AN ANALYSIS OF FLOUTING MAXIMS IN THE 'FRIENDS' WEB SERIES BY DAVID CRANE AND MARTA KAUFFMAN

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Abstract

This research investigates two problem statements: the kinds of flouting maxims by characters in the 'Friends' web series and the strategy to flout the maxims. Maxims is a part of a pragmatics study by H.P. Grice called the Grice Cooperative Principle. The researcher used a qualitative research method to collect the data. The result showed that 40 data of flouting maxims were found in this series with some strategy to flout the maxims. Maxim of Relation is the most common maxim to flout in the 'Friends' web series, and irrelevance is the strategy that is most used. Flouting maxims often occurred in the flat. The findings of this study highlight how the environment and context significantly impact conversational strategy and the use of pragmatic devices. Furthermore, the students can develop their critical and interpretative thinking skills. Additionally, future research could explore the application of these findings in different genres of television shows or other forms of media to determine whether similar patterns of maxim flouting occur. Investigating how cultural contexts influence flouting maxims and their interpretation could offer a broader understanding of pragmatic principles across diverse environments.

Keywords*: *Communication, Flouting Maxim, Pragmatics, Strategy

Introduction

Humans have an essential role in life. Humans were created to take care of the Earth and its contents. In fulfilling this role, humans cannot live alone and will inevitably need help from others. All humans will coexist and interact with each other. This interaction is established through communication.

Communication is transmitting information and achieving a common understanding between individuals (Keyton, 2011). This means that communication involves exchanging messages and ensuring that both the sender and receiver share a mutual comprehension of the information conveyed. Effective communication requires clarity, context, and feedback to confirm that the intended message is understood accurately. It encompasses various forms, such as verbal, non-verbal, written, and visual methods, to foster understanding and collaboration among people (Apriyanti, 2018). Communication is crucial for human interaction. We can provide information, convey opinions, exchange ideas, and more through communication. Several essential components exist in every communication, such as the sender, receiver, message, feedback, and medium. Communication can occur in various ways, whether directly or indirectly. According to Caldwell & Gulbrandsen (2019:2), communication is a two-way relationship with other parties, enabling the perception of one's preferences or behaviors. Based on this quote, communication will be successful if the listener responds to what the speaker says. Communication is two-way; the speaker and listener must understand the discussion. In this situation, the sender plays an essential role in providing information, either orally or in written form. The delivery of the message is supported by using good and correct language.

Language is one of the tools for human communication around the world. Without language, people will never be able to communicate with others. Besides, people need language to interact and share ideas (Khalawi, Hafidah, & Purwatiningsih, 2020). Language enables the exchange of knowledge and culture, enriching our lives and strengthening social ties. In addition, language also plays a vital role in forming individual and group identity because, through language, we can express who we are and where we come from.

Unfortunately, sometimes the purpose of communication does not always go well due to interference or weaknesses in communication. Weaknesses in communication are inherent to human interaction, stemming from differences in perception, language barriers, emotional conditions, cultural backgrounds, and individual communication styles. If there are weaknesses in communication, several problems will occur.

All of these problems can be overcome if humans can understand the intent of the speaker's speech by studying pragmatics. Paltridge (2000) states that pragmatics is the study of meaning concerning the context in which one speaks or writes. Good communication can be established if the speaker provides clear information and the listener can understand it and follows the principle of cooperation developed by Paul Grice in 1975.

Maxim violations occur not only in everyday life but also in social media, movie dialogs, or series. In movies or series, maxims violation is usually done to make the conversation more exciting or build a mysterious character. People can be easily influenced by what they watch. In this case, the conversations in the movie or series can be carried over into everyday life. In addition, the violation of maxims makes it difficult for the audience to understand what the characters are talking about and can lead to ambiguous questions or conclusions.

Friends is an American television sitcom aired on NBC from 1994 to 2004. David Crane and Marta Kauffman created the show. Friends revolves around six young adults who are roommates or neighbors in New York City. The series features various situations depicting different individuals' lives, including relationships, work, and everyday life. The characters consist of three men and three women with diverse personalities and flaws, making them identifiable to a broad audience. The comfort and support they provide each other serve as the perfect antidote to the stresses of life. The show mainly occurs in the friends' apartment as they visit each other. The cast is known for its closeness and ensemble approach to working on the series. Friends ran for 10 seasons, starting with the premiere episode, which aired on September 22 and September 22, 1994, and ended its ten-season run on May 6, 2004, with 236 episodes. Over 52 million people watched the final episode of Friends.

This research provided a deeper understanding of communication dynamics and how we understand messages from others. Maxim violation occurs when someone violates the principles of cooperation, which include quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. The implications of this research are very relevant in the world of education and everyday life. In the context of education, understanding maxim violation helps educators design more effective teaching strategies and teach learners about the importance of paying attention to the principles of cooperation in communication.

The first previous study, titled 'Flouting Maxim As Shown By Characters In A Novel Entitled Buffalo Bill, The Border King' by (I Komang Arsa Adi Winarta et al., 2022), aimed to identify the types of maxim floutings in the novel Buffalo Bill and the reasons behind these floutings by the characters in the novel. The second previous study, titled 'The Analysis of Flouting Maxim in the @Pepekomik comic strip' by (Saefudin et al., 2023), aims to classify utterances that deviate from and violate Grice's proposed cooperative principle in the Pepekomik comic strip through the expressions of its characters. The third research was conducted by Alprida (2017), which aims to describe the linguistic forms of maxims flouting in the movie Marmut Merah Jambu and describe speech acts that violate the maxims of relation in the film Marmut Merah Jambu. However, the main difference between these three research studies and this research is the research subject. Character interactions in a web series offer more diverse conversation dynamics than a single novel, potentially revealing more strategies characters use to flout maxims than in movies.

The researcher believes that the web series 'Friends,' created by David Crane and Marta Kauffman, contains instances of flouting maxims. This research aims to describe and analyze

these instances through 'An Analysis of Flouting Maxims in 'Friends' Web Series by David Crane and Marta Kauffman.'

Method

The research employs an interpretive approach, a philosophical framework that underscores understanding human actions within social and cultural contexts. This viewpoint, commonly utilized in qualitative research, challenges the idea of an objective reality, focusing on individuals' subjective experiences and interpretations in their interactions with the world. Interpretivism emerged as a reaction to earlier empirical methods, highlighting the significance of grasping individuals' subjective realities and experiences. It moves beyond explaining phenomena to delve into how people perceive, interpret, and engage in social environments.

For this study, the researcher utilizes qualitative methods to examine dialogues from the 'Friends' web series, concentrating on instances where characters breach Grice's conversational maxims: quantity, quality, relation, and manner. Qualitative research emphasizes thorough understanding and interpretation over numerical measurement, making it ideal for this analysis. The study combines narrative and pragmatic approaches to explore how language and context shape the interpretation of meaning. The primary data source is the series' script, supplemented by academic literature on conversational maxims.

Data collection comprises downloading and analyzing the script, watching the series, and pinpointing instances of maxim violations. The data analysis adheres to Miles and Huberman's model, involving data collection, reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. The process begins with identifying and categorizing maxim violations and then organizing the data into visual formats such as matrices and charts to identify patterns. Ultimately, the researcher synthesizes these discoveries to derive meaningful insights, shedding light on the utilization and flouting of conversational maxims in the 'Friends' series.

Findings and Discussions
Data Finding

This section presents the data on the type of flouting maxims and the strategy of flouting maxims found in the 'Friends' series. The data were obtained from observing the scripts, dialogues, and situations when the characters flouted maxims, allowing for analysis within the given context. To ensure the accuracy of the findings, each instance was carefully examined to understand the underlying reasons and contextual factors contributing to the flouting of maxims.

Table 4.1 Data Percentage of Flouting Maxims in Friends Web Series

Types of flouting maxim	Frequencies	Percentage
Maxim of Quality	11	27.5 %
Maxim of Quantity	7	17.5 %
Maxim of Manner	8	20 %
Maxim of Relation	14	35 %
Total	**40**	**100 %**

The table illustrates that the researcher has found 40 data points for maxim flouting by characters in the Friends series, specifically in season 1, episodes 1-10. After categorizing the data based on each type of maxim, it was discovered that there were 11 data for flouting the maxim of quality, accounting for 27.5%, 7 data for flouting the maxim of quantity, with the percentage in 17.5%, 8 data for flouting the maxim manner, representing 20%, and 14 data for flouting the maxim of relation, constituting 35%. Among all the data, the maxim of relation was the most frequently flouted in 10 episodes.

Data Discussion

In this section, the researcher presented the analysis of the data results of flouting maxims in the Friends series using Paul Grice's theory. This analysis aims to identify and explain the kind of flouting maxim and the strategy to flout the maxim found in the Friends web series. Furthermore, the researcher also gave the example of a conversation that follow the maxim.

Table 4.3 Data Result of Flouting Maxims and Strategy to Flout Maxim in Friends Web Series

Domain	Types Of Maxim					Strategies to flout a maxim										
						Qual			Quant			Mann			Rel	
	QL	QN	MN	RL	$\sum$	Met	RQ	Iro	Tau	OS	US	Obs	Am	Pro	Irre	$\sum$
FLAT	8	3	5	7	23	2	1	5	-	1	2	4	-	1	7	23
PUBLIC PLACE	2	4	4	7	17	1	-	1	-	1	3	4	-	-	7	17
Total	10	7	9	14	40	3	1	6	-	2	5	8	-	1	14	40

Note : QL = Quality; QN = Quantity; MN = Manner; RL = Relation; Met= Metaphor; RQ= Rhetorical Question; Iro= Irony; Tau= Tautology; OS= Overstatement; US= Understatement; Irre= Irrelevance; Obs= Obscurity; Am= Ambiguity; Pro= Prolixity

Based on the data display of flouting maxims, 40 data of flouting maxims are found in the Friends web series by 6 characters. They're Chandler, Monica, Phoebe, Ross, Rachel, and Joey, 10 data of flouting the Maxim of Quality, 7 data of flouting the Maxim of Quantity, 9 data of flouting the Maxim of Manner, and 14 the Maxim of Relation. In the conversations in this series, the violation of maxims is caused by several factors, including misunderstandings, intentional actions, and the interlocutor. Flouting maxims is done using 10 strategies: metaphor, rhetorical question, irony, tautology, overstatement, understatement, irrelevance, obscurity, ambiguity, and prolixity. Therefore, in this series, only eight strategies are used to flout the maxim, such as metaphor, rhetorical question, irony, overstatement, understatement, irrelevance, obscurity, and prolixity. They flout this maxim to create humor or sarcasm for the listener.

The most frequently flouted maxim is the Maxim of Relation, found 14 times in episodes 1-10. This case indicates that the characters often provide intentionally irrelevant responses to create humor, aligning with the show's comedic theme. According to Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson (1986), human cognition is geared towards maximizing relations. This means that people expect communication to provide the maximum amount of relevant information with the least cognitive effort. When speakers deliberately provide irrelevant information, they flout the maxim of relation. Still, they do so with the expectation that the listener will recognize the underlying intent or find humor in the irrelation.

The data also shows that most floating instances occur in the apartment setting. There are 23 data on flouting maxims in the apartment and 17 in public places such as cafes, banks, offices, hospitals, and funerals. The most used setting for flouted maxim is their apartment because the environment is depicted as more accessible, comfortable, and safe, allowing characters to make ambiguous statements, unclear remarks, and jokes more liberally. This contributes to the relaxed, humorous atmosphere central to the series, where playful banter and witty exchanges are a hallmark of the characters' interactions. Otherwise, they rarely flout the maxim publicly because they know they can't just talk. They must consider how other people's responses. In everyday life, people are like actors on a stage, performing roles for their audience. They present

themselves in ways designed to create specific impressions in the minds of others, adjusting their behavior according to the social context they are in (Goffman, 1959:25). This statement is related to the situational context that affects how people communicate. In more informal and relaxed settings, such as in an apartment, the social context allows for more accessible and ambiguous language use. This context changes in public, and characters must be more mindful of how they communicate to maintain their image or avoid conflicts with others.

Based on this analysis, there are several contexts or reasons why they're flouting the maxim. In the flouting maxim, several factors exist, such as listener, context of utterances, misunderstanding, and deliberate. For example, they have Phoebe, who has pure characteristics, leading them to make fun of her when talking. Other than that, they flout the maxim when they're not in the mood. For example, they flout the maxim quantity with short or less information because they have problems with their partners. According to Brown & Levinson (1987), situational context can influence communication. In this series, social and emotional situations can determine how people communicate and whether they flout conversational maxims.

Conclusion

This study analyzed the types of maxims flouted by the characters in the series Friends and the strategies. Based on the analysis of 40 instances of flouting maxims, the following distribution was observed: 11 cases of flouting the maxim of quality, 7 instances of flouting the maxim of quantity, 8 cases of flouting the maxim of manner, and 14 instances of flouting the maxim of relation.

The characters in Friends utilized various strategies to flout these maxims, including overstatement, understatement, irony, metaphor, irrelevance, obscurity, rhetorical question, and prolixity. It was found that flouting maxims often occurred in the apartment/flat setting, indicating that characters felt more comfortable flouting maxims in a familiar and relaxed environment. This setting facilitated their use of flouting maxims primarily for comedic purposes, allowing for a natural and humorous interaction that is a hallmark of the show.

The frequent use of humor and other rhetorical strategies to flout maxims in Friends highlights the series creative and dynamic nature of conversational exchanges. This study contributes to our understanding of pragmatic principles in scripted dialogue and underscores the importance of context in interpreting conversational implicature. The findings demonstrate that the characters in Friends flout conversational maxims as a deliberate and strategic choice to enhance their interactions' comedic and relational aspects, particularly in the informal and intimate setting of their apartment.

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