

FLOUTING MAXIMS IN *SOUL* FILM

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Abstract

Grice (in Yule, 1996:37) states that people can have effective conversations if they obey to the cooperative principle which is divided into four types of maxims, such as maxim of quality, maxim of quantity, maxim of relation, and maxim of manner. However, during the conversation, there were also responses given by the listener that did not match what was said by the speaker which caused the conversation to not go properly. Many people sometimes disobey the maxim deliberately, this case is known as flouting maxim. This study discusses maxim that flouted by the characters in the *Soul* film. This study aims to find out the types of flouting maxim based on the theory of Cooperative Principle by Grice (1975). The method used in this research is qualitative method. The data was collected from the utterances of the characters in the film. Then the data was classified based on the types of flouting maxim and the reasons of flouting maxim. The finding shows that all types of maxim are flouted by the characters in the film. The maxim which flouted the most in conversation is the maxim of relation because the speakers give a response that is not relevant to the topic being discussed. Flouting maxims occurs because the speakers do not obey the maxim when doing the conversation to convey the hidden meaning in their utterances.

Keywords - *flouting maxim, soul film, cooperative principle*

Introduction

Conversation is a spoken language that used by humans to express and exchange of individual ideas, thoughts, or feelings through talking with other people. Conversation always involves two people or more which is a speaker or a hearer who take a crucial part in conversation. In doing a conversation, people should pay attention to some rules in order to make the conversation go properly. Grice (in Yule, 1996:37) states that people can have effective conversations if they obey to the cooperative principle which is divided into four types of maxims, such as maxim of quality when the speaker must give the right amount of information as it is required, maxim of quantity when the speaker have to be truthful, maxim of relation when the speaker have to be relevant to the topic, and maxim of manner when the speaker have to be clearly and orderly to avoid the ambiguity. However, during the conversation, there were also responses given by the listener that did not match what was said by the speaker which caused the conversation to not go properly. Sometimes, many people disobey the maxim deliberately and this case is known as flouting maxim.

Grice (1975) stated that flouting is the condition when a speaker deliberately fails to fulfill the maxims. Flouting of maxim also divided into four types, such as flouting maxim of quantity when the speaker gives less or more information than is required, flouting maxim of quality when the speaker tells a lie and something that lacks of evidence, flouting maxim of relation when the speaker says something irrelevant to the topic, and flouting maxim of manner when the speaker is being ambiguous and not brief in saying something. In daily life, people flout the maxims in order to convey the implicit meaning. The reflection of human life can be

reflected in a film and the flouting maxim also can be found in the utterances conveyed by the characters. Therefore, film is chosen to be the data source of this study that used to analyze the types of flouting maxim.

An American computer-animated fantasy comedy film entitled *Soul* was chosen to be analysis. This film tells about Joe Gardner, a junior high school music teacher from New York City who dreams of playing jazz and has a passion for a career in jazz. After getting a good offer for his career, unexpected events occur. Joe died in an accident. Joe's soul enters a place called The Great Before and meets a soul named 22. Joe asks 22 to help him return back to his body on Earth before his night shows performance. *Soul* film was selected, because this film winning the Best Animated Film and it has the conversational that flouted the maxims of cooperative principle.

This research aimed to find out the types of flouting maxim conveyed by the characters in *Soul* film based on the theory of Cooperative Principle by Grice (1975). This research is expected to give useful information to the readers and understanding about flouting maxim in conversation.

Methods

This research used qualitative method. This method is used to analyze descriptively related to the flouting maxim found in the *Soul* film. The data of this research were in the form of utterances that contained flouting maxim in the film. The primary data of this research was taken from the *Soul* film directed by Pete Docter. The data were collected from utterances of the characters in the *Soul* film. In collecting the data, there were several steps to do. First, the researcher watched the film also read the transcript repeatedly. Then, the data was classified and analyzed based on the types of flouting maxim and the reasons of flouting maxim using the theory Cooperative Principle proposed by Grice (1975). In presenting the data, the researcher used formal method to present the data in the form of a table to show the percentage of the data that was collected and informal method to present the data in the form of narration.

Finding and Discussion

Table 1. Types of flouting maxim in the *Soul* film

Flouting Maxim	Frequency	%
Quantity	10	19,24%
Quality	16	30,77%
Relation	17	32,70%
Manner	9	17,31%
TOTAL	52	100%

This table shows the total of flouting maxim found in the *Soul* film is 52 data. The most frequent occurrences of flouting maxim in *Soul* film was the flouting maxim of relation, 17 data (32,70%), followed by flouting maxim of quality, 16 data (30,77%), flouting maxim of quantity, 10 data (19,24%), and flouting maxim of manner, 9 data (17,31%). Flouting maxim of relation is flouted the most in conversation because the speakers give a response that is not relevant to the topic being discussed. Types of flouting maxim is discussed in the following below.

Flouting Maxim of Quantity

Data 1

Joe is in The Great Before, the place where all new souls will be born to earth, after escaping from The Great Beyond which is the place after life. He accidentally meets Jerry, who is the supervisor there and asks about whether he is dead or not.

Joe: Does this mean I'm dead?

Jerry: Not yet. *Your body's in a holding pattern. It's complicated. I'll get you back to your group.*

(Soul film, 00:14:14 – 00:14:20)

The conversation above belongs to flouting maxim of quantity. Jerry provided too much information than was necessary. Joe expects Jerry to tell him whether he is dead or not, but Jerry provides additional information about how Joe's soul is and where she is taking Joe next. Jerry flouted the maxim of quantity because she wanted to inform Joe that he was in a coma and wanted to put Joe where he belonged in The Great Before.

Data 2

Joe and 22 are in the "Zone", the space between the physical and spiritual. They managed to find Moonwind, the person who will help them was driving a wooden ship along with his ship's members. 22 introduced Joe to Moonwind. Then Joe asks if he can help him return to earth.

Joe: I'm trying to get back to my body. Can you help me?

Moonwind: That's what we do. *We are the mystics without borders. Devoted to helping the lost souls of Earth find their way. I'm Moonwind Stardancer at your service. That's Windstar Dreamermoon, Dancerstar Windmoon, and that's Dreamerwind Dreamerdreamer.*

(Soul film, 00:31:19 – 00:31:31)

The conversation above shows that Moonwind flouted the maxim of quantity. This can be seen in his words providing too much information in the sense of exceeding what Joe wanted to know. Joe just wants to know if Moonwind can help him to return to the Earth. Here, Moonwind should simply answer yes or no. However, Moonwind answered Joe's question by explaining what his duties were and introducing his crew members. Moonwind flouts the maxim of quantity because he wants Joe to trust him that he and his friends are trusted people and experts in bringing lost souls back to earth.

Flouting Maxim of Quality

Data 1

Joe was teaching his students to play Jazz music in his class, but the student's music playing is not good, the musical instrument that being played sounds out of tune. Then the Principal, Ms. Arroyo interrupted him by telling Joe to leave the class for a while. They talk in the corridor of the class that taught by Joe.

Principal Arroyo: Sorry to interrupt, Mr. Gardner

Joe: You're doing my ears a favor

A student: Hey!

Joe: *Not you, though, you're good. (WHISPERS) He's not.*

(Soul film, 0:02:52 - 0:02:57)

Based on the conversation above, there is a flouting of maxim of quality. This can be seen when Joe lied to one of his students who overheard his conversation with the Principal, Ms. Arroyo by saying *'Not you, though, you're good'* and after the student left, he continued to whisper *'He's not'*. Joe lied to the student by saying that his musical playing was good, but in reality it wasn't. Joe flouted the maxim of quality because he doesn't want his students to feel offended and sad.

Data 2

After knowing that the way these new souls descend to Earth is through the Earth Portal, Joe sneaks and escapes to the Earth Portal without Jerry's permission in order to return to Earth by stealing the pass from other souls. But unfortunately, his efforts always failed. Jerry manages to find Joe and invites him to You Seminar as a mentor.

Jerry: I understand. Mentoring isn't for everyone. You're more than welcome to opt out.

Joe: *Actually, on second thought, you know, the mentoring sounds like fun*
(Soul film, 0:16:54 - 0:17:03)

In this conversation, Joe flouted the maxim of quality. This can be seen from Joe's words *'Actually, on second thought, you know, the mentoring sounds like fun'* which seemed forced to look happy and pretended to like being a mentor after hearing Jerry's words that if he objected to his duties, then he would return to The Great Beyond. Joe decides to lie to Jerry because he didn't want to return to The Great Beyond and didn't want to thwart his plans to return to the Earth. If, he went to The Great Beyond then that would mean he died.

Flouting Maxim of Relation

Data 1

Joe is telling his students that it's a good thing to get lost while playing music. Because it means we animate and love music. Joe also shared how he first wanted to play the piano and wanted to get lost in it. Joe tells the story while playing the piano. Then he asked Connie.

Joe: Connie knows what I mean. Right, Connie?

Connie: *I'm 12*

(Soul film, 00:02:41 – 00:02:43)

The utterance of Connie in the conversation above showed that Connie flouted the maxim of relation. It could be seen from how she answered Joe's question. She answered *'I'm 12'* even though Joe didn't ask Connie's age, he just wanted to know Connie's opinion. With Coni saying that, she was proven to have flouted the maxim of relation, because she made the conversation unmatched. She actually wanted to say that she is still young and not interested in the deep thoughts of adults.

Data 2

Joe and 22 go to the Hall of Everything to find the last fragment of passport 22 so he can come down to earth. They are in the firefighting section. 22 holds a water hose to put out the fire in a house like firefighters do. Joe asked, isn't it fun being a firefighter.

Joe: Isn't this exciting?

22: *The fire is so pretty. I kinda wanna let it spread.*

(Soul film, 00:27:32 – 00:27:38)

According to the conversation above, 22 flouted the maxim of relation. 22 answered Joe's question which is irrelevant to the topic. Joe asks about how to become a firefighter but 22 replies about the fire is pretty which makes it very clear that this answer is off topic. 22 flouted the maxim of relation because she implied the meaning in her words which means that he is not interested in being a firefighter.

Data 3

22's soul is in Joe's body, while Joe's soul is in the cat's body. They were at Joe's mother's sewing shop. Joe wants to ask his mother to sew the pants that he will use at the jazz show tonight. However, his mother refused to do so because she never approved Joe to become a musician and there was a quarrel between the two.

Libra: Your father had me. Most times, this shop is what paid the bills. So when I'm gone, who's gonna pay yours?

Joe: *Music is all I think about. From the moment I wake up in the morning to the moment I fall asleep at night.*

(Soul film, 01:02:55 – 01:03:11)

In this conversation, Joe blatantly flouted the maxim of relation. It can be seen from the way Joe answered his mother question. Joe flouted the maxim of relation by changing the topic of conversation. His mother wanted to know how Joe will live his life if the job he chose is not guarantee him and what will happen if she dies. Joe didn't seem to answer his mother's question. Joe flouted the maxim of relation because he wanted to say that he really likes music and can guarantee that he will be happy and able to live his life while he is doing what he loves.

The Flouting Maxim of Manner

Data 1

Joe's soul escapes the Great Beyond and he falls in the Great Before, then accidentally encounters Jerry and other new souls. Joe asks Jerry to confirm where he is now, he is worried about his show with Dorothea. He had to hurry back to his house before it was too late.

Joe : *Is it H-E-double hockey sticks?*

New Souls : Hell, hell, hell, hell

(Soul film, 00:13:43 – 00:13:49)

From the conversation above, Joe blatantly flouted the maxim of manner. He did not give a brief information by spelling out the word Hell by saying '*Is it H-E-double hockey sticks?*' instead of saying it directly which could lead to ambiguity. To make an effective conversation he should say it clearly. He flouted the maxim of manner because he didn't want to mention the word '*Hell*' in a place full of pure new souls.

Data 2

After successfully returning to his original body. Joe went to where Dorothea is doing her show. However, Joe is intercepted by Curley from seeing Dorothea, as she is disappointed in Joe for being late. Joe stubbornly entered Dorothea's room and asked for a chance.

Joe: Let me talk to Dorothea.

Curley: No, no, no, man. She doesn't play that.

Dorothea: These rappers act like... *Who let this lunatic in here?*

(Soul film, 01:13:07 – 01:13:13)

In Dorothea utterance, she obviously flouted the maxim of manner by using the word '*this lunatic*' which caused her words to sound ambiguous. Dorothea should have provided clear information in referring someone. Dorothea flouted the maxim of manner because she didn't want to mention Joe Gardner's name. Joe already pissed her off for coming late.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the characters flouted all types of the maxim in the *Soul* film. There are 52 data of flouting maxim; flouting maxim of relation, 17 data (32,70%), followed by flouting maxim of quality, 16 data (30,77%), flouting maxim of quantity, 10 data (19,24%), and flouting maxim of manner, 9 data (17,31%). In the *Soul* film, the maxim that is flouted the most in conversation by the characters is the maxim of relation because the speakers give a response that is irrelevant to the topic being discussed. Flouting maxims occurs because the speakers do not obey the maxim when doing the conversation to convey the hidden meaning in their utterances.

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