

Flouting Maxims in The Ellen DeGeneres Talk Show Episode Will Smith Full Interview with Ellen

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Abstract

People can easily communicate well when people can apply maxim compliance principles in communicating. In reality, people do not always apply maxim compliance in communicating. When this happens during communication, it will cause a phenomenon called the floating maxim. This phenomenon occurs in The Ellen DeGeneres Talk Show which is the object of this research, with research questions: 1) What Maxims are flouted in *The Ellen DeGeneres Talk Show Episode Will Smith Full Interview with Ellen*? 2) What are the reasons of the characters flouting the Maxims in *The Ellen DeGeneres Talk Show Episode Will Smith Full Interview with Ellen*? The theory in this study uses the theory of Grice, Cutting and Leech. The objects in this research focus on Ellen and Smith. This study uses descriptive qualitative with content analysis. Technical analysis in this study uses the analysis of Vanderstoep and Johnston; Identifying, coding, discussing, and drawing conclusion. Based on the findings of the study, 33 data were found representing all types of flouting maxim and the reasons for flouting maxim. There are 3 data on the flouting maxim of quantity, 11 data on the flouting maxim of quality, 4 data on the flouting maxim of relevance, and 3 data on the flouting maxim of manner. While on the reasons of flouting maxim, there are 3 data on conflictive reason, 4 data on competitive reason, 2 data on convivial reason and 3 data on collaborative reason. Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that most of the characters in the show flouted the maxim of quality and competitive reasons for flouting maxim the maxim.

Keywords: *Pragmatics, Flouting Maxim, Reason for Flouting Maxim, Ellen DeGeneres Talk Show.*

Introduction

The Ellen DeGeneres Talk Show or often called The Ellen Show is one of television talk show in America that hosted by a comedian/actress named Ellen DeGeneres. This talk show has been airing since 2003. This talk show is often presented in a fun way or packaged in a comedy genre with famous celebrities or

inspirational figures. While Ellen herself is an American actress who was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. Ellen starred in the sitcom *Ellen* from 1994 to 1998. She has also hosted *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* since 2003. Since *The Ellen DeGeneres Talk Show* aired, the talk show invited many guest stars with various characters and always discussed interesting topics. *The Ellen DeGeneres Talk Show* always inserts comedy in every conversation, this is what makes the talk show different from other talk shows. The sitcom genre talk show is packaged in such a way that it presents an interesting talk show to watch. However, the talk show will always bring up some interesting phenomena to study. One of the phenomena that appears on the talk show is floating maxim.

Thus, the researcher is interested in researching this phenomenon with the object of *The Ellen DeGeneres Talk Show* which focuses on the episode that was uploaded on May 25, 2019 with the title *Will Smith's Full Interview with Ellen* with the main guest star Will Smith, and Mena Massoud, Naomi Scott as a supporting guest star. As a guest star, Willard Christopher Smith, Jr. or known as Will Smith is an American actor who was born in Wynnefield, West Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, September 25, 1968.

Flouting maxim becomes interesting to discuss since it can help people to analyze the meaning behind a conversation that might be confusing or make misunderstanding because not obeyed the four guidelines to build a good conversation. As Grice said that there are four guidelines to build a good conversation with the other that relate to the truthfulness, giving require information, relevance and clear. Related to the conversation in *The Ellen DeGeneres Talk Show*, in their communication the four guidelines were not always obeyed by the speech participants. When maxims are not followed or obeyed in a communication, this is what is known as flouting maxim or maximal offense.

Method

In this study, the author uses a qualitative method but a more specific qualitative method, namely descriptive qualitative content analysis. According to Creswell (2003), qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The research builds a complex, holistic pictures, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducted the study in natural setting. According to Krippendorff (2013) "Certainly, content analysis is not the only research method that takes meanings seriously, but it is a method that is both powerful and unobtrusive. It makes sense of what is mediated between people-textual matter, symbols, messages, information, mass-media content, and technology-supported social interactions-without perturbing or affecting those who handle that textual matter".

Results

Based on the purpose of this study, the data to be discussed are the types of flouting maxim, and the reason of flouting maxim. Below are 2 different types of tables to present the phenomena being discussed in this study. The first table

presents the flouting maxim found when Ellen and Sam Smith were having a conversation on the talk show.

Table 1. Types of flouting maxim performed in *Ellen DeGeneres Talk Show Episode Will Smith Full Interview with Ellen*

NO	Types of Flouting Maxim	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Flouting Maxim of Quantity	3	14%
2.	Flouting Maxim of Quality	11	52%
3.	Flouting Maxim of Relevance	4	19%
4.	Flouting Maxim of Manner	3	14%
Total		21	100%

In *The Ellen DeGeneres Talk Show Episode Will Smith Full Interview with Ellen*, the data found for the Reason for Flouting Maxim is 12 data. The data can be seen in table 2.

Table 2. The Reasons for Maxim Flouting Performed in *The Ellen DeGeneres Talk Show Episode Sam Smith Full Interview with Ellen*

NO	Reason for Flouting Maxim	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Conflictive Reason	3	25%
2.	Competitive Reason	4	33%
3.	Convivial Reason	2	17%
4.	Collaborative Reason	3	25%
Total		12	100%

Discussion

Types of Flouting Maxim in *The Ellen DeGeneres Talk Show Episode Will Smith Full Interview with Ellen*

In *The Ellen DeGeneres Talk Show Episode Sam Smith Full Interview with Ellen*, the host and guests flout all the type of maxim. The most dominant maxim flouting is flouting maxim of quality and the least dominant are flouting maxim of quantity and flouting maxim of manner.

Flouting Maxim of Quantity

In the data of Ellen's flouting maxim of quantity on the talk show *The Ellen DeGeneres Talk Show Episode Will Smith Full Interview with Ellen* is provided below. It started when Smith finished performing singing and rapping on the talk show.



Figure 1

[Smith Singing, Rapping and Dancing]

Ellen : “It was wonderful. It's so-- I always love when I know you're going to be on the show. You're so much fun. And this couldn't be a better time for me because I don't feel well, and you just made—“

Smith : “Oh no, I got it. I got it. Just relax”.

Ellen : “Yeah, I'll just sit here”.

Smith : “Just relax”.

Ellen : “Good”.

(Datum 02/FQn)

Flouting maxim of quantity occurs when Ellen said “It was wonderful. It's so-- I always love when I know you're going to be on the show. You're so much fun. And this couldn't be a better time for me because I don't feel well, and you just made”. Ellen's statement has been more informative than is required. Starting a conversation, by asking the guest star's condition should be enough, then other topics can be discussed when it's small talk to make the atmosphere fluid. In this case Ellen has done a quantity maxim flouting since he does not make his contribution as is required. Thus, Ellen's statement is in accordance with the theory of Grice (1975) that do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

Flouting Maxim of Quality

A data of the type of floating maxim of quality is presented below. When Ellen spoke to the guests that they were the lucky ones to be able to play a character in the movie Aladdin.



Figure 2

- Smith : “My people! My people are here”.
“Yay!”
- Ellen : “Two lucky people. You beat out hundreds of actors for this. I mean, like everybody wanted to be a part of this movie. And the two of you got it. You must be thrilled with yourselves”.
- Mena : “Yeah, very blessed. Yes. We're very blessed to be here and grateful. And we hope people like the film”.

(Datum 03/FQI)

In the data above, Ellen and the guests were talking about the movie they just released, Aladdin. Ellen flouted maxim of quality when she said “Two lucky people. You beat out hundreds of actors for this”. Ellen spoke to Mena and Naomi that they were both lucky people because they were the ones chosen to play the characters Ali and Jasmine in Aladdin.

As Grice (1975) said that do not say what you believe to be false. Seken (2015, p. 95) states To comply with this maxim, a speaker in a conversational exchange must speak on the basis of facts and the participants must have factual evidence by which to sufficiently support what they say as truth (H, Nasution, & Lubis, 2021). In this case, also her statement is floating maxim of quality using by hyperbole related to (Cutting, 2002, p. 38) proposes several ways people may flout the maxim of quality by using hyperbole, metaphor, irony, banter, and sarcasm.

Flouting Maxim of Relevance

The conversation below is a data of the flouting maxim of relevance by Ellen in *The Ellen DeGeneres Talk Show Episode Will Smith Full Interview with Ellen*. The first example is taken from the time when Smith finished performing Rapp on the talk show.



Figure 3

- Smith : “What is up?”
- Ellen : “That was enjoyable. I had like a front row seat to that wonderful performance of yours”.
- Smith : “Right? It was like you were, like, on stage—“
- Ellen : “On stage with you”.
- Smith : “--with me”.
- Ellen : “Like I was chosen”.
- Smith : “You were—like you were the one”.
- Ellen : “Yeah, like I was Courtney Cox in that Bruce Springsteen video”.

Smith : 'Yes, right! Yeah!'

(Datum 05/FRI)

Flouting the maxim of relation, it can be said that every response which is not relevant to the context of the questions lead to misunderstandings in a conversation (Grice, 1975). Here, when Smith says "what is up?", Ellen doesn't give a relevant response which mean according to Grice this violation called flouting maxim of relevance. In this case, Ellen flouted maxim of relevance then emphasizing his main purpose by saying "That was enjoyable. I had like a front row seat to that wonderful performance of yours". Ellen tried to convey that she felt enjoy seeing Smith's performance when doing Rapp. Ellen said that she loved sitting in the front row watching Smit's amazing performance. Even so, Smith understood Ellen's point. Instead of answering Smith's questions, Ellen talked about Smith's appearance.

Flouting Maxim of Manner

The data of the floating maxim of manner is provided below. This happened when Smith finished singing and rapping as the opening act on the talk show, then Ellen welcomed Smith as a guest star on the talk show.



Figure 4

Ellen : "Our first guest is one of the biggest movie stars in the world. Please welcome Will Smith".

[MUSIC - WILL SMITH, "GETTIN' JIGGY WITH IT"]

Smith : "Wow, well, thanks a lot, Ellen! Oh, yeah. It's been great".

Ellen : "All right, thank you".

Smith : "That's all we've got time for".

Ellen : "All right, that's all. Yeah".

Smith : "Thank you very much, everyone".

Ellen : "We'll take a quick commercial break", and--hi, Will. That –

(Datum 08/FMn)

In that situation, flouting maxim of manner occurs when Ellen said "We'll take a quick commercial break" which has many meanings that make it ambiguous. The statement Ellen said when Smith singing and rapping was too long so it was quite time consuming. Ellen's goal in saying the hidden message was none other than satirizing Smith but in a way that was related to the talk show. The ambiguous according to Grice is included in the flouting maxim of manner where Grice said that "maxim of manner, the speaker should be perspicuous, be brief, be orderly, to avoid

ambiguity and obscurity of expression” (in Yule, 1996).

Reason for Flouting Maxim

In *The Ellen DeGeneres Talk Show Episode Sam Smith Full Interview with Ellen*, all reasons appear in the talk show.

Competitive Reason

In the following conversation, Smith and Ellen are talking about Smith's fear of mice. In that situation, Smith was frightened when Ellen teased him with the mouse toy she brought.



Figure 5

- Ellen : “Amazing. You do all these things. I have this here, and it's going to be fine. But I have this—“
- Smith : “Oh, oh, oh! Hey! Hey, hey”.
- Ellen : “That's a fake. You're scared of mice?”
- Smith : “OK, yes. I'm terrified. No, I had a-- no, I'm just not no punk scared of mice. No, I had a childhood experience with a-- hey, you better not, Ellen”.
- Ellen : “All right. Here's the thing. You said conquering fear. We all were here”.

(Datum 09/FQn/CMr)

In the data above, conflictive reason leads Smith to flout maxim of quantity. In the conversation, competitive reason is the main factor in flouting the maxim. Smith's illocutionary goal is self-centered to say that he is scared of the toy Ellen is carrying and asks Ellen to stop scaring him. On the other hand, Smith's social goal is to be a professional guest star by answering Ellen's questions and not messing up the talk show due to the fear she was experiencing at the time. Smith's social goal here is a benefit for others because his fear is an entertaining spectacle. At the end of Smith's answer, he begging Ellen not to scare her which is begging belongs to competitive reason. The illocutionary goal competes with the social goal; eg ordering, asking, demanding, begging, etc. In that case, the competition is started (Leech, 1983).

Convivial Reason

The next data is taken from the conversation between Smith Ellen where Ellen invited Smith as a guest star on the talk show. Smith then emerged by showing his talent by singing and rapping.



Figure 6

Ellen : “Our first guest is one of the biggest movie stars in the world. Please welcome Will Smith”.

[MUSIC - WILL SMITH, "GETTIN' JIGGY WITH IT"]

Smith : “Wow, well, thanks a lot, Ellen! Oh, yeah. It's been great”.

Ellen : “All right, thank you”.

Smith : “That's all we've got time for”.

Ellen : “All right, that's all. Yeah”.

Smith : “Thank you very much, everyone”.

Ellen : “We'll take a quick commercial break, and--hi, Will. That was—enjoyable”.

(Datum 12/FQI/CVr)

In the conversation above, Ellen breaks the maxim of quality by using hyperbole and saying something excessive. In the conversation above, Ellen's illocutionary goal is to invite Smith to appear on a stage where Smith is currently a guest on the event. On the other hand, Ellen's social goal was to welcome Smith by praising Smith, who at that time was being talked about by the public because he was Genie's character in the movie Aladdin. Here, there is no competition on Ellen's illocutionary goals and the social goals only coincide between the two goals. Inviting here is a convivial reason of flouting maxim because according to Leech (1983) Convivial reason arises when the illocutionary goal coincides with the social goal, such as offering, inviting, greeting, thanking and congratulating.

Collaborative Reason

As the first data, a conversation between Smith and Ellen is provided. The situation is that when Smith and Ellen are talking about Skydiving by Smith. Then Smith asked about skydiving to Ellen, here Ellen's answer leads to the floating maxim of quantity.



Figure 7

Smith : “Have you ever jumped? Have you ever?”

Ellen : “No. You know when I was younger, I thought that I wanted to do that. It was kind of a dream of mine. And as I got older and wiser, I decided I don't want to do that”.

Smith : “We should do it together”.

Ellen : “No, no”.

Smith : “We would break the internet if we did it together”.

Ellen : “Yeah, I'm sure we would. And I don't need to do that. I've done it on the Oscars, and I'm done. Don't need to break it again”.

(Datum 13/FQn/CLr)

In the conversation above, Ellen flouts maxim of quantity. In this exchange, Ellen's illocutionary is to reply to Smith that he has never skydived. Then, Ellen's social goal is to emphasize the reason Ellen has never skydived. In this case, illocutionary goals may collaborate with social goals to achieve something. The floating maxim of quantity happened because to convince Smith the reason why Ellen never did skydiving so Ellen gave too much information. In other words, social goals support illocutionary goals. The illocutionary goal is dominant in this exchange. Since the illocutionary goal is indifferent to the social goal, the maxim violation occurs in this conversation. As (Leech, 1983, p. 104) explains that collaborative happens when an illocutionary goal is indifferent to the social goal.

Conflictive Reason

The first data of conflictive reason is the conversation between Ellen and Smith where Smith was a guest on the talk show. It started when Ellen talked about how Ellen really liked Smith when he was performing.



Figure 8

Ellen : “It was wonderful. It's so-- I always love when I know you're going to be on the show. You're so much fun. And this couldn't be a better time for me because I don't feel well, and you just made—“

Smith : “Oh no, I got it. I got it. Just relax”.

Ellen : “Yeah, I'll just sit here”.

Smith : “Just relax”.

Ellen : “Good”.

(Datum 15/FQn/CNr)

In the data above, conflictive reason leads Smith to flout maxim of quantity. Flouting maxim occurs since Smith is getting bored because Ellen's explanation is too long. In this case, his illocutionary goal is to get Ellen to stop talking too much about herself that has nothing to do with the previous conversation. In the other hand, his social goal is to give respect by listening to Ellen's explanation by listening to it without interrupting Ellen. It is a reason where the illocutionary goal of a conversation conflicts with the social goal (Leech, 1983, p. 104). Those theories in accordance with the situation of the data above, there is a conflict here between the illocutionary goal and the social goal. This conflictive goal makes Smith violate the maxim of quantity. Under these conditions, Smith tried to stop Ellen but also to show his respect for Ellen by saying “Oh no, I got it. I got it. Just relax”, and Smith expresses that kind of expression in this exchange. Smith does a maxim flouting

Conclusion

With regard to data related to the types of flouting maxim, in *The Ellen DeGeneres Talk Show Episode Will Smith Full Interview with Ellen*, the host and the guests performs four types of flouting maxim. They are flouting maxim of quantity, flouting maxim of quality, flouting maxim of relevance and flouting maxim of manner. The most dominant flouting maxim is flouting maxim of quality with 11 data. The second rank is flouting maxim of relevance with 4 data. The last rank is flouting maxim of quantity and flouting maxim of manner with 3 data for flouting maxim of quality and 3 data for flouting maxim of manner. The flouting maxim that most often appears is the flouting maxim of quality which is often found in comedy conversations. The speaker flouts maxim of quality a lot because they are joking so the speaker does not tell the truth. Similar to the reason of flouting maxim, the reason that appears the most is the competitive reason.

Then, in terms of reason of flouting maxim, there are four reason of flouting maxim that occurs in *The Ellen DeGeneres Talk Show Episode Sam Smith Full Interview with Ellen*, they are conflictive reason, competitive reason, convivial reason, and collaborative reason. The host and the guests used reason for flouting maxim with conflictive reason 3 data, competitive reason 4 data, convivial reason 2 data and collaborative reason 3 data. Similar to the reason of flouting maxim, the reason that appears the most is the competitive reason. This happened because in their conversation there were many shows the competition between illocutionary goals and social goals.

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