



An Analysis of Maxim Violations in the Pursuit of Happyness Movie

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-08-12 Revised: 2026-08-28 Accepted: 2026-09-03 Keywords: Cooperative principle; Maxim Violations; Pragmatics DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i2.12271 Corresponding Author: Yayang Aryana Pb191210039@upbatam.ac.id Universitas Putera Batam, Indonesia	<i>This research was focused on identifying Maxim Violations and finding out the type that was most often used in The Pursuit of Happyness. This research also aimed at analyzing the utterances of all characters that used maxim violations proposed by Grice 1975. The research design of this research was qualitative descriptive. The data were collected by using an observational method and a non-participatory technique. The results of this research indicated that in the pursuit of happyness 15 data of maxim violations were found which included 4 types proposed by Grice, which were maxim of quality, maxim of quantity, maxim of relation, and maxim of manner. It also conveyed that maxim of relation was the most frequently used by all characters. It happened 5 times of total data.</i>

1. Introduction

Language is generally known as a medium which ease people to have interaction, communication, and speak to others (Widiasih, Ayomi, & Winarta, 2022). The effective communication is one that can work together between speakers and hearers. There are two types of communication: direct (face-to-face) and indirect communication (through media), and, as a rule, human beings communicate with each other by conducting conversations (Probosini, 2020). Cooperation in the sense that speakers and hearers must contribute to

each other's response and reduce FTA. Grice (1975:45) stated that there are four maxims in Cooperative Principles: namely quantity, quality, relation, and manner (Novebry & Rosa, 2019). Although principle has been clearly explained, unfortunately, violations of this principle still occur in some utterances. The information provides must be factual, relevant, concise, and organized (Yule, 1996). If information is not clear, the speaker will not be able to understand it. If the information is given in excess, the listener may be able to understand but it will take time to figure out the main points.

As social human being, people need and involved in daily interactions in order to share information, exchange ideas, greet each other and other interactions (Saragih, Rahayu, & Azizah, 2019). Daily conversation can be a source of research in scientific work. It can be movies and TV series. TV series have several episodes that are more than enough to meet the amount of data to conduct research. One of phenomenon was found from Modern Family Movie, when Gloria and her son, Manny were visiting Claire's house to bond with the family. Glorya invited Claire's daughter to go shopping with her. Glorya also offered something to Claire, but she refused it.

<i>Glorya</i>	: <i>"Manny brought his favorite game to play with Luke."</i>
<i>Manny</i>	: <i>"It's called empire. You use strategy to expand territories and take over the world."</i>
<i>Claire</i>	: <i>"Luke is gonna love that, he's out back playing."</i>
<i>Glorya</i>	: <i>"Do you need me to get out you something while I'm shopping?"</i>
<i>Claire</i>	: <i>"That's such a nice offer, but I think we're good. Thanks"</i>
<i>Glorya</i>	: <i>"Okay" (04.30- 04.34)</i>

In this conversation, the speaker violated the maxim of relation. The maxim of relation is appropriateness or relevance between one conversation and another. In the conversation above, the speaker violated the maxim of relation because the topic or situation did not match what was said. It was clear that the speaker was deviating from the topic of conversation. Speakers should participate in the talking games their children play without directly offering to shop. Violation of maxims is when the speaker tries to change the subject conversation with the intent to distract the listener (Cutting & Kenneth, 2020).

Maxim violation is a pragmatics notion that refers to breaking the rules of cooperation in a dialogue (Widiasih et al., 2022). Regarding Violating of maxims, it can be linked to several successive statements to find out the implied meaning behind the utterances. As Grice (1975, as cited in Alfina and Subiyanto 2016) argued that violations of maxims are primarily meant to mislead the listener. But apart from that, there was also another reason hind the offense. Goffman (1967, as cited Sari et al., 2019) stated that violating maxims can be done intentionally save face. Leech (1983) also stated that cooperative principles are created for related to the politeness principle.

In conducting this research, there were two previous research used to support this research. One of the previous research projects by Juwita Ningsih and Ambalegin (2022) aimed at finding out about maxim violations on the lion. This previous research used theory by Grice 1975 in winter movie. The results of this research discussed 15 violations uttered in Pretty Little Liars and maxim relation was the most dominant used in this movie.

Another of previous research by Sari et al., (2019) focused on identifying maxim violations and their impact on effective communication. The data source was the movie Confessions of a Shopaholic, released in 2009 using theory by Grice 1989. The results of this research showed that 40 utterances that produced by all characters. Maxim of manner occurred 19 times. Maxim of quantity 9 times. Maxim of quality 9 times and maxim of relation 3 times. And it turned out that the most often violated was manner as much as 19 times. The violation that most affected the effectiveness of communication was a maxim of

relation, followed by violation of other maxims namely quantity, manner, and quality. Violation of maxims is very influential in communication. Effective communication can lead to effective communication.

Previous research and current research had similarities, namely similarities in discussing maxim violations in the movie and the method. The difference was that the previous study by Juwita Ningsih and Ambalegin (2022) used theory by Grice 1975, in previous study by Sari et al., (2019) used theory by Grice 1989. Another difference was also in the data source. This research used "*The Pursuit of happyness*" movie. Therefore, this study aimed at determining the maxim violations expressed in "*The Pursuit of happyness*" movie.

According to Leech (1983), violation of maxims is different from flouting. In maxim violations, one does not realize that one has been deceived, while Flouting maxims are meant to be observed. However, breaking maxims occurs when a speaker who does not intend to produce implicatures fails to obey maxims. There are four maxim violations, namely quality, quantity, relation, and manner. Grice (1989) said that when the speaker does not fulfill or obey the maxims, the speaker is said to violate the maxims.

In maxim quality, the speaker must convey something real and factual. Those statements must be supported and based on clear evidence. If that statement is not true, it means the speaker violates the maxim of quality. Not all violations of the maxim of quality despicable. According to Grice (1975, as cited in Cutting 2002), the maxim of quality is about the truth of the information conveyed.

Baron : "*It's just easy for stuff to get in the way.*"

Ella : "*What do you mean? What kind of stuff? What kind of stuff you get in the way about?*"

Baron : "*No, **nothing. Like, you know me, I just get a little overly obsessed about work, that's all.***" (Yulianti & Ambalegin, 2021)

In maxim of quantity, Grice (1975, as quoted in Cutting 2002) stated that violation of maxim of quantity occurs when the speaker does not provide enough information to the hearer about the information conveyed. It can be too much, and it can be too little in providing information to the listener. According to Grice (1975, as cited in Brown and Levinson 1987), maxims of quantity consist two meanings that do not say less than is required and do not say more than is required.

Ezra: "*Aria, why would someone want to mess with you?*"

Aria: "***Because last summer... I don't know. It's complicated.***" (Yulianti & Ambalegin, 2021)

In maxim of relation, the principle of cooperation determines the violation of the maxim of relation when the speaker does not utter related to the topic discussed. The speaker is also considered to have committed this offense if he tries to change the subject abruptly (Grice 1975, as quoted in Cutting 2002).

Hanna : "*So, what, he lives here now?*"

Ashley : "***Take out the milk.***" (Yulianti & Ambalegin, 2021)

In maxim of manner, the speaker violates the maxim if he gives unclear references, give an ambiguous answer. The maxim of manner occurs when the speaker gives too much information that is unclear or long-winded. (Grice 1975, as quoted in Cutting 2002)

Mike : "Can you hear them?"

Aria : **"Look, whatever it is, it's not about us.** (Yulianti & Ambalegin, 2021)

2. Method

In this study, the researchers used qualitative descriptive. According to (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), the descriptive method was used because in this study the data source used were words, phrases, and sentences. Qualitative research method was a descriptive method used to analyze a phenomenon more specifically, namely analyzing Maxim violations in the pursuit of happiness movie. The method used by researchers to collect this data was the observational method. The technique used in this research was the equalization technique. This technique aimed at equating data sources and theory. Researchers perform the following steps in performing data: researchers watched the movie. Researchers would take down the script. Then, the conversation that had a phenomenon of maxim violations was highlighted. Finally, the data would be sorted for analysis based on the types of maxim of violations.

3. Result

Based on the research, there were many conversations that used Maxim violations in the pursuit of happiness movie. The total data found was 15. There were 4 maxim of quantity, 2 maxim of quality, 5 maxim of relation, and 4 maxim of manner. Violating maxim that was most often used is maxim of relation.

Table 1 the quantity of the violation uttered in the Pursuit of Happiness Movie

Types	Qty
The violation of maxim Quantity	4
The violation of maxim Quality	2
The violation of maxim Relation	5
The violation of maxim Manner	4
Total	15

4. Discussion

Data 1

Chriss : "How you doing in here, man?"

Christopher : **"Okay"**

The conversation above violated maxim of quantity. It happened at home when Chriss as a father saw his son Christopher. Chriss as speaker and Christopher as hearer. This violation was demonstrated when the listener responds with truly short answers that do not provide clear information to the speaker.

Data 2

Linda : "Oh, no, you don't, chriss. I'm back on at 7"

Chriss : "I know, I have to go to Oakland"

Linda : "So I gotta get christoper home, feed him, bathe him, get him in bed, and be back here by 7?"

Chriss : **"Yes"**

The conversation took place at a public telephone booth. At that time, Chriss called Linda to ask for help picking up her son, Christopher. The conversation above still violated maxim of quantity. It was obvious when the speaker asked for help with the hearer, but he responded to the hearer curtly by not giving a clear reason and upsetting hearer.

Data 3

Chriss : *"Woo, man. I got two questions for you. What do you do? And how do you do it?"*

Man : ***"I'm a stockbroker"***

Chriss : *"Oh, stockbroker"*

The conversation above took place in the parking area when Chris met his old friend. At that time, he gave two questions about a fast change by his friend. His friend was involved richer than ever. When answering the speaker's question, the answer was not related to what the speaker asked. He should answer the journey he can reach a point of success, not answer with his current job. It was clear that the hearer violated the maxim of relation.

Data 4

Chriss : *"I wanna see about a job there"*

Linda : *"Yeah? What job?"*

Chriss : ***"Uh you know, when I was a kid, I could go through a math book in a week. So, I'm gonna go see about, uh, a job they got down there"***

Linda : *"What job?"*

The conversation above took place in the bathroom when the husband and wife were brushing their teeth together. Chriss gave the excuse that today he could not sell machine because he had to go to a company to apply for a job there. However, when asked what kind of work there was, Chriss answered with the achievements he achieved when he was little. Therefore, the answer given was not related to what was being discussed. It was clear that the conversation above violated the maxim of relation.

Data 5

Chriss : *"So you don't trust me now?"*

Linda : ***"Whatever. I don't care"***

The conversation above took place in the dining room when they had just finished having dinner together. The conversation started when Linda asked for the house rent to be paid tomorrow. However, Chris did not have any money and he promised to pay the rent as soon as possible. At that time, Linda was still angry and answered that she did not care about Chris's question. The answer showed ambiguity because it is not clear what the meaning of indifference was. It had 2 meanings, did not care about Chris's job, or did not care that tomorrow he had to be able to pay the house rent. Therefore, the conversation above violated the maxim of manner.

Data 6

Chriss : *"Are you all right with Christopher?"*

Linda : ***"I'm leaving. Chris, I'm leaving"***

The above conversation took place on a public telephone when Chris called Linda to ask how she and her child were doing. It was clear that the hearer's response was not related to what the hearer was asking. He replied with another statement that had nothing to do with the conversation situation. Therefore, the hearer violated the maxim of relation.

Data 7

Christopher : "Where's mom?"
Chriss : **"Look, just get, get your stuff"**
Christopher : "But she told me she was coming to pick me up today"

The conversation above happened at kindergarten when Chris picked up his son. Seeing Chriss who came in a hurry and alone, Christopher asked, **where's mom?** Chriss just answered **"Look, just get, get your stuff"**. It was clear that the hearer was violating the maxim of relation because the information provided was not related to what was being discussed. The hearer tried to divert the topic so that no further questions arise. Diverting the topic was also called Violating maxims.

Data 8

Christopher : "Where do I sleep tonight?"
Chriss : **"Let me ask you smothing. Are you happy?"**
Christopher : "Yeah"

The conversation took place on the street when they were kicked out of the rented house and wanted to find a new place to live. From the conversation above, it was clear that the hearer had violated the maxim of relation because the information provided was not related to what was being discussed. The hearer tried to divert the topic so that no further questions arise. Diverting the topic was also called Violating maxims.

Data 9

Chriss : "You want to go play some basketball?"
Christopher : **"Okay"**

The conversation above happened in the field after Chriss picked up his son. It was clear that the conversation above violated the maxim of quantity because the information provided by the hearer was truly short and unclear. This made the conversation awkward. The hearer should add another statement, so that the conversation looked smooth.

Data 10

Christopher : "Dad, why did we move to a motel?"
Chriss : **"I told you. Because I'm getting a better job. You gotta trust me, all right?"**

The conversation above happened at home when they were cleaning up their belongings to get out of the rented house. The conversation above violated the maxim of quality because the hearer provided incorrect information, so this is a lie. In fact, Chris could not have had a better job. They moved to rent because Chris could not afford it and was late paying for the house. Therefore, to hide it, Chris lied to his son and violated the maxim of quality.

Data 11

Christopher : "Dad, when's mom coming back?"
Chriss : **"I don't know, Christopher."**

The conversation above violated the maxim of manner. This was clearly shown by hearer's answer, he replied "I don't know". The hearer gave ambiguous information. It was not clear what it meant. When he answered I do not know, "it could be possible to go home soon or go home a long time ago. Therefore, a case like this violated the maxim of manner.

Data 12

Christopher : "Hey, you want one of those?"
Chriss : **"No, it's okay"**

The conversation above happened in the supermarket. At that time, Chris saw his son paying attention to food. Therefore, Chriss tried to offer the food. And his son answered and gave incorrect information or lied. The hearer deliberately lied because he knew the speaker did not have money to buy food. Therefore, the hearer violated the maxim of quality.

Data 13

Chriss : "You dressed yet?"
Christopher : **"No"**

The conversation above happened at home when Christopher prepared to go to school. It was clear that the conversation above violated the maxim of quantity because the information provided by the hearer was truly short and unclear. This made the conversation awkward. The hearer should add another statement, so that the conversation looked smooth.

Data 14

Christopher : "Dad, where are we going?"
Chriss : **"Just be quiet. Go get your things, go"**

The conversation above took place on the train. At that time, Chris did not know where to go with his son. The conversation violated the maxim of manner. This was clearly shown by hearer's answer which gave ambiguous information, it was not clear what it means.

Data 15

Christopher : "Where are we going now?"
Chriss : **"Gotta uh... We gotta see somebody else"**
Christopher : "I'm tired"

The conversation above took place on the train. At that time, Chris had an appointment with a client to sold his wares. Conversation that clearly violated the maxim of manner, this was shown when the listener answered by giving ambiguous information, the meaning was not clear. The answer of the hearer had several purposes, whether it was meeting at the market, at the office, at the hospital or something else. It made the speaker very confused. Therefore, the hearer violated the maxim of manner.

5. Conclusion

Maxim violations are a general phenomenon that occurs in conversational activities. It can be found in real life and literary works that contain social interaction. Violation of maxims occurs for several reasons, one of which is misleading the interlocutor. This research investigates maxim violations in the pursuit of happiness movies. From the movie it is concluded that this movie contains all types of maxim violations that finds 15 utterances using maxim violations, maxim of relation is the most frequently uses with 5 utterances of the total data. Then, it was followed by maxim of quality 2 utterances, maxim of quantity with 4 utterances, and maxim of manner with 4 utterances. Knowledge about violating maxims must be studied to know the meaning and intent of types of violations.

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