

# **AN ANALYSIS OF CONVERSATIONAL MAXIMS IN CASUAL CONVERSATION**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This study was aimed to analyze the conversational maxims appeared and flouted by the speakers in casual conversation which are conducted by two students of English Language Education, Graduate Program of State Semarang University. In order to achieve the goal, the writer used descriptive qualitative research design. Therefore, this study is conducted systematically through the technique of data collecting and data analysis. As the results of this research, the writer divided into two categories. The first result, the writer found out that maxim of quality was the most appeared in the conversation, the frequency appeared of maxim of quantity was 16 times, followed by maxim of quality with 13 times appeared, 2 times appeared for the maxim of relation and only 1 time for maxim of manner. The second result showed that there were 3 kinds flouting maxims in the conversation. The flouting maxims that the speakers did were maxim of quantity (only 1 time) and maxim of quality (2 times). From the result, it implicated that the speakers obey the rule of Gricean maxims. It also means that the conversation runs smoothly and both of the speakers understand what they uttered in the conversation. Although there is*

*some flouting inside the conversation, it does not mean that there is some problem occur in the conversation.*

**Keywords:** conversational maxims, flouting maxim, casual conversation

## INTRODUCTION

In daily communication, conversation will occur in various style. The ways in delivering the messages in conversation are developing through the ages. Levinson (1983: 284) defined conversation as the familiar kind of talk in which two or more participants freely alternate in speaking, which generally occurs outside specific institutional settings like religious services, law courts, classrooms, and the like. In understanding the messages conveyed in the daily conversation, it is needed that we learn and study about one of an ideas in pragmatics which called conversational implicature. Levinson (1983:101) described conversational implicatures as “a nonconventional implicature based on an addressee’s assumption that the speaker is following the conversational maxims or at least the cooperative principle”. In producing a good conversation, participants need to understand each others’ meaning of the utterance. That is why the participants tend to follow the cooperative principle and the conversational maxim by giving enough, true, related, and arranged utterance which is assumed as explicit information. In the other hand conversational implicature tends to flout the conversational maxim. Grice (1975) categorized the cooperative principle of conversation and elaborates it in four sub-principles: (1) maxim of quantity, (2) maxim of quality, (3) maxim of relation, and (4) maxim of manner. Yule (1996: 37) says that it is important to recognize these maxims as unstated assumptions we have in conversation.

Many participants of conversation, sometimes, are difficult to understand the meaning that assumed from the flouted conversational maxim in the conversation implicature. They need some effort to understand the meaning and sometimes they clarify to the speaker about what they intend to. As the result of the case, not all of the hearer (interlocutor) could follow and refer to what the speaker means. That is why it is very important to the hearer to see the context of which the conversation occurred. Talking about conversation is also talking about context. As stated by

Yule (1996: 3) that pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning. So, talking about pragmatics is also talking about context. Context itself according to Leech (1983: 13) is the relevant aspect of the physical or social setting of utterance. It is a background knowledge assumed to be shared by speaker and addressee. The contexts help the hearer to imply the meaning in the conversation occurred. The study of pragmatics especially conversational implicature has been built by people as the influence of conversational implicature and conversational maxims which were created by Yule (1996) and Grice (1975). This study conducted to figure out the types of conversational maxim which are appeared and flouted in casual conversational done by the English students of Graduate Program (UNNES).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In conveying the additional information in the conversation sometime the speaker tends to flout the conversational maxim, as described by Levinson (1983: 101) about particularized conversational implicature which is a nonconventional implicature based on an addressee's assumption that the speaker is following the conversational maxims or at least the cooperative principle. The similar statement also stated by Yule (1996: 42) that particularized conversational implicature is an additional unstated meaning that depends on special or local knowledge. Maxims are the realization of the cooperative principle which is the conversational principle in pragmatics. According to Grice (1975: 46), "participants expect that each will make a conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange". Besides that, Yule (1996: 37) said, "a basic assumption in conversation that each participant will attempt to contribute appropriately, at the required time, to the current exchange of talk". Yule (1996: 40) said that the basic assumption in conversation is that, unless otherwise indicated, the participants are adhering to the cooperative principle and the maxims. In addition, Grice (1975: 45) described maxim as any of four rules that a speaker is assumed to make a contribution that is adequately but not overly informative (quantity maxim), the speaker does not believe to be false and for which

adequate evidence is had (quality maxim), is relevant (maxim of relation or relevance), and is clear, unambiguous, brief, and orderly (maxim of manner).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The writer used descriptive qualitative method in this research. According to Kumar (1998), he said that descriptive method is an attempt to describe systematically a situation, problem or phenomenon, or to provide information about, say the condition of living in the communities or an issue. In addition, Woods (2006) said that qualitative method focuses on natural setting, has interest in meaning, perspectives and understanding, and gives great consideration on process. Therefore, this research is conducted systematically through the technique of data collecting and data analysis. The data are taken from the casual conversation between two students of graduate program of UNNES in the spare time. The focus of this study is to find out the types of maxims which appeared and flouted by the speakers in the conversation.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **A. FINDINGS**

After analyzing the data, the writer found several conversational maxims and also some flouting maxims which are done by the students in the casual conversation. The result of the analysis divided in two categories; those could be seen as follows:

#### **1. The Result of Conversational Maxims**

There are 4 conversational maxims that analyzed by the writer. The result could be seen in the table below.

Table 4.1

Conversational maxims appeared

No	Kinds of Maxim	Frequency
1	Maxim of Quality	13

2	Maxim of Quantity	16
3	Maxim of Relation	2
4	Maxim of Manner	1
Total		32

## 2. The Result of Flouting Maxims

The flouting maxims of the casual conversation could be seen in the table below:

Table 4.2

Flouting maxims appeared

No	Kinds of Maxim	Frequency
1	Maxim of Quality	-
2	Maxim of Quantity	1
3	Maxim of Relation	2
4	Maxim of Manner	-
Total		3

Based on the data above, the first result (table 4.1) shows that the frequency maxim of quantity is the highest among the other maxims in the casual conversation. The maxims of quantity appeared 16 times, followed by maxim of quality with 13 times appeared, 2 times appeared for the maxim of relation and only 1 time for maxim of manner. The second result (table 4.2) shows that there were 3 kinds flouting maxims in the conversation. The flouting maxims that the speakers did were maxim of quantity (only 1 time) and maxim of quality (2 times). According to the result, it means that the speakers obey the rule of Gricean maxims. It also means that the conversation runs smoothly and both of the speakers understand what they uttered in the conversation. Although there is some flouting inside the conversation, it does not mean that there is some problem occur in the conversation.

## B. DISCUSSION

The conversational maxims can be categorized into four categories. The first one was the maxim of quality (do not say what you believe to be false or that for which you lack evidence), the second one is maxim of quantity (say as much as but no more than is necessary), the third one is maxim of relation (be relevant), and the last one is maxim of manner (be clear, avoid ambiguity, be brief, be orderly).

Based on those categories, the writer shows some parts of the conversation that contains the maxims. These are the examples of conversational maxims which appeared and flouted in the casual conversation between two English students of graduate program.

1. Maxim of quality (do not say what you believe to be false or that for which you lack evidence)

Example 1:

B	By the way, how did you spend your holiday last semester?
A	<i>After we went to Jogja, I did nothing. Just stay at my hometown, spending time there.</i>
A	And What will you after this?
B	<i>Ummm... I think I want to go to Gramedia. I want to buy some books of linguistics likes pragmatic or discourse. But I will read them first in Gramedia.</i>

2. Maxim of quantity (say as much as but no more than is necessary)

A	After we went to Jogja, I did nothing. Just stay at my hometown, spending time there.
	<i>And how 'bout you?</i>
B	<b>Same here...</b>

B	So, you are the first child, Alrina?
A	<i>Yas, I should say aaa...yes.</i>

B	Mmm...
A	<i>I should say I am.</i>

3. Maxim of relation (be relevant)

A	Hi Kak... How are you?
B	<i>Only my pet which is fine.</i>

A	Swimming with Kak Tia. I love swimming. Do you want to come along?
B	What? Swimming? <i>I am a stone in the water.</i>

4. Maxim of manner (be clear, avoid ambiguity, be brief, be orderly).

B	Uh um... how do you know about that kind of thing? Do you love football, too?
A	<i>I did, actually. Let me highlight the word did. Not too much right now. I have no friends who will accompany me to watch football match at night. Even though I want to do it so much. You know, in my boarding house, all of them are girls and when I want to watch it, there are no one who like football like me. So, I have....to...get back.</i>
B	Uh um. And but, I think I will invite you to come with me. While having coffee in Indomaret point.
A	Really? If the match is not late at night, I will come next time for sure.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to identify the conversational maxims which are appeared and what types of maxims which are flouted in the casual conversation. Based on the analysis above, It can be seen the results as follows.

1. The first result shows that the frequency maxim of quantity is the highest among the other maxims in the casual conversation. The maxims of quantity appeared 16 times, followed by maxim of quality with 13 times appeared, 2 times appeared for the maxim of relation and only 1 time for maxim of manner.
2. The second result shows that there were 3 kinds flouting maxims in the conversation. The flouting maxims that the speakers did were maxim of quantity (only 1 time) and maxim of quality (2 times).

According to the result, the writer concluded that both of the students obey the conversational maxims. it means that the speakers obey the rule of Gricean maxims. It also means that the conversation runs smoothly and both of the speakers understand what they uttered in the conversation. Although there is some flouting inside the conversation, but it does not mean that there is some problems occur in the conversation. The writer also concluded that both of the students understand well about the role of their selves in the conversation. So, the casual conversation runs well without any pressure or intimidation.



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## APPENDIX

### Transcript of Conversation

Speakers	Conversation	Kinds of Maxim
A	Hi Kak... How are you?	Flouting maxim of relation
B	Only my pet which is fine.	
A	Why? What's wrong?	Maxim of quantity
B	I don't know but I think it is because of a lot of assignments.	
	Have you ordered something?	Maxim of quantity
A	Yes, I have ordered for two of us.	
B	Mmmm.... That's great.	Maxim of quality
	By the way, how did you spend your holiday last semester?	
A	After we went to Jogja, I did nothing. Just stay at my hometown, spending time there.	Maxim of quantity
	And how 'bout you?	
B	Same here...	Flouting maxim of quantity
	And... How did you feel about our holiday in Jogja?	
A	Our holiday was awesome. I'd been craving to go to the beach for a long time and I had accomplished my dreams. Fortunately, you	

	invited me to join there. I hope you will invite me to another trip. And how about you?	
B	I'm very happy because that was my first time after a long time ago. May be, mmm...ten years ago. The last time I went there when I was in junior high school. Yes, of course, we will have another trip. I have a plan with our friends to go to Dieng or Bromo. Which one do you want? Later, I will tell mas Rojul.	
	Have you seen our new campus?	Maxim of quality
A	Yes, I have.	
B	What do you think? Is it better or not?	
A	Mmmm.... In my opinion, mmm... how should I put it? Mmm.... The building is quite good, but ... I... I like the previous campus better.	Maxim of quality
	You?	
B	Hmmm.... I agree with you. I like the old one. Because...it feels like comfortable for me.	Maxim of quality
A	So, we have the same opinion about our new campus, haven't we?	Maxim of quality
	Yes, we have.	
B	By the way, do you think that our new lessons are very difficult, Alrina? All about linguistics.	Maxim of quality

A	Oh my God, the lessons seem very difficult. All of them. Actually, I'm not really good in learning the bloody linguistic things.	
B	Hmmm, really? Because I've never got these lessons before in my undergraduate program, Alrina. And I think I will ask you and help me to...	
A	I... I don't think... I don't... I won't help you enough.	
	By the way, you like football, don't you?	Maxim of quality
B	Yes, I love football. Why?	
A	Ummm, yeah... I heard that last night, Barca has been beaten by....	
B	PSG?	
A	Yeah, yeah, yeah. PSG 4-0. Is that true?	Maxim of quality
B	Yess... that is true. I couldn't believe it because Barca is never beaten by PSG before. But last night they lost. I am very disappointed as a fan.	
A	It was very surprising, tho, even for me. And I'm not the fan of Barca. Umm... That club has beaten the mighty barca. It is very surprising because Barca never lost. I mean that I've never heard that club before and yeah... the club has even beaten Barca. That is very surprising.	
B	Uh um... how do you know about that kind of thing? Do you love football, too?	Maxim of manner
A	I did, actually. Let me highlight the word did. Not too much right now. I have no	

	friends who will accompany me to watch football match at night. Even though I want to do it so much. You know, in my boarding house, all of them are girls and when I want to watch it, there are no one who like football like me. So, I have....to...get back.	
B	Uh um. And but, I think I will invite you to come with me. While having coffee in Indomaret point.	
A	Really? If the match is not late at night, I will come next time for sure.	
	And What will you after this?	
B	Ummm... I think I want to go to Gramedia. I want to buy some books of linguistics likes pragmatic or discourse. But I will read them first in gramedia.	Maxim of quantity
A	Ohhh, I want to go there also. But unfortunately, I have another appointment after this.	Maxim of quality
B	What appointment? With whom?	
A	Swimming with Kak Tia. I love swimming. Do you want to come along?	Flouting
B	What? Swimming? I am a stone in the water.	maxim of relation
A	Why do you say so? Actually, learning swimming is not easy tho. I learned swimming for 3 months when I was child... Once a week. And that's really tiring. But, it's fun.	Maxim of quantity

B	Hmmm... three months? but, my father never let me touch water when I was child.	
A	Really? Ooh, poor you.	
B	Yea, What I mean is, never bring me to swimming pool and then try to swim or something else.	
	(laugh) By the way, did you gain weight?	Maxim of quality
A	Yes. I've been eating so much at home.	
B	And you never been exercising? Because you're weighing.	Maxim of quantity
A	Mmmm...let me think first. I think no. I'm too lazy to do that. I just want to eat and sleep at home before come back to Semarang and facing bloody...what is it? Bloody routines.	
B	Okay, lucky you, I can't do that at home since I have to prepare for my brother's wedding.	Maxim of quality
A	Woah, that look so fun. I don't have older brother or sister, so I don't have a chance to do that.	
B	So you are the first child, Alrina?	Maxim of quantity
A	Yas, I should say aaa...yes.	
B	Mmm...	
A	I should say I am.	
B	Oh, the food is already here. Let's take a bite.	
A	Is that your phone? It's new, right?	Maxim of quantity
B	Yes, it is. It is a new one. I just bought it last night.	

A	Can I borrow it?	Maxim of quantity
B	Yes, just take it.	
A	What kind of processor is it? In this new series of asus?	Maxim of Quantity
B	Qualcomm 435.	
A	Uh, I see... That processor is rather old. Why don't you buy a phone with the new processor in it?	Maxim of quality
B	I don't have that much money. I have to spare my budget for something else.	
A	May I know?	
B	Some accessories for my guitar	
A	So, you can play guitar?	Maxim of quantity
B	Of course.	
A	Why didn't you play for us before?	Maxim of quantity
B	What for? It's not necessary. You guys have never told me to play guitar, and I don't have a chance to play it.	
A	You can play it later, when we gather. Okay, back to your phone, it's quite good actually.	
	How many pixels of camera does it have?	Maxim quantity
B	16 megapixels for rear and 8 megapixels for front camera. But you have to remember, this phone has a big battery.	
A	Aah.... So, your priority to buy that phone was for the battery life?	Maxim quantity
B	I have to take care of my social media and playing games.	

A	Is it flagship phone? I don't really understand about asus, Huawei, OnePlus, and their friends	Maxim quantity
B	No, it is not. Flagship phone can be seen from the price. Around 4-10 million. And of course, the phone has the best features.	
	Oh, it's already a half past two.	Maxim of quality
A	(laugh) yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah...	
B	I have to go. Don't forget to pay the food!	
A	Yeah, okay. See you later.	
B	See you	