**AN ANALYSIS OF FLOUTING OF MAXIM IN *FAMILY SWITCH* MOVIE (2023)**

Annisa Nurjanah Sitepua, Firqo Ameliab, Dwi Taurina Milac

a,b,c Universitas Abdurachman Saleh Situbondo

*\*pos-el:* *annisanurjanahstp@gmail.com**,* *firqo\_amelia@unars.ac.id**,* *dwimeela@gmail.com*

**Abstract**

This research examines the flouting of Grice's Maxims in the movie *Family Switch*. By analyzing character conversations, the study aims to identify the types and strategies of maxim flouting. A descriptive qualitative method is used, applying Grice’s Cooperative Principle (1975) to explore the types of flouting, while Cutting’s theory (2002) is employed to analyze the strategies used. The data analysis follows Miles and Huberman’s (1994) technique, with the researcher acting as the instrument for collecting, identifying, and describing the data. The findings show all four types of maxim flouting: hyperbole and irony for the maxim of quality, too much or too little information for the maxim of quantity, irrelevance for the maxim of relation, and obscurity for the maxim of manner. Six strategies were identified overall. The researcher encourages future studies to explore maxim flouting in other areas, such as advertisements, TV shows, and newspapers, as it is a common linguistic phenomenon.

*Keywords: flouting of maxim, Family Switch movie, Grice’s maxim*

**Introduction**

Language is a crucial tool for communication in daily life. People use language to convey different aspects of their society through conversations. Studying language as a means of communication is crucial for understanding how people and communities interact, develop relationships, and convey cultural values (Trudgill, 2000).

The language used in communication can take the form of both spoken and written language. Spoken language is considered more basic and natural than written language, because it is used spontaneously and more frequently. A significant form of spoken language is conversation (Affifatusholihah & Setyawan, 2016).

A conversation is considered successful when the listener completely understands the speaker's intended meaning (Rokhmania, 2012). However, in everyday conversations, there are times when listeners do not fully understand the speaker's meaning. To prevent miscommunication, it is important for individuals to understand the speaker's intentions or the real meaning behind their words.

The study of what speaker’s meaning is called pragmatics (Yule, 1996). In simple terms, pragmatics can be explained as a study that examines the meanings of utterances conveyed by speakers and understood by listeners. In pragmatics, there are principles called cooperative principles that participants in communication must follow in order to understand an utterance. Cooperative principles explained how individuals effectively participate in conversational communication in everyday social contexts.

In cooperative principle, there are maxims that should be followed. These maxims, introduced by Grice (1975) are used to understand the meaning conveyed by individuals in their daily conversations. The cooperative principles include four types of maxims. First is Maxim of quality. The speaker should aim to be truthful and provide information that is accurate. The second is Maxim of quantity. The speakers should give enough information, neither too little nor too much. The third is maxim of relation. The speaker should ensure their contributions are relevant to the ongoing discussion. The last is maxim of manner. The speaker should avoid ambiguity and be clear in their expression to prevent confusion. These maxims are often disregarded by certain individuals, resulting in what are referred to as non-observance maxims. Examples of this include violating, opting out, and flouting (Grice, 1975). Flouting maxim occurs when speakers appear not to follow the maxims but expect hearers to appreciate the meaning implied (Cutting & Fordyce, 2021).

Based on the study about flouting of maxim, the researcher discovered some similar previous researches with this current research. The first previous study belongs to “Flouting Maxim of Quality and Quantity in Spill Your Guts or Fill You Guts Session” by Sasi (2022). This study takes data source from YouTube channel. This research was conduct humor verbally by the host and guest star in the Spill Your Guts or Fill Your Guts session. In this research, the researcher only used two types of flouting maxim, there are flouting maxim of quality and flouting maxim of quantity.

The second previous study came from Jannah (2022) with the title “An Analysis of Flouting Maxims Used by Students During Proposal Seminar”. This research focuses on Flouting Maxims used by students during proposal seminar. The research used qualitative method for collecting the data and applied the theory of Cooperative Principal Grice’s Maxims and use proposal seminar as the research object.

The third previous study came from Maulinawati (2018). With the thesis title “Flouting Maxims in Central Intelligence Movie Script”. This research focuses on the flouting maxims, the rhetorical strategies and the implicature that generated in the movie.

The subjects of the previous studies were a YouTube video, a student proposal seminar, and the Central Intelligence movie script. In this study, the researcher chose the movie *Family Switch* to analyze flouting maxims. The movie is about a family that switches bodies with each other during Christmas due to a rare planetary alignment. Their amusing journey to return to normal brings them closer together. This research aims to identify the types of flouting maxims and the strategies used by the characters in the movie *Family Switch*.

This study focuses on analyzing types of flouting maxim using theory from Grice (1975) and the researcher will Cutting’s theory (2002) to found the strategies of flouting maxim in *Family Switch* movie. The purpose of this research is to explain the Cooperative Principle, focusing specifically on how maxims are flouted. It aims to provide a clear understanding of how speakers break conversational rules to convey hidden meanings. The researcher hopes that this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of how the Cooperative Principle operates in communication and how the flouting of maxims can reveal hidden meanings.

**Review of Literature**

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies how context and communication objectives influence the understanding and use of language. Yule (1996:3-4) describes pragmatics as the study of contextual meaning. Levinson (1983:21) added pragmatics is the study of the relations between language and context that are basic to an account of language understanding. This type of study necessarily involves the interpretation of what people mean in the particular context and how the context influences what is said. It involves aspects such as implicature, cooperative principle, politeness and how language is used in real situations.

Yule suggests that to comprehensively understand the concept of pragmatics, it is important to relate it to various other areas within linguistics. Yule (1996:3) categorizes the concept of pragmatics into four distinct types, which are outlined as follows. Yule (1996:3) divide the meaning of pragmatics into four kinds as follow: (1) Pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning, (2) Pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning, (3) Pragmatics is the study of how more gets communicated than is said, (4) Pragmatics is the study of the expression of relative distance. From these definitions, it becomes clear that pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics that relies heavily on context to shape meaning. This allows individuals to understand not only the literal words being spoken but also the deeper meanings behind them.

Pragmatics, as the study of language in context, is closely tied to the Cooperative Principle, which suggests that effective communication requires cooperation between speakers and listeners. In pragmatics, understanding how individuals interpret meaning based on context is essential, and the Cooperative Principle provides a structure through its maxims to ensure that speakers communicate clearly and meaningfully within that context.

According to Grice (1975), the Cooperative Principle refers to the contributions made by participants during communication and the activities they are engaged in at that time. In communication, the speaker aims to express utterances with the intention of conveying a message to the conversation partner, so that the partner can understand what the speaker wants to communicate. For the conversation partner to understand the message the speaker intends to convey, cooperation between the two is necessary.

Grice (1975) introduced four conversational maxims those are maxim of quality, maxim of quantity, maxim of relation, and maxim of manner, which participants in a conversation should follow to communicate effectively. However, these maxims are often flouted when a speaker intentionally breaks one or more of them to convey implicit meanings. Flouting a maxim occurs when a speaker does not provide accurate information on purpose. The speaker chooses to flout the maxim because they want the listener to figure out a hidden or deeper meaning in the conversation. This happens when the speaker deliberately does not follow the rules of the maxim. According to Cutting (2002:37) state the speaker who flouts maxims expects the listeners to appreciate the meaning implied but they appears not to follow the maxims.

Flouting the maxim of quality occurs when a speaker provides information that is not true. There are some strategies used in this maxim hyperbole, metaphor, irony and banter. Hyperbole involves using exaggerated statements that are not meant to be taken literally but serve to emphasize a point. Similarly, metaphor conveys meanings different from their literal interpretations, while irony allows a speaker to indirectly express negative feelings by stating the opposite of what they mean. Banter, in contrast to irony, expresses a negative sentiment while implying a positive one.

Flouting the maxim of quantity happens when the speaker gives too much or too little information. The strategies of flouting maxim of quantity are giving too much information and giving too little information. When a speaker gives more information than necessary, they may be emphasizing a particular point or conveying something indirectly. Conversely, providing too little information requires the listener to infer missing details or understand the speaker's intent.

The maxim of relevance is flouted when a speaker gives an irrelevant response, leading the listener to infer the underlying meaning or reason for the diversion. The strategy are used in this maxim is being irrelevance. When a speaker gives an irrelevant response, it creates a situation where the listener must infer the speaker's actual meaning or reason for diverting the conversation.

 Flouting the maxim of manner occurs when a speaker uses ambiguous or obscure language, making it harder for the listener to interpret the intended message. The strategy of flouting maxim of manner is being obscure. This strategy is often used to exclude a third party or create a sense of ambiguity in the conversation.

Strategies for flouting maxims are used intentionally by speakers to imply meanings that go beyond the literal content of their words. By recognizing and interpreting these strategies, listeners can uncover the implicit messages conveyed in everyday conversations, revealing deeper layers of meaning within communication.

**Methodology**

 The researcher employs qualitative methods that emphasize generating descriptive information presented as written or spoken words. The data were collected through taking note the utterances that related to flouting of maxims uttered by the main characters in the Family Switch. The data consist of utterances from the main characters that demonstrate the types and strategies of flouting maxims.

 The researcher used Miles and Huberman's (1994) theory as the technique of data analysis. Miles and Huberman categorize data analysis into three steps as a technique of data analysis; those are data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The first step in data analysis is data reduction, where the researcher classifies the types of flouting maxims and the strategies used by the characters. Following this, the researcher interprets the data related to the flouting of maxims found in the movie Family Switch. The second step is data display, which involves presenting the data visually through graphs, charts, and tables to facilitate a clearer understanding of the findings. The third step is conclusion drawing, the researcher presented the conclusion regarding the types and strategies of flouting maxims found in the movie Family Switch.

**Findings and Discussion**

**Findings**

**Strategies of Flouting Maxim of Quality**

**Hyperbole**

Datum 17 (00:38:14)

Mr Molson: “who is this intelligent young woman?

Jess in CC’s body: ”oh, I’m her daughter, and **any intelligence I have is purely because of the way my mother raised me**”

This event took place in the morning at Jess's office when she was about to present her work project. However, since they had switched bodies, CC, now in Jess's body, took over the presentation and ended up messing it up. Jess, who was in CC's body, and then stepped in to explain the project. Mr. Molson, their boss, was surprised by Jess in CC's body explaining the project and asked who the intelligent young woman was. Jess, still in CC's body, replied, "I'm her daughter, and any intelligence I have comes entirely from how my mother raised me." By saying *any intelligence I have is purely because of the way my mother raised me* jess in cc’s body was flouted the **maxim of quality** using **hyperbole** strategy because she exaggerated her utterances.

**Using an Irony**

Datum 14 (00:27:54)

Jess in CC’s body: “look, I think we can both agree we don’t ruin each other’s lives today”

CC in Jess’s body: “**good luck with that, mom**”

The conversation above took place in the morning at the Walker family’s house when CC and Jess came out of their own rooms after getting ready. They looked unlike themselves as usual because they had switched bodies. Jess decided that they would not let their new appearances ruin their lives. In the conversation above, CC *saying good luck with that mom* indicates a **flouting of the maxim of quality**, using the strategy of **irony** because it contains sarcasm, stating a positive sentence but implying a negative meaning.

**Strategies of Flouting Maxim of Quantity**

**Give Too Much Information**

Datum 11 (00:26:14)

Jess in cc’s body: “CC Walker, you have a tattoo?”

CC in Jess body: “**at least it’s a cute little owl, right?**”

The conversation took place in the morning at Walkers family’s house when the Walkers family was preparing for their own activities. Jess in CC’s body saw the tattoo in CC’s foot, so Jess asked CC that she had a tattoo. From the dialogue, CC answered *at least it’s a cute little owl, right?*indicated to **flouting maxim of quantity** by using strategy **giving too much information** about her other tattoo, because her mom talk about a tattoo in her foot but CC talk about tattoo in her shoulder.

**Give Too Little Information**

Datum 15 (00:31:50)

Kara: “CC, what are you doing here?”

Jess in CC: “**hi**”

The conversation took place in the morning when CC and Jess arrived at Jess's workplace. As usual, when Jess entered the company, she was always greeted by her assistant, Kara. Kara, seeing CC in the office and asked CC what she was doing there, and CC, who is actually Jess in CC's body, only responds to her question with a greeting, *Hi*. From the conversation, Jess in CC’s body **flouted the maxim of quantity** using strategy **give too little information** because she just answered Kara’s question with a greeting *Hi*.

**Strategies of Flouting Maxim of Relation**

**Being irrelevance**

Datum 5 (00:04:56)

Jess: “CC, do I have your attention?”

CC: “**yeah, I’m looking for my homework**”

The conversation happened in the morning at the dining table in the Walkers' family house, where they were discussing their Christmas plans then Jess asked CC’s attention for family meeting. From the dialogue above, the researcher found flouting maxim of relation uttered by CC. By saying utterance *yeah, I’m looking for my homework*, **CC flouted the maxim of relation** using strategy **being irrelevance** because CCgive irrelevance answerabout her mom question.

**Strategies of Flouting Maxim of Manner**

**Being Obscure**

Datum 13 (00:27:47)

CC in Jess’s body: “did you pluck my eyebrows?”

Jess CC’s body: “**no. yes**”

The conversation took place in the morning at the Walker’s house. This conversation occurred after they had switched bodies with each other and they still had to go about their usual activities. After getting ready, CC and Jess saw each other's bodies looking different from their usual appearance. CC, in Jess's body, noticed that her eyebrows had changed, so she asked her mom, who was in her body, if she had plucked her eyebrows. From the conversation above, Jess utterance *Yes. No* suggested to **flouting of manner** because shegave ambiguous answered **using strategy being obscure**.

**Table 4.1 frequency of types of flouting maxim**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | Types | Number of Cases | Percentage (%) |
| 1 | Flouting Maxim of Quality | 5 | 18% |
| 2 | Flouting Maxim of Quantity | 7 | 27% |
| 3 | Flouting Maxim of Relation | 10 | 37% |
| 4 | Flouting Maxim of Manner | 5 | 18% |
|  |  Total  | 27 | 100% |

**Table 4.2 frequency of strategies of flouting maxim**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No |  Strategies  | Number of Cases | Percentage (%) |
| 1 | Hyperbole | 4 | 15% |
| 2 | Metaphor | - | - |
| 3 | Irony | 1 | 4% |
| 4 | Banter | - | - |
| 5 | Give too Much Information | 6 | 22% |
| 6 | Give too Little Information | 1 | 4% |
| 7 | Being Irrelevance | 10 | 37% |
| 8 | Being Obscure | 5 | 18% |
|  | **Total** | 27 | 100% |

 From the table 4.1 above, total result data of types flouting maxim is 27 data. It can be summarized that the most dominant type of flouting of maxim is flouting of maxim of relation with total 10 data (37%), followed by flouting maxim of quantity 6 data (27%), then flouting maxim of quality 5 data (18%), and flouting maxim of manner 5 data (18%).

And from the table 4.2 above, total result data of strategies is 27 data. The most dominant strategy is being irrelevance with total data 10 data (37%), followed by give too much information 6 data (22%), then being obscure 5 data (18%), hyperbole 4 data (15%), irony 1 data (4%), and give too little information 1 data (4%).

**Discussion**

The researcher discovered all four types of maxim flouting in the movie *Family Switch*, with different amounts of data for each type. A total of 28 times of flouted maxims were found, along with seven out of eight flouting strategies. The first type, flouting the maxim of quality, occurred six times. The characters used strategies hyperbole four times, metaphor one time, and irony one time. The second type, flouting the maxim of quantity, was found seven times, mostly through providing too much information six times, with one instance of giving too little information. The third and most common type was flouting the maxim of relation, with ten times, all using the strategy of being irrelevant. The least common type was flouting the maxim of manner, with five times of being obscure.

The most frequent type of flouting was the maxim of relation, where characters changed the topic to avoid certain subjects. This aligns with findings from other studies, such as research by Hamidah et al. (2022) and Widiani et al. (2021), who found that people often flout the maxim of relation to dodge uncomfortable topics. Flouting the maxim of quantity was the next most common, with characters often providing too much information to distract others or fill awkward silences. For example, Jess used this strategy when describing herself as a good mother or answering questions about her condition. Flouting the maxim of quality, especially through hyperbole, was also common. Characters exaggerated to make a point or convince others, like when Jess tried to impress her boss about her intelligence. The least common type was flouting the maxim of manner, where characters provided unclear or ambiguous information. Overall, Jess Walker was the character who flouted the most maxims, especially by giving too much information to fill silences or distract others.

The researcher compared this study with previous ones. A study by Ainun Nikmah Karomiyah Putri Sasi (2022), which analyzed a YouTube show, found only two types of flouting maxims, mainly focusing on humor. Another study by Rizki Maulinawati (2018) looked at rhetorical strategies, with the most common being flouting the maxim of quantity. Finally, a study by Fauzia Reihanil Jannah (2022), which focused on student proposal seminars, found the maxim of relevance to be the most flouted. This research shares similarities with previous studies in identifying types of flouting maxims, particularly those involving quality and quantity. The results suggest that, regardless of the context or medium, people flout maxims to withhold or avoid sharing the full truth.

**Conclusion and Suggestion**

In the movie *Family Switch*, all four types of flouting maxims were identified, along with various strategies used by the main characters. Specifically, the characters employed hyperbole and irony for flouting the maxim of quality, too much information for the maxim of quantity, being irrelevant for the maxim of relation, and being obscure for the maxim of manner. These strategies were primarily directed at family members, reflecting the movie's theme focused on family relationships.

The frequent use of flouting maxims among family members can be attributed to their emotional closeness and familiarity, which create a relaxed conversational atmosphere. In these interactions, indirect language, such as sarcasm or irony, becomes a way to express feelings without being direct. Family members often understand hidden meanings easily, leading them to ignore formal conversational rules to maintain harmony or avoid conflict.

In real life, flouting maxims is commonly observed in everyday interactions. People frequently flout the maxims of relation or quantity, particularly when they want to protect someone, avoid conflict, or change the topic. For instance, in professional settings, individuals might provide elaborate explanations or unrelated answers to avoid admitting mistakes. Similarly, in personal relationships, irony or metaphor may be used to express dissatisfaction without being confrontational.

Overall, these findings highlight that flouting maxims is a prevalent conversational strategy employed across various contexts, both in fictional media and real life, to achieve specific communication goals like evasion, humor, or indirect criticism. Understanding these strategies enhances our comprehension of human communication and the nuanced ways people navigate social interactions.

Effective communication requires participants to follow certain rules. By analyzing maxims, speakers can cooperate and understand each other more clearly. The researcher encourages linguistic scholars and future researchers to delve deeper into the topic of maxim flouting, as it is a common phenomenon in everyday language. For those conducting similar studies on types and strategies of flouting maxims in literary works, such as films, novels, or real-life interactions, it is suggested to explore the variations and implications of this phenomenon further. In-depth studies on the flouting of the cooperative principle in other literary contexts could also enhance the understanding of this research area.

**References**

Affifatusholihah, L., & Setyawan, A. H. (2016). *Flouting maxim by sherlock holmes and dr. watson in tv series of Sherlock season*. Journal of English Language and Education, 2, 110-117. doi:10.26486/jele.v2i2.225

Cutting, J. & Fordyce, K. (2021). *Pragmatics*. Fourth Edition. Taylor & Francis.

Cutting, J. (2002). *Pragmatics and Discourse: A Resource Book for Students*. New York: Routledge.

Grice, H. P. (1975). *Logic and Conversation*. In Cole *et al*. Speech Acts, 41-58.

Jannah, F. R. (2022*). An Analysis of Flouting Maxims Used by Students During Proposal Seminar*. Islamic University of Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar

Levinson, S.C. 1983. *Pragmatics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Maulinawati, R. (2018). *Flouting Maxims in Central Intelligence Movie Script.* Universitas Islam Negeri.

McG. (Director). (2023). *Family Switch* [Film]. Grey Matter Productions.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *An expanded Sourcebook Qualitative Data Analysis Second Edition*. SAGE Publications.

Nurul Hamidah. N, Arifin. M. B, Ariani. S. (2022). *Analysis of Flouting of Conversational Maxims by Characters in the Help Movie*. Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, dan Budaya.

Rokhmania, N. (2012). *Descriptive analysis on flouting and hedging of conversational maxims in the “post grad” movie*. Register journal, 5, 275-294. doi:https://doi. org/10.18326/rgt.v5i2.123-142

Sasi, A. N. (2022). *Flouting Maxim of Quality and Quantity in Spill Your Guts or Fill You Guts Session.* Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Ibrahim Malang.

Song L. (2010). *The Role of Context in Discourse Analysis*. Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 876-879.

Trudgill, P. (2000). Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society (4th ed.). Penguin Books.

Widiani, D., Candra, K., Suastini, N. (2021). Flouting of Conversational Maxims in Avangers: Endgame Movie. International Journal of English Learning and Applied Linguistics. http://dx.doi.org/10.21111/ijelal.v2i1.5688

Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Yule, G. (2010). *The Study of Language*. Cambridge University Press.