

Exploring Maxim Flouting in “A Man Called Otto” Movie: A Pragmatic Study

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ABSTRACT

The term flouting maxim refers to a situation in which a speaker deliberately fails to uphold one of Grice's conversational maxims, called the Grice a maxim: quantity, quality, relation, and manner. In the movie *A Man Called Otto*, there were several times when the cast committed violations of the maxim. Due to the discovery of these problems, the primary aims of this study are to ascertain the various categories of maxims that are flouted within the movie “*A Man Called Otto*,” and to provide an explanation of the situational context underlying the character's dialogues that involve the flouting of maxims. The data were analyzed by the theory proposed by Cutting, (2002) as the leading theory to find out the types of flouting maxims, and the theory context of the situation offered by Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, (1989) was used. In this study, the method utilized for analyzing the data was a descriptive qualitative, while observing and note-taking techniques were used in collecting the data. The results of this study indicate that the characters in the movie “*A Man Called Otto*” flouted the conversational maxims. The maxim of relation was found to be the most frequently flouted, followed by the maxim of quantity, the maxim of quality, and lastly, the maxim of manner.

Keywords: *A Man Called Otto; Cooperative Principle; Context Situation; Flouting Maxim; Movie.*

INTRODUCTION

In the constantly evolving environment of communication, the capacity to detect unspoken nuances and hidden meanings within conversation is a fascinating task Chu, M., Tobin, P., Ioannidou, F., & Basnakova, J. (2023) According to the Oxford Dictionary, communication is the act or procedure of expressing feelings and ideas or transmitting information to individuals. Based on Ritchie, (1949), there are two types of communication: verbal and non-verbal. Verbal communication can be defined as the act of conveying information or expressing oneself through the use of spoken words or sounds, Phutela, (2015). On the other hand, non-verbal communication encompasses many forms of expression, gestures, or symbolic behaviors that are either intentionally employed to convey meaning or happen to transmit meaning unintentionally Burgoon, (2016).

According to Kane, T. R., & Levinson, (1985) the study of the relationship between language and context, which is fundamental to an explanation of language understanding, is known as pragmatics. In studying language, one cannot ignore the

situation when the speech is uttered. There is close relation between an utterance and situations. Thus, pragmatics includes the relevant context or situation, instead of the language usage Aristyanti et al., (2020). Explaining language use in context can be done methodically using pragmatics. It aims to clarify meaning in ways that semantics cannot, in the ordinary sense of words or structures, explain. Pragmatics as a branch of language studies is relatively recent.

Communicating is not just about talking; at the same time, exchanging ideas is also essential. Explaining language use in context can be done methodically using pragmatics. It aims to clarify meaning in ways that semantics cannot, in the ordinary sense of words or structures, explain. Pragmatics as a branch of language studies is relatively recent. According to Harlow., Longman, (2001), a compelling speaker needs to possess the ability to process language in a way that is coherent within their thoughts. Giffin, K., & Patten, (1976) add that the act of producing meaning is a component of communication. It is the communication and interaction between individuals in a group Fatimayin, F. (2018). The aforementioned demonstrates that humans communicate in a variety of ways and through a variety of channels on a daily basis. That is to say, there are many ways that modern man communicates, including speaking, using a phone, blogging, watching television, creating art, using hand and body motions, and making facial expressions. Furthermore, the speaker should strive for comprehensibility and effectively transmit their intended meaning. An explanation about the goal of spoken interaction is from. According to Searle, (1969), the primary objective of spoken interaction or conversation is to effectively convey information to participants by eliciting their understanding of the genuine intention underlying each statement.

To accomplish a successful conversation, the participants must convey the message clearly to the other participants. When conducting a conversation, sometimes participants can be uninformative by giving too long or too little information. Rokhmania stated that, if in a conversation the receiver could get the intention of the speaker's utterance, that conversation can be said successful Widiani, D. A. I., Candra, K. D. P., & Suastini, (2021). There is also a phenomenon where participants do not provide answers relevant to the discussed topic. To minimize these problems, cooperation between participants is needed so that the conversation can run flawlessly. Hatch & Long argued, conversation are cooperative ventures Hardiansyah, (2015). Wang also stated that the participants should be co-operative, and then their utterances can be relevant to each other Hardiansyah, (2015). A successful discussion or interaction can be achieved by following the cooperative principles theory, although occasionally there are misunderstandings between the speaker and the hearer. Cutting, (2002) A misunderstanding arises when the listener misunderstands what the speaker is trying to say Hidayat et al., (2020).

In English and many other languages, this content is structured in such a way that given, or familiar, information precedes new, or unfamiliar, information. Because givenness and newness are largely matters of what has come previously in the discourse, information structuring is inextricably tied to matters of context-in particular, the prior linguistic context-and this is what makes information structure quintessentially

pragmatic in nature Birner, (2013). In linguistics, especially pragmatics, a theory explains how people can communicate cooperatively Sari & Afriana, (2020). This theory is called the Cooperative Principle Herawati, (2013). Grundy, (2000) stated that discourse scholars frequently refer to the cooperation principle and its maxims because they clearly explain how readers and listeners can infer information from an utterance even when it isn't stated explicitly. Thus, it means that if the cooperative principle is applied, dialogue or communication can go without incident Grundy, (2000), Afiati, N. (2007). A British linguist, Herbert Paul Grice, introduced the cooperative principle in 1975. Grice described that cooperative principles have four sub-principles or maxims. People always break those rules in many ways. He also stated that flouting maxims is a result when the speaker fails to fulfill the cooperative principles. The cooperative principle is when participants contribute to the conversation to build agreed meaning Grice (1989). The cooperative principle can be used as guidance to achieve a well-run and successful conversation. Grice states that each participant of a conversation must adhere to four conversational maxims, namely, the maxim of quantity, the maxim of quality, the maxim of relation, and the maxim of manner. Grice described that cooperative principles have four sub-principles or maxims. People always break those rules in many ways. Grice, (1975) stated that flouting maxims is a result when the speaker fails to fulfill the cooperative principles. Thomas, (1995) stated that people may disregard a maxim because they are unable to talk plainly or because they prefer to lie on purpose. Flouting is a condition when speakers are unable to apply certain maxims in their conversation and lead to misunderstanding in their conversation Sembiring, E. H. B., & Ghozali, (2017). The speech's true meanings are covered by the maxim's flouting, which also helps the listener deduce the maxim's inferred meaning (Lestari, 2019).

Yet, in reality, conversations do not always go smoothly, and even the participants cannot always follow the conversational maxims Abualadas, O. A. (2020). When the participants do not follow the conversational maxims, this phenomenon is called the 'flouting maxim.' Grundy, (2000) posits that flouting a maxim is a notable means by which an interlocutor might effectively prompt the addressee to make an inference, hence facilitating the retrieval of an implicature. Another explanation is from Cutting, (2002); when speakers appear not to follow the maxims but expect hearers to appreciate the meaning implied, it is called a flouting maxim.

Cutting (2002) states four distinct categories of flouting maxims exist. Flouting is a condition when speakers are unable to apply certain maxims in their conversation and lead to misunderstanding in their conversation Sembiring, E. H. B., & Ghozali, (2017). The first category is the flouting of the maxim of quantity, which occurs when the speaker intentionally provides an excessive or insufficient amount of information. According to Grundy (2000), the quantity maxim is a cooperative ideal that pertains to providing only the necessary information and refraining from providing more than what is necessary Hutahaean, (2020). The second category is the flouting of the maxim of quality, which typically transpires when the speaker expresses something that does not align with their true beliefs. The maxim of quality dictates that our input must be factual

and supported by enough evidence Fitri & Qodriani, (2019). This type of flouting may involve metaphor, irony, or banter. The third category is the flouting of the maxim of relation, where the speaker assumes that the listener can infer unspoken information and establish a connection with the preceding statement. According to the relational principle, the speaker must offer responses that are pertinent to the subject Kurniati & Hanidar, (2018). Grice's cooperation principle, which deals with language and communication, provides a way to accomplish effective communication. It is explained that in order for both speakers and listeners to arrive at the same interpretation of the message they are attempting to transmit, they must contribute as needed by one another Nur Ulfah & Afrilia, (2018) Lastly, the flouting of the maxim of manner occurs when the speaker deliberately communicates in an unclear or ambiguous manner, often disregarding the presence of a third party.

Following the careful observation of the occurrence, the study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) To determine the types of maxims flouting in a movie called "A Man Called Otto.
- 2) To explain the situational context of the characters' conversations that contain flouting maxim in the movie "A Man Called Otto."

In this regard, this session will intensively review related previous studies used as reference materials in this study. The following reviews are the results of several previous studies relevant to this study's topic. First, Latifatun Nuzulia, (2020) analyzed the maxim flouting in Donald Trump's interview with TIME in the Oval Office 2020. The study used the descriptive qualitative method. The results of the analysis identified 11 utterances that contained maxim flouting. Four types of maxim flouting were identified; however, only three types were found in this study: maxim flouting of quantity, maxim flouting of relation, and maxim flouting of manner. There is no flouting maxim of quality found in the data source of this study. Upon analysis, the most prevalent type found in this study is the flouting maxim of quantity. The concept of flouting maxim was examined in "Sherlock: A Study in Pink," a BBC series. The objective was to determine the type of maxim being flouted and explain the context of the situation behind the flouting maxim Burhan, (2018). The objective was to determine the type of maxim being flouted and explain the situation's context Burhan, (2018). The study employs Grice's theory for analyzing the issues at hand and Halliday & Hassan's theory of the context of the situation as a supporting theory.

The study's outcome revealed that the flouting of the relation maxim is the most dominating flouting maxim. Hidayat et al., (2020) flouting maxims have been analyzed on the David Letterman Show in an episode with Aishwarya Rai. This research aims to discover the types of flouting and why these maxims flouting occurs. The results of this study state that there are four types of flouting maxims committed by David and Aishwarya. However, it is not mentioned what type of maxim flouting is most dominant in this study. Moreover, in this study, it can be concluded that maxim flouting occurs to avoid discomfort and to provide more information. Natasya & Sari, (2019) examined the flouting of maxims in a well-known movie entitled "Finding Dory." The techniques

used in collecting data in this study are a conservation observation technique and a sorting determinants technique as an analysis method. Grice's theory is applied in this study. The result of this study found all types of maxims flouting. The type of quantity maxim flouting is the most counted. Dewi & Utami (2020) classified the types of maxims flouting in the movie *Lady Bird*. The method applied in analyzing is the descriptive qualitative method, and Grice's theory (1975) is adopted as a reference to categorize the types of maxims flouting in this study. It can be seen that the most dominant maxim flouting here is the flouting of the maxim of quantity, while the least maxim flouting is the flouting of the maxim of manner. Lubis and Nasution (2019) examined the maxim flouting committed by the main characters in *The Edge of Seventeen* movies. They discovered the effects caused by the maxim flouting committed by the main characters in the movie. Twenty dialogues containing maxim flouting were found. The most maxim flouting committed by the main characters in this movie are quantity maxim flouting, and the lowest are quality maxim flouting and manner maxim flouting. In addition, this study analyzes the effects of maxim flouting based on Austin's theory. There are seven effects based on Austin's theory: annoying, boring, convincing, causing, getting the hearer to realize something, getting the hearer to do something, and insulting. The effect that is most caused by the maxim flouting committed by Nadine, the main character in the film, is the effect of getting the hearer to realize something. There are four types of Grice a maxim, which includes quantity, quality, relevance, and manner showed in the research done by Nurjannah et al., (2020). It was shown by the occurrence of frequency, flouting maxim of quantity was the most-flouted, flouting maxim of manner was the least. Ten kinds of strategies to flout the maxims were used as well including overstatement, understatement, metaphor, irony, banter, sarcasm, irrelevant statement, ambiguous statement, tautology, and rhetorical question.

However, research into flouting maxims has been conducted on various subjects. After reviewing previous studies analyzing maxim flouting, this study has a different case to solve about maxim flouting in a movie entitled *A Man Called Otto*. Cutting, (2002) theory is a reference for analyzing the problems found in this study.

METHOD

This study applied a descriptive qualitative method to analyze the results. According to Hancock, B., Ockleford, E., & Windridge, (2021) qualitative research explores and interprets social phenomena to generate a comprehensive understanding. As stated by Surakhmad, (1994) the descriptive method involves both data collection and analysis of findings by the researcher. It analyzed the types and situational context of flouting maxims in a movie. The findings of this study are presented in two ways: formal and informal methods. The formal method presents the data in table form, and the informal method describes the sentence in a paragraph based on the result Egan, M., Bérubé, D., Racine, G., Leonard, C., & Rochon, E. (2010). The instruments applied in this study are observation and note-taking to collect data from the movie *Rahmah*, (2016). While watching the movie, the observation instrument is done to do a quick scan to see which dialogs contain flouting maxims.

Furthermore, note-taking is done on the characters' dialogues that contain flouting maxims in the movie. During data analysis, several steps are taken, including watching the movie carefully to ensure that the context of the situation in the movie can be understood clearly. Afterward, the dialogues of the characters containing flouting maxims were written down. After that, data classification was done based on the type of flouting maxim based on the theory proposed by Cutting (2002). Henceforth, the theory context of the situation proposed by Halliday (1989) will be used as a reference to analyze the context of the situation in the movie. Halliday (1989) stated that three concepts can be used to interpret the social context in which meaning is being exchanged: field refers to what is happening in the ongoing communication, whether it is related to the topic being discussed, what the participants are doing, and where the communication is taking place, tenor is concerned with the participants involved in communication, including relationships, status and a variety of roles that can influence the tenor discourse, and the last is mode relates to the role that language plays in a situation and what the participants are hoping language will accomplish for them.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data findings in this study state that there are four types of flouting maxims found in the movie "A Man Called Otto," namely, flouting the maxim of quantity, flouting the maxim of quality, flouting the maxim of relation, and flouting the maxim of manner. The most prominent maxim of flouting done by the characters in the movie is the flouting maxim of relation. Further details related to the findings of the data in the movie "A Man Called Otto" can be seen in the table below.

Table:1. Types of Flouting Maxims in A Man Called Otto movie

Types of Flouting Maxim	Frequency
Flouting Maxim of Quantity	7
Flouting Maxim of Quality	4
Flouting Maxim of Relation	13
Flouting Maxim of Manner	4
Total	28

The discussion regarding the flouting maxim analysis and the context of the situation will be presented in data 1 until data 4. The data has been sorted into the classification of what type of flouting maxim, along with the context of the situation in the characters' conversation, will be followed by a description and explanation.

Flouting Maxim of Quantity

According to Cutting, (2002) participants commonly deviate from the maxim of quantity by providing little or too much information.

Data 1

Anita: "Uh, Otto, hate to bother you, but, um, we don't have any heat. Could you come take a look?"

Otto: "Try bleeding your radiators"

Anita: "How would I go about that?"

Otto: **"By bleeding the radiators."**

Minutes: 1:31:54-1:31:42

The above conversation occurred when Otto went to his garage to get a ladder to lend to his neighbor. When he arrived at his garage, he accidentally met Anita, his neighbor. Back then, when they were young, Otto and Reuben, Anita's husband, were very close friends because they were passionate about the automotive world, and vice versa between Anita and Sonya, Otto's late wife. However, after many years of friendship, there was a misunderstanding between Otto and Reuben, which affected their relationship. Reuben now has Parkinson's disease, which causes his ability to control his motor skills to decrease. Anita lost her husband's figure and took care of the household alone. Anita realized that the heater in her house was not working, but she did not know how to fix it, so she dared to ask Otto for help. However, Otto only replied curtly because he was still annoyed by the misunderstanding that had occurred in the past and still had not solved it.

However, when Otto answered Anita's question, it was clear that he violated the maxim of quantity by giving too little information, so what he said was unclear and confused Anita. Otto should have been able to explain the steps to release the radiator water to Anita.

Flouting Maxim of Quality

According to Cutting, (2002) the flouting of the maxim of quality occurs when speakers express statements that do not accurately reflect their beliefs or thoughts. Speakers can flout the maxim of quality through metaphor, irony, and banter within their verbal statements.

Data 2

Malcolm: "What was that noise?"

Otto: **"The generator blew, and the power is out."**

Minutes: 34:39-34:35

The above conversation occurred late one night when Malcolm visited Otto's house to stay overnight. Malcolm was one of the students whom Sonya had taught. One day, Malcolm worked part-time as a newspaper deliveryman. He went around the neighborhood and threw the newspaper he was carrying at each house, until when he threw the newspaper at Otto's house, Otto immediately came out of his house and scolded Malcolm because he had put a sign in front of his house that he did not accept newspapers. He eventually softens after Otto discovers that Malcolm used to be his late wife's student.

At that moment, Otto was in his house holding a gun while sitting in a chair, reminiscing about his memories with his wife. For a long time, Otto had planned suicide several times because he felt nothing had gone as planned since his wife died. Malcolm came knocking on the door as he reminisced about his memories with his wife while putting his gun under his chin. Shocked to hear the door knock, Otto accidentally fired his gun toward the top of his ceiling, so he immediately went downstairs while wondering who was knocking on his door that night.

In the conversation above, the answer given by Otto is considered a flouting of the quality maxim. Otto tells Malcolm, saying, “The generator blew, and the power is out.” He was caught lying here because the noise heard by Malcolm was a gunshot from the gun that Otto was carrying. Otto did this unintentionally because he was surprised to hear a door knock from below while daydreaming. Hence, Otto’s speech is a flouting maxim of quality because what he said is untrue and does not represent his thoughts.

Flouting Maxim of Relation

In the opinion of Cutting, (2002) opinion, when speakers flout the maxim of relation, they anticipate that the listener can logically fill in the gaps and establish a connection between their statement and the preceding conversation.

Data 3

Marisol: “That’s you. She always draws you in color.”

Otto: “What do you mean, “always?”

Marisol: **“Hm! I have a very good idea. You can be my driver’s instructor.”**

Minutes: 1:07:35-1:07:24

The above conversation occurred as Otto parked his car in a lot near the railroad tracks. While daydreaming, he reflected on a recent incident where he saved a man who fell onto the tracks. Suddenly, Otto’s new neighbor, Marisol, knocked on his car door, startling him. Marisol was learning to drive and happened to spot Otto’s car. When Marisol knocked on Otto’s car door, she brought a drawing made by her daughter Abbie and showed it to him. Marisol mentioned that Abbie always colors Otto’s drawings, and Otto asked what Marisol meant by saying “always?”.

Marisol’s response appears irrelevant to Otto’s inquiry, indicating a flouting of the maxim of relation. Her statement lacks relevance as Otto’s query relates to the meaning behind Marisol’s usage of ‘always.’ A suitable response would have clarified that Abbie greatly admires Otto, viewing him as a grandfatherly figure, and therefore regularly colors Otto’s drawings.

Flouting Maxim of Manner

Cutting, (2002) posits that those who disobey the maxim of manner indicate a tendency towards ambiguity and frequently reveal a disregard for the presence of a third party.

Data 4

Otto: "Can I speak to your manager?"

Lee: "He's at lunch."

Minutes: 2:05:59-2:02:56

The above interaction occurred in a supermarket where Lee, a supermarket staff member, assisted Otto, a customer, in measuring and cutting rope. The nature of their relationship is strictly professional. Otto came to purchase rope and measured the rope himself. Upon seeing this, Lee offered to help measure and cut the rope. However, despite Otto's irritable nature regarding people interfering in his business, he rudely refused Lee's offered help. Then he nagged him by saying that he underestimated Otto to the point that he could not cut his rope. Displeased with Otto's reaction, Lee left Otto alone and let him do the job himself.

Having finished, Otto went to check out. He encountered Lee once more, and Lee kindly inquired if Otto had obtained everything he needed. Otto replied in an unfriendly tone, insisting that he had. When Lee tallied the rope that Otto purchased and informed him of the total cost of his groceries, Otto suddenly complained that the amount Lee reported did not align with his count. Otto continued to argue, holding up the line while Lee patiently attempted to explain. Eventually, Otto demanded to speak with Lee's manager.

Lee's statement "He's at lunch" is ambiguous as it can have two meanings. The first is that Otto is requested to wait until his manager arrives, and the second is that Lee's manager is unavailable. It can be inferred that Lee's speech flouts the maxim of manner and is confusing to Otto because the information conveyed is unclear and does not directly state that his manager is unavailable today.

CONCLUSION

The impact of Cutting's theory on the conversational efficacy in the movie "A Man Called Otto" is evident. Moreover, it is widely acknowledged that the intentional flouting of conversational maxims in the movie supports the plot. After analyzing the flouting maxim in this movie, it can be hypothesized that the primary maxim consistently disregarded by the characters is the maxim of relation. This conclusion is drawn from the prevalence of statements made by the characters that are either irrelevant or fail to align with the contextual context of the ongoing conversation. Nevertheless, instances where the speaker intentionally violates the conversational maxim do not necessarily connote negativity. There are situations where in speakers deviate from the prescribed rules of the maxim to convey an implicit message, aiming to preserve the emotional well-being of their interlocutors.

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