

FLOUTING AND VIOLATION OF MAXIMS IN “A MAN CALLED OTTO” MOVIE

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ABSTRACT. The application of the maxim principle can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the conversations. Grice's four cooperative principles of maxims allow us to assume that the people having a conversation are working together to create an effective conversation. This research aims to identify the most frequent flouting and violations of maxims committed by the characters in “A Man Called Otto” movie and to determine the factors that cause these flouting and violations. By applying a qualitative approach, the results show that all types of maxims are flouted and violated in the movie. The study argues that the causes of the flouting and violations are lacking of understanding, and avoiding a certain topic, especially on the maxim of quality and relation. Focus on the topic, respond appropriately, and provide accurate and truthful information are the keys to effective and honest communication that remains relevant, coherent, and conducive.

Keywords: A Man Called Otto; Cooperative Principle; Conversational Maxim; Flouting; Violation

ABSTRAK. Penerapan prinsip maksim mampu meningkatkan efisiensi dan efektivitas percakapan. Empat prinsip kerja sama oleh Grice memungkinkan kita untuk berasumsi bahwa orang-orang yang melakukan percakapan bekerja sama untuk menciptakan percakapan yang efektif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi pengabaian dan pelanggaran maksim yang paling banyak dilakukan oleh para tokoh dalam film “A Man Called Otto” dan untuk mengetahui faktor apa saja yang menjadi penyebabnya. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa semua jenis maksim diabaikan dan dilanggar dalam film ini. Penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa penyebab dari pengabaian dan pelanggaran maksim tersebut adalah kurangnya pengetahuan akan konteks pembicaraan dan menghindari topik pembicaraan, terutama pada maksim kualitas dan relasi. Berfokus pada topik pembicaraan, merespon dengan tepat, dan memberikan informasi yang akurat dan jujur adalah kunci dari komunikasi yang efektif dan jujur yang tetap relevan, koheren, dan kondusif.

Kata kunci: *A Man Called Otto*; Prinsip Kerja Sama; Pelanggaran Maksim Percakapan; Pengabaian Maksim Percakapan

INTRODUCTION

Flouting and violating maxims can impact conversations, potentially making them difficult to comprehend. These arguments highlight why it is relevant to discuss this topic. First, flouting and violating maxim can cause ambiguity and misunderstanding because they obscure the intended message, resulting in miscommunication (Amaliyasari & Widiyanah, 2019). Second, deception may also happen when people purposefully flout and/or violate these maxims in order to deceive or manipulate others, destroying confidence in communication and relationships (Sorlin, 2017). Third, defying the maxims can lead to imprecision, since indirect or funny communication may not be appropriate for delivering complicated or essential information (Thomas, 1997). Fourth, continuous flouting of the maxims can irritate and frustrate listeners by appearing evasive or annoying (Manurung, 2019), and so on.

Although many studies have been conducted on cooperative principle maxims, especially on the topic flouting and violating maxims, almost all of them only focus on one side, either flouting

maxims (Sori, 2023; Averina, 2023; Holifatunnisa & Wuryandari, 2023; Astini, et al., 2023; Sinaga, et al., 2023) or violating maxims (Lee, et al., 2023; Hardianti, et al., 2023; Efendi, et al., 2023; Fitriana & Pratama, 2023; Wang, 2023). There are still few or even no studies that discuss the flouting and violation of maxims at once. According to the cooperative principle, introduced by H. P. Grice in 1975, it allows us to assume that the people having a conversation are working with each other to create an effective conversation (Yule, 1996). It also assumes that people usually provide appropriate information; they tell the truth, are relevant, and are as clear as possible.

Grice's maxims are divided into four categories: quality, quantity, relation, and manner. First, quality emphasizes truthfulness and honesty, requiring speakers to express their beliefs without relying on lack of evidence (Yule, 1996). Second, quantity refers to the amount of information needed, requiring speakers to provide as much information as necessary for the exchange (Yule, 1996). Third, relation requires speakers to be relevant to the subject, ensuring their responses are related to the previous speaker's statement (Cutting, 2005). And fourth, manner refers to the way the speaker uses language

to deliver a message, avoiding obscurity, ambiguity, being brief, and being orderly. The speaker must deliver a clear, concise message without unnecessary prolixity, avoiding unnecessary prolixity (Yule, 1996). By adhering to these maxims, speakers can effectively communicate their ideas and maintain a positive and productive exchange.

Flouting and violating maxims refer to speakers who do not adhere to the guidelines set by the maxim (Cutting, 2005). Speakers who do not follow the maxim's guideline are referred to as violating and flouting the maxim. Flouting involves revealing the speaker's awareness of the principle or maxim, while violating maxims involves revealing the speaker's intentions and causing the audience to question the truth.

Flouting occurs when a speaker reveals their awareness of the principle or maxim, leaving the audience to question why it was rejected. This involves using implicature to get around the maxim, allowing the listener to understand the hidden meaning of the speech (Cutting, 2005). Examples of flouting maxims include providing too much information or saying something that does not reflect the speaker's thoughts.

1. A: "How's my look?"
B: "Well, it's good."
2. A: "Ouch, I'm starving!"
B: Yeah, so am I. I bet I could finish a whole bucket of fried noodles by iftar time."

Violating maxims occurs when a speaker is aware that the audience will only perceive the words' surface meaning, such as distracting the topic or using a misleading manner (Cutting, 2005). Examples of violating maxims include changing the topic or using a misleading answer.

1. C: "How much did the new dress cost, honey?"
D: "I know. Let's go out tonight."
2. C: "How much did the new dress cost, honey?"
D: "A tiny fraction of my salary, though probably a bigger fraction of the salary of the woman that sold it to me."

A movie is a recording of moving images that tell a story and that people watch on a screen or television (Merriam Webster, 2019). Movies are not merely a medium of entertainment, but they can provide a sense of closeness to an unimaginable world. Watching a movie can transport the audience away from their everyday lives and immerse them in the world of the movie. Movies, being a medium of communication, serve as a tool for conveying messages to the audience. Analyzing a movie can

help us see cultural values, historical events, or even hidden messages in it that can provide new insights and even influence the way we see things.

"A Man Called Otto", a movie based on the #1 New York Times bestseller "A Man Called Ove", brought this issue to light so that people would be more aware of the situation. "A Man Called Otto", as cited by Sony Pictures, is narrating the tale of Otto Anderson (Tom Hanks), a grump who lost his wife and now feels purposeless in life. Otto is prepared to get rid of everything, but his plans are derailed when a vibrant young family moves in next door and he finds that Marisol, who is quick-witted, is just his equal. She pushes him to reconsider life, which results in an unexpected friendship that completely changes his perspective. "A Man Called Otto" is a touching and humorous tale about love, grief, and life that demonstrates how family may occasionally be found in the most unlikely places.

From the explanation above, the following questions came to mind: What are the most frequent flouting and violations of maxims committed by all the movie casts? And what are the factors that cause these flouting and violations? and the main concern of this article is initially to identify the most frequent flouting and violations of maxims committed by all the movie casts and to determine the factors that cause these flouting and violations based on the movie context.

METHOD

This article applied a qualitative approach based on the stated research objectives and the fact that the entire analysis attempts to explain the characteristics and complexities of a phenomenon. The subject of the research is the movie "A Man Called Otto" itself as a visual text and the explicit and implicit meanings it conveys. The object of the research is the flouting and violation of maxims occurred in the movie which is significant in terms of characters' development and the movie plot. It is impossible to analyze the movie without watching it carefully. Several scenes need to be observed to analyze not only the dialogue but also the various visual and non-verbal aspects. The main source of this research are the movie itself and the movie script that was downloaded from a site called "Script Slug." Data was collected by observing all the dialogues and classifying the selected dialogues based on the category of flouting and/or violation in maxims. The results of the observations were written down in notes. This research also involves a descriptive method that aims to describe the factor caused in the phenomena based on the facts found and

the findings of previous research. The discussion was informed by the concept of cooperative principle by (Grice, 1975; Yule, 1995), and the concept of flouting and violation of maxim proposed by (Yule, 1995; Cutting, 2005; Amaliyasari & Widiyanah, 2019; Sorlin, 2017; Thomas, 1997; Manurung, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the research undertaken, it was found that there were 22 utterances that indicated flouting of maxims in total and 27 utterances that indicated violation of maxims in total. Further explanation of the examples of each maxim is described as follows.

Flouting of Maxims

From each maxim, there are 8 samples of data on maxim of quality, 3 utterances on maxim of quantity, 8 utterances on maxim of relation, and 3 utterances on maxim of manner. Below are some examples of utterances that have been collected.

Maxim of Quality

- (1) OTTO: "I'm not unfriendly!"

MARISOL: "No, you are right. Your every word is like a warm cuddle, really."

Otto, who keeps refuting the fact that he is an unfriendly person, forces Marisol to agree to what Otto says while presenting information that is completely contrary to the actual condition. This utterance is included in the flouting of quality maxim because it contains irony.

- (2) OTTO (to the clerk, squinting): "She's the assistant manager? How old is she?"

OTTO (to Taylor): "Shouldn't you be in gym class?"

TAYLOR: "... Sorry — What?"

Otto was sarcastic about the assistant manager's younger appearance and he thought she was inappropriate for the position. This utterance is included in the flouting of quality maxim because it contains information that is different from the actual condition.

- (3) SONYA: "I'm on my way to visit my father right now — I go every Thursday. Do you take this train a lot?"

OTTO: "No, I had to come into town for my army physical."

Otto lied to Sonya, whom he had just met. The truth was that he had just returned from the town after his physical check-up and got on the train to give Sonya the book that she had dropped at the station. This is a flouting of quality maxim because instead of telling the truth, Otto says things that are not in line

with the facts.

- (4) SHARI: "Mr. Anderson? My name is Shari Kenzie. I'm a social media journalist and —" (...)

OTTO: "You've got the wrong person."

Otto lied to the social media journalist even though she had provided correct information about him. Otto did this to avoid things that might inconvenience him. This utterance is a flouting of quality maxim because Otto did not give truthful information even though he knew that it was true.

Maxim of Quantity

- (1) MARISOL: "Are you always this unfriendly?"

OTTO: "I am not unfriendly!"

MARISOL: "No? I'd say you are a little unfriendly."

OTTO: "I am not!"

MARISOL: "No, you are right. Your every word is like a warm cuddle, really."

In this excerpt, despite the sweetness of her words, Marisol flouts the maxim with her sarcastic utterance. Her saying that Otto is unfriendly and her saying that Otto's word is like a warm cuddle are clearly contradictory. However, she is merely being sarcastic because Otto insists that he is not unfriendly despite his sharp words.

- (2) OTTO: (Grumpily:) "What?"

MARISOL: "My father used to smile like that."

OTTO: "I'm not smiling."

MARISOL: "Exactly."

In this excerpt, Marisol is once again being sarcastic with her utterance. She said that her father used to smile like that when, in fact, Otto was not smiling, which implies that Otto rarely smiles just like her father.

- (3) DR. ELLIS: "It's called Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy. Basically, his heart is too big."

MARISOL: "... Too big?"

In this excerpt, Marisol was laughing because the doctor said that Otto's heart was too big. It seems like she deciphers it as an idiom for someone with a big heart, which means a kind, loving, and generous person.

Maxim of Relation

- (1) HARDWARE CLERK: "Can I help you with that, sir?"

OTTO: "You think I don't know how to cut rope?"

In this dialog, Otto seems to assume that the

hardware clerk's question is irrelevant or inappropriate. In other words, Otto seems to feel that the clerk does not understand his ability to cut the rope and that his question is unnecessary. Thus, Otto's statement can be said to be a flouting of the maxim of relation because he does not give an answer that is appropriate or relevant to the clerk's question. Although not directly violating by giving an unrelated answer, Otto indirectly ignores or undermines the relevance of the question asked by the clerk.

- (2) OTTO: "What is this?"
BOSS: "It's a... well, retirement cake, I guess - call it what you like."
OTTO: "'Have Fun?' Doing what?"
BOSS: "With the rest of your life. We wanted to, you know..."
OTTO: "Celebrate?"
BOSS: "Yes — well, no — give you a nice send-off."
OTTO: "What's nice about it?"
BOSS: "Come on, Otto. You're the one who decided to leave - and you did get a nice severance package."
In this dialogue, Otto appears to doubt or dismiss the importance or positivity of his retirement celebration. His statements show dissatisfaction and a lack of recognition of the employer's efforts to provide a retirement celebration that is perceived as positive.
- (3) TELEMARKETER: "Oh, hi — sorry, can you hear me? It's Susan. I have great news about your life insurance —"
OTTO: "... Yes, you can help me. I want this phone line disconnected."
The conversation between the telemarketer and Otto above is also considered a maxim violation. Otto violated the maxim of relation by not answering the telemarketer's question in a relevant manner. When the telemarketer asked if Otto could hear him and if he could help him, Otto interrupted the conversation by saying that he wanted to disconnect the phone.
- (4) ANITA: "Oh — Otto, good. I hate to bother you, but our heat doesn't seem to be working. Could you take a look?"
OTTO: "Try bleeding the radiators."
ANITA: "How exactly would I do that?"
OTTO: "By bleeding the radiators."
Otto deliberately gave an answer that seemed unhelpful and more like a form of humor or satire. His answer, "By bleeding the radiators," provides no clear explanation or any assistance to Anita, and this can be considered flouting

the maxim of relationship as Otto deliberately ignores the expected relevance of Anita's question.

Maxim of Manner

- (1) OTTO: "'Have Fun?' Doing what?"
BOSS: "With the rest of your life. We wanted to, you know..."
OTTO: "Celebrate?"
BOSS: "Yes — well, no — give you a nice send-off."
OTTO: "What's nice about it?"
Boss' answer to Otto's question is not concise and contains ambiguity. When Otto asks, "Have Fun? Doing what?" and the Boss responds with, "With the rest of your life. We wanted to, you know..." There is a level of vagueness in his sentence. Otto seeks clarification by saying "Celebrate?" and the Boss replies, "Yes - well, no - give you a nice send-off." The response could have been more clear and blunt, as shown by the back-and-forth clarification in this interaction. Therefore, in this conversation, the boss was flouting the maxim of manner because he hesitated from expressing his desire to bid Otto farewell for his retirement.
- (2) OTTO: "Try bleeding the radiators."
ANITA: "How exactly would I do that?"
OTTO: "By bleeding the radiators."
Otto's response, "By bleeding the radiators," is a repetition of the previous suggestion without providing additional details or guidance. This could be perceived as unhelpful and ambiguous. Further information on how to bleed the radiators should be provided in response to Anita's question, but Otto only points out what he had said rather than providing Anita with specific instructions. Otto's intentional unclear reaction to Anita's confusion indicates that he clearly flouted the maxim of manners.
- (3) MARISOL: "Did you and Sonya ever think about having children?"
OTTO: "It's two o'clock."
The response from Otto, "It's two o'clock," can be seen as a form of flouting the Maxim of Manner. Otto seems to be uncomfortable about Marisol's question about whether he and Sonya ever thought about having children, therefore instead of answering the question, he provides an unrelated statement about the time. This can be interpreted as an attempt to avoid the question.

Violation of Maxims

From each maxim, there are 5 utterances on

maxim of quality, 17 utterances on maxim of quantity, 4 utterances on maxim of relation, and 1 utterance on maxim of manner. Below are some examples of utterances that have been collected.

Maxim of Quality

- (1) OTTO: "Social media journalist — what the hell does that even mean? It's all just a bunch of fools pointing cameras at themselves."
 Otto commented on social media journalists by saying that they are just idiots who record themselves regardless of their true meaning. This is considered a violation of quality maxim because what Otto said is just the perception of a common person who has no knowledge of what a social media journalist actually is.
- (2) SONYA: "... Do you take this train a lot?"
 OTTO: "No, I had to come into town for my army physical."
 SONYA: "Oh, god... That must be hard, not knowing what you're going to face over there."
 Otto lied about the reason he was taking the train and Sonya, who did not have the same background knowledge as him since they had just met, caused a misunderstanding that made Sonya's response show a violation of quality maxim.
- (3) OTTO: "Don't you dare let that little rat dog of yours piss on my walkway again! I know it was you!"
 BARB: "Ignore him, Prince. He's a nasty bitter old man. And he has no idea who's doing that."
 Otto confidently claimed that Barb's dog was the one who pissed in his walkway even though he had no solid evidence other than the smell of its pee. This is also supported by the fact that Barb, the dog owner, disagrees with what Otto said. This utterance is considered a violation of quality maxim because Otto says things that he cannot even prove to be true.
- (4) TOMMY: "You wouldn't have an Alvin wrench I could borrow, would you?"
 OTTO: "You mean an Allen wrench."
 TOMMY: "No, it's Alvin."
 OTTO & MARISOL: "Allen!"
 Tommy insists that what he is looking for is Alvin wrench even though Otto and Marisol try to state that the correct one is Allen wrench, not Alvin. The utterance is a violation of quality maxim because Tommy sticks to something that has been confirmed wrong but he still considers it true.

Maxim of Quantity

- (1) OTTO: "What the hell kind of computer can't

do simple math?"

HARDWARE CLERK: "Yeah... I'm sorry. I think they sell rope by the foot over at the Home Depot if you want."

OTTO: "I don't want to go to the goddamn Home Depot! Where's your manager?"

In this excerpt, Otto was asking the clerk about the computer because apparently the computer is not mathing. However, despite the apology, the clerk was violating the maxim by saying that Home Depot sells rope by the foot and therefore Otto should go there if he wants, which clearly is not the point.

- (2) OTTO: "Why the hell is it in your pocket?"

TOMMY: "I'm the driver."

MARISOL: "We're renting here. 206."

This excerpt happened when Otto met Marisol and Tommy for the first time. Otto was asking why Tommy put the parking permit in his pocket, and Tommy's answer was insufficient because he did not actually answer Otto's question. Not only that, Marisol also added some information, which was unnecessary because it is nowhere near Otto's question.

- (3) OTTO: "Chicken and rice?"

MARISOL: "*Pollo mole* - it's a Mexican dish. I was born in el Salvador, that's where my father was from, but my mother was Mexican - she went down to El Salvador to run an agriculture program. So that's how they met, and that's where I was born. But I grew up in Mexico."

OTTO: "What about you?"

TOMMY: "I'm an I.T. consultant."

In this excerpt, Marisol answered Otto's question and gave much more information than was required. When Otto asked Tommy, the answer was missing the point of the question.

- (4) MARISOL: "Your counters are so low! Mine, I feel like I'm chopping onions right under my chin. These are perfect. Where did you get them?"

OTTO: "I made them. For Sonya. My wife."

MARISOL: "Okay. Is she here or...?"

JIMMY: "Sonya passed away. She was a great cook, though, wasn't she? I used to eat here all the time."

In this excerpt, answering "I made them" was enough to answer Marisol's question. However, Otto added some unrequired information by saying he made the counters for his wife. Not only that, when Marisol was asking about Sonya's whereabouts, Jimmy answered by adding some unnecessary details about how Sonya was a great cook and how he used

to eat there all the time.

Maxim of Relation

- (1) BEPPO: "I was actually reading to them," Mr. Bear grumbled. Say, can I borrow a coin, Mr. Bear?"

OTTO: "I need this back."

Beppo's question is direct and relevant to the topic of the conversation. Otto's answer does not directly answer Beppo's question. Instead, he said that he needed the coin back. Otto probably did not want to lend the coin to Beppo for some reason (the coin was a gift from Sonya, his deceased ex-wife). Therefore, he diverted the conversation by emphasizing that he needed the coin back.

- (2) MARISOL: "Is he dead?"

OTTO: "Maybe he's sleeping."

The answer "Maybe he's sleeping" seems to be a form of flouting the maxim of relation because it does not give a direct or serious answer to Marisol's question. Indirectly, the answer contains an element of humor and deliberately ignores the question's relevance.

- (3) MARISOL: "Did you and Sonya ever think about having children?"

OTTO: "It's two o'clock."

Otto's response can be considered a violation of the maxim of relation, as he expressly ignores or avoids Marisol's question about whether he and Sonya have ever thought about having children. He switches directly from the question to a statement of time, not giving an answer or further talking about the topic at hand. This is done by Otto because he does not want to discuss that topic.

- (4) OTTO: "Get it. And any records you have about Reuben's condition and yours."

ANITA: "Did Jimmy tell you - ?"

OTTO: "Now!"

Otto's "Now!" command without providing an answer or further context can be considered a violation of the maxim of relation. Otto appears to not provide sufficient information to explain the urgency or reasoning behind his command, degrading the interaction to be very assertive and urgent.

Maxim of Manner

- (1) MARISOL: "*Pollo mole* - it's a Mexican dish. I was born in El Salvador, that's where my father was from, but my mother was Mexican - she went down to El Salvador to run an agriculture program. So that's how they met, and that's where I was born. But I grew up in Mexico."

OTTO: "What about you?"

TOMMY: "I'm an I.T. consultant."

MARISOL (To Tommy:) "*Dile de dónde eres* (Tell him where you're from)."

TOMMY: "Oh. Anaheim."

Otto asked Tommy a question that could be a bit unclear to Tommy. Before Otto asked, Marisol mentioned that she grew up in Mexico. So, it seemed like Tommy should say where he's from. But instead, Tommy thought Otto was asking about his job, so he said he's an I.T. consultant. This suggests that he interpreted the question as referring to his profession rather than his place of origin. Marisol had to step in and say, "Tell him where you're from." This helps clear up the confusion. It shows how important it is to ask questions in a way that avoids confusion and makes sure everyone understands. Because Tommy was confused by Otto's question and Tommy's response did not align with Otto's question, both Otto and Tommy violated the maxim of manner in this conversation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion above, the most frequent flouting of maxims that were committed by the characters are maxim of quality and maxim of relation with 8 samples each. The most frequent violation of maxim that was committed by the characters is maxim of quantity with 17 samples. The factors that caused these flouting and violations are lack of understanding, avoiding a certain topic, and creating a sense of humor. To prevent the flouting and violating the maxim of quality, it is important to provide accurate and truthful information and ensure it is factually accurate and based on reliable sources. In the case of flouting and violating the maxim of relation, it is important to maintain relevance, focus on the topic, respond appropriately, avoid ambiguity and misinterpretation. By adhering to these maxims, effective and honest communication that remains relevant, coherent, and conducive as proposed by George Yule can be fulfilled. To further analyze this research, we suggest that the next research can be focused on analyzing the flouting and violation of maxims based on the specific theme or issue that is brought by the movie.

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