

Flouting Maxim Found in WhatsApp Group Chat: Pragmatics Analysis

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Abstract

The Gricean Maxim provides a framework for understanding and analyzing communicative interactions, offering insights into the dynamics of effective communication and cooperation in various contexts. This study is to identify the kinds of maxims that were flouted and the reasons for flouting maxims. Two different WhatsApp group chats in a long-distance friendship context were analyzed. The WhatsApp groups consist of members from different areas in East Java. By employing qualitative research, the researcher used the theory of the four types of cooperative principle of the maxim by Grice to analyze the context in which the maxim was flouted and to analyze the reasons of the speakers for flouting the maxims. The finding showed that all kinds of flouting maxims were found, except flouting the maxim of quality. Therefore, it can be concluded that some friendship members usually did not obey the maxims for certain reasons, such as to provide humor and to give the information more effectively.

Keywords: Flouting Maxims, WhatsApp Group Chat, Long-Distance Friendship

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication plays a vital role in human social life (Durga & Mehrotra, 2022). To achieve communication that can be mutually understood by the speaker and the hearer, humans use language as the mediator to express thoughts and feelings (Januar et al., 2023). The language used by participants must be cooperative to get interactional communication. Therefore, a philosopher, H. Paul Grice (1975), put forward the cooperative principle of communication (Gricean Maxim). The Gricean Maxim provides a framework for understanding and analyzing communicative interactions, offering insights into the dynamics of effective communication and cooperation in various contexts.

The Gricean Maxim is divided into four types that should be obeyed to make the communication cooperate. Maxim of Quantity: the speakers are expected to be able to convey sufficient information, no less and no more, Maxim of Quality: do not provide false or misleading information, Maxim of Relation: the speakers are expected to be relevant, and Maxim of Manner: the speakers are asked to provide the statements in a straightforward, unambiguous, and be clear (H. Paul Grice, 1975).

However, in every communication (offline and online through applications) some individuals deliberately fail the cooperative principles

(Gultom, 2022). The Gricean Maxim theory states that an attempt not to comply with the cooperative principle of conversation is called violating and flouting the maxim (Hmouri, 2021). Maxim violation occurs when someone deliberately causes misunderstanding or confusion in the interlocutor, receiving wrong information, confusion, sarcasm, and so on (Nisa et al., 2023). Being different from the concept of violation, the maxims can be flouted, leading to implicatures or hidden meanings that require cooperation and interpretation to be understood (Sri Ningsih, 2014). Flouting the maxims is a common feature of everyday communication and it is closely related to the concept of implicature.

The theory of flouting the cooperative principle 'maxim', stated by Thomas is when the speaker intentionally fails to observe the maxim, and the interlocutor can still understand the meaning by analyzing the context of the conversation (in Hmouri, 2021). For example:

- 1) By being too exaggerated or less in answering a question (flouting the maxim of quantity).

Student: "Morning sir, could I ask for your signature now?" Lecturer: I don't go to campus. Next Thursday". An example of a conversation was held between the lecturer and the student in WhatsApp chat. The lecturer flouted the maxim of quantity by giving additional information on the phrase "Next Thursday" because the student did not ask about the day when the lecturer was able to give the signature. However, the additional information in this conversation helps students to get an understanding of the day when the lecturer would be able to sign (Ariyanti et al., 2020).

- 2) Saying information that lacks evidence (flouting the maxim of quality). According to Puspasari about the humour said by a comedian Kevin Hart, **"she ain't have no nipples"**. The statement by Kevin Hart flouts the maxim of quality because he did not provide evidence that a girl does not have nipples (Puspasari & Ariyanti, 2019). Even the audience could find that Kevin Hart flouting the maxim aims to make a joke by ridiculing a girl.

- 3) Getting out of the context being discussed (flouting the maxim of relation).

Septiani in her research stated the example of flouting the maxim of relation/relevance on WhatsApp messages: **A: "bajuku" (my clothes) B: "kan jumat" (Friday, right?)** In this short conversation, B was flouting the maxim of relevance because the question said by A and the answer given by B showed an irrelevant contribution, but the answer of B has a

hidden meaning that the clothes would be returned on Friday (Septiani, 2021).

- 4) Communicating ambiguously which is not immediately understood by others (flouting the maxim of manner)

Student: "Excuse me, sir. I want to apply for LO for EIP, is it still open?" **Lecturer: "Noted"**. The word 'noted' intentionally broke the rules of the cooperative principle because it did not give clear information on whether the student's application was accepted or not. However, the student can conclude the lecturer's word also shows that the meaning is 'yes, you are accepted' (Ariyanti et al., 2020).

The general description of the flouting maxim in the WhatsApp conversation above shows that failure of the cooperative principle is considered unstoppable, even in online communication, because in some contexts it is better to use a style of speech that is more informative using more effective ways (Jorfi & Dowlatabadi, 2015).

Communication through WhatsApp is widely used in this industrial 4.0 era because it is easier to communicate over long distances, reaching a range between islands and even between nations (Kaur & Singh, 2021). However, the lack of non-verbal communication and expression of interlocutor can occur more often in communication via WhatsApp due to the absence of nonverbal cues such as facial expressions and body language. Therefore, understanding flouted maxims on communication through WhatsApp is crucial in grasping the richness and complexity of communication beyond literal meaning.

This study aims to identify the kinds of maxims that are flouted and the reason for flouting the maxims. There are two previous researches on the topic of flouting maxim analysis in WhatsApp chat: first, conducted by Ariyanti, Setiawan, & Wedawati (2020) entitled 'Exploring Implicature via WhatsApp: The Maxim of Conversation Analysis', the research analyzed the flouting maxim by lecture in responding the students' question. Second, the research by Septiani & Fatmawati (2021), entitled 'Flouting Maxim Analysis on WhatsApp Message' analyzed conversations between friends in personal chat.

The main objective of this study is the same as the previous study but in the context of long-distance friendship. Long distance friendship is a friendship between two people who are geographically separated and cannot meet in person regularly (Kelpinski, 2022). Analysis of this context was chosen because long-distance friendships have been happening a lot in recent years since online chat applications have been widely used by society.

Flouting maxims in society can contribute to an understanding of communication patterns and the intentions behind various forms of communication. Flouting maxims occur not only in spoken communication, but also in written communication. The study of flouting maxims in WhatsApp Group chat can gain valuable insights into the language used in written

communication contexts and the factors that influence communication outcomes. This study was an analysis of the specific instances in which the principles of cooperation were disregarded in the context of long-distance friendship.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method in this study is qualitative research. According to Saryono, qualitative research is a research approach used to analyze, discover, describe, and explain the social events that cannot be explained, measured, or described using a quantitative approach (Rukminingsih et al., 2020). The data were analyzed in the form of screenshot text from two different WhatsApp Group chats of long-distance friendship context; the WhatsApp group consists of members in different areas in East Java. The two different objects was chosen because of four reasons. First, the selected group only which uses English language, the data selected were only in English to avoid mistranslation in research analysis which used English language and to avoid other specific linguistic issues. Second, as a form of scientific research, the selected conversations of group only used polite language and did not contain dirty or hate speech towards certain parties. Third, group members discuss something which the some of them respond by flouting the principle of maxim cooperation. And fourth, the group has a long-distance friendship context.

The supporting tools or instruments used were laptop, notebooks, and smartphone which were used directly by the researcher as the main instruments. The collecting data technique was conducted by reading on chats carefully and taking screenshots of conversations that contained flouting of maxims. The data analysis phase started with classifying the data into each type of flouting maxim, whether it is flouting the maxim of quantity, flouting the maxim of quality, flouting the maxim of relevance, or flouting the maxim of manner using the theory of cooperative principle maxim by Grice (1975). Then finding the context when the maxims were flouted and then was to analyze the reasons of the speakers for flouting maxims. The last, classified the data that had been identified into the table.

Table 2.1 Table of Flouting Maxims

No. Data	Utterance	The Type of Flouting Maxims				The Reasons
		Quantity	Quality	Relevance	Manner	
	Total					

The data then being interpreted and explained using the perspective of a long-distance friendship context.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section explains the results of the data analysis by the researcher. The steps to formulate results started with classifying data into the kinds of flouting maxims and then looking for the context when the conversation occurs to find out the reasons why a group member flouted the cooperative principle of maxims. The findings from data analysis are described briefly and clearly as follows:

Flouting Maxim of Quantity

Figure 3.1 WhatsApp Group Chat:
Flouting Maxim of Quantity



The conversation started when The Speaker asked about Regita's statement 'We need much more money'. Then The Speaker asked the function of money, is it for entering ticket? By saying 'We need to pay entering ticket?'. This conversation was going effectively until Cindy flouted the maxim of quantity by adding unnecessary information to answer The Speaker's question. without Cindy's providing additional information. Actually, the answer is fulfilled by answering 'sure'.

The reason Cindy for flouted the maxim was to create a joke. The humor was created when Cindy's satirical text 'Nowadays there's no free for healing' was added which was then followed by an emoji 'covering mouth' (it means she was holding back laughter) because she was joking through previous satirical sentences.

Flouting Maxim of Relevance

Figure 3.2 WhatsApp Group Chat:
Flouting Maxim of Relevance 1



In this conversation, Cindy was found to have flouted the maxim of relevance because she had given an irrelevant response to Maylia's headache text. The way of flouting the maxim has a hidden meaning that Cindy was making a joke by ridiculing Maylia. Cindy created humor by saying things that lower-class people often complain about, so the other participants in this group would think that it is funny.

When Cindy flouted the maxim of relevance, she aimed to create a different atmosphere. This goal was to create a humor by deliberately changing the topic of conversation. This can be seen from the reactions of other members after Cindy created a joke in conversation. There were the next reactions of other members:

Figure 3.3 WhatsApp Group Chat:
The Response of Other Members



This figure shows a change of topic in the conversation and at the same time Cindy's text then confirmed as a joke by Maylia.

Subsequent data regarding the discovery of flouting of the maxim of relevance.

Figure 3.4 WhatsApp Group Chat:
Flouting Maxim of Relevance 2



The context of the conversation was when The Speaker complained that Nike's house (as the meeting point) was too far from his/her area. Then Nike explained that her house was close to the waterfall location that they would visit together. The flouting of the maxim of relevance occurred when The Speaker asked about the clarity of Nike's house and the waterfall location which was then answered with irrelevant information. Rather than providing detailed information about the address, Nike responded by saying that the direction of her house and the location of the waterfall from The Speaker area were the same. The irrelevant information provided had a meaning that can be understood by the interlocutor because the information 'in the same direction' also indicates the meaning of 'best way' in this context. It showed that The Speaker would find it easier to reach the waterfall location by visiting Nike's house first. Nike's flouting the maxim aimed to shorten the answers but still maintained by providing the required information.

Flouting Maxim of Manner

Figure 3.5 WhatsApp Group Chat:
Flouting Maxim of Manner 1

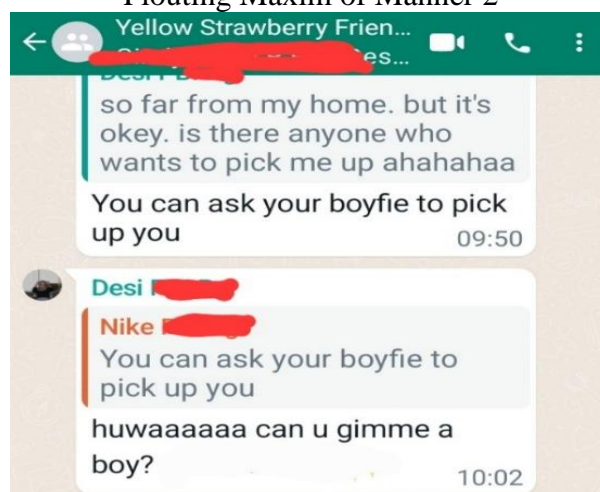


The conversation was held when Maylia asked about how other members were doing, whether their day was good or otherwise. The flouting of the maxim of manner occurred when Devi asked how Maylia was, which then answered using an unclear reply. Maylia answered 'I don't know what can I do right now', instead of answering specifically about her situation that day. However, the way Maylia flouted the maxim of manner could conclude to other members that her day was not going well. This was shown by Maylia's words which showed confusion and worry.

Maylia's reason for flouting the maxim was to express confusion more clearly rather than explained by 'I am not good' which allowed another question like 'Why are you not good?', 'what is happening, Maylia?', etc. This method showed Maylia's efforts to shorten the answers to Devi's question that she had to write in the chat.

Here is a flouting maxim of manner found in the following data:

Figure 3.6 WhatsApp Group Chat:
Flouting Maxim of Manner 2



The context of the conversation was that Nike had suggested asking Desi's boyfriend to pick her up to go out to Nike's house. Then Desi responded with a question about a boy, instead of using clear sentences. In this example, it can be said that Desi had flouted the maxim of manner. Desi's speech contained an element of ambiguity and unclearness in this chat, but it had a hidden meaning that Desi did not have a boyfriend. So she said 'Can you gimme a boy?' This satirical statement in the form of a question showed Desi's request for a man to be her boyfriend.

Logically, according to the conversation in Figure (6), it can be concluded that Desi had flouted the maxim of quality by telling lies to give her a boyfriend (which means that she does not have a boyfriend), even though she probably already had a boyfriend. Nike's previous chat was used as proof that Desi already had a boyfriend. But, in reality, Desi did not have a boyfriend based on

the witnesses of 3 other members in the group. Nike in this context did not know about this fact. For this reason, the form of flouting the maxim of quality cannot be confirmed. Desi flouted the maxim to straighten out Nike's statement using a request sentence with the purpose of a joke to find a partner. The data findings are summarized in the following table:

Table 3.1. Table of Flouting Maxims

No. Data	Utterance	The Type of Flouting Maxims				The Reasons
		Quantity	Quality	Relevance	Manner	
1.	Sure. Nowadays there's no free for healing	√				Create a joke
2.	Because ur wallet so empty right?			√		Create a joke
3.	It means in the same direction. hahaha			√		Give information more effective
4.	I don't know what can i do right now				√	Give information more effective
5.	Huwaaaaaa can u gimme a boy?				√	Create a joke
	Total	1	0	2	2	

4. DISCUSSION

This section further discusses the results of findings related to flouting maxim data through scientific interpretation. It includes the discussions of the research question which is interconnected: the types of flouting maxim found and the reasons for flouting the maxim. For example, some maxims were found to have been flouted and other maxims were not found to have been flouted for certain specific reasons. Furthermore, the results of the discussion are explained in a related manner to avoid long-winded interpretations.

The flouting of maxims in conversation is often carried out by speakers with different forms and purposes, including in communication via WhatsApp. According to Grice's (1975), flouting the maxim of the cooperative principle is divided into four, namely flouting the maxim of quantity, flouting the maxim of quality, flouting the maxim of relevance, and flouting the maxim of manner.

Flouting the maxims found varied from the 4 types of flouting maxims stated. There is only flouting the maxim of quality type that was not found in the data obtained. While flouting the maxim of quality can be found in various contexts, it is essential to consider the context and the reasons behind it. In friendship cases, flouting the maxim of quality was not to maintain truth.

The maxim of quality is related to the principle of being truthful and provides accurate information in communication. Instead, honesty and accuracy are fundamental for building and preserving trust in friendships. Having trustworthy and honest friends can positively impact mental health and overall well-being (Hwong, 2016).

In a long-distance friendship communication through WhatsApp which is very limited in expressing all non-verbal communication, flouting the maxim of quality seem to be difficult to detect without knowing the speaker's facial expression and gestures.

Other maxims such as the maxim of quantity, relevance, and manner can also be relevant in long-distance friendship communication. The research produced at least 5 flouting maxim data: 1 data of flouting the maxim of quantity, 2 data of flouting the maxim of relevance, and 2 others in the form of flouting the maxim of manner. It showed that other types, except flouting the maxim of quality types, can be done for certain positive reasons as long as the goal of communication is understood and most importantly, does not result in misunderstanding in other parties.

Flouting the maxims in figures (1) and (2) shows the possibility that friends created humor or intertextually created a relaxed atmosphere, and relieved tension during the conversation. Humor can serve to lighten the mood, especially when discussing difficult conversations such as in the topic example when Cindy said something irrelevant to create humor by mocking Maylia's headache. In the context of friendship communication via WhatsApp, the limitations of providing physical support can also be a factor that causes some

individuals to make jokes. In addition, this can help foster a supportive and comfortable environment for discussing various topics.

Moreover, introducing a response that may seem unrelated can serve a specific purpose in the conversation. Using sentences that seem inconsistent with the previous topic and including non-linear or ambiguous answers in figures (4), (5), and (6) can mean that conveying information indirectly is effective and understandable. In research conducted by Ariyanti (2020), it was revealed that communication through WhatsApp triggered the flouting of maxims due to efforts to provide more detailed information.

4. CONCLUSION

Communicating via WhatsApp, friendly relations must comply with the principles of conversation as in the principles of spoken conversation. Based on this research that had been conducted on flouting maxims found in WhatsApp Group chats on long-distance friendship, it can be concluded that some friendship members usually do not obey the maxims for certain reasons. This reason can be to provide humor and give the information more effectively.

Based on the principles of maxims by Grice (1975), the types of flouting maxims found were also formulated into 4 types: Flouting the maxim of quantity, flouting the maxim of quality, flouting the maxim of manner, and flouting the maxim of relevance. But in the context of friendship chat, there is no flouting maxim of quality was found because of the importance of maintaining trust with friends.

The researcher recommends for future researchers to conduct further research on flouting maxim using the Gricean Maxim theory in different contexts and perceptions, or the same context of friendship but using unwritten forms besides WhatsApp, Line, Facebook, or other social media. Also, hopefully, this research can be used as a reference to conduct other research about flouting maxims.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

ACW designed the research concept, collected and analyzed the data. YS helps to provide suggestions on critical contents. And YP provides grammar correction and selects words that are concise and informative.

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