



# SEEING MAXIM VIOLATION IN EFL CLASSROOM INTERACTION

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## Abstract.

In relating with other people, the cooperative principle may be done to make a dialogue run well and efficiently. However, there are chances when speakers have to violate a maxim because of some reason. Maxim of quality talks about; first, the participants in conversation. Second, they should not say something without adequate evidence. Maxim of quantity is concerned with providing information as required. It should not be less informative or more informative. Maxim of relevance recommends that the utterance should be relevant to the topic being conversed. Maxim of manner requires the speaker's utterance to be understandable or comprehensible or not ambiguous. It should not be blurred. This study aims to determine the kinds of maxim violations done by the students during classroom interaction and the reasons behind the students violating the maxims. This study used observation and interview methods to collect the data. The study results show that there are three maxims violated by students, namely violating the maxim of quantity, relevance, and quality, with a total of 25 utterances. The students violate the maxim because they want to save face and build someone's belief. This study found that the students violated three maxims when interacting with the teacher. They were violating the maxim of quality, violating the maxim of quantity, and violating the maxim of relevance. This study found 2 violating the maxim of quality, 14 violating the maxim of quantity, and 9 violating the maxim of relevance.

**Keywords:** *cooperative principle, violating maxim, classroom interaction,*

## INTRODUCTION

Communication performs a significant function as a social interaction tool to convey information from one person to another. One of the most basic ways of human communication is spoken language (Andresen, 2013). Language functions as a bridge that

connects two or more people (Andy & Ambalegin, 2019). Language is an essential communication instrument (Albiansyah et al., 2021). Principally, communication's purpose is to deliver information or message by the speaker to the interlocutor then make the interlocutor understand what is said. Both participants must be cooperative and refer to the context when conversing to get the information being conveyed (Grice, 1975). To sum up, the ability to communicate is critical to understand to create effective communication.

In the process of effective communication, (Grice, 1975) reveals that people must fulfil cooperative principles, namely four maxims; quality, quantity, relevance, and manner. Maxim of quality talks about; first, the participants in conversation should not say what is considered fake or false. Second, they should not say something without adequate evidence. It means that they need to inform the fact to create cooperative communication. Maxim of quantity is concerned with providing information as required. It should not be less informative or more informative. Maxim of relevance recommends that the utterance should be relevant to the topic being conversed. Maxim of manner requires the speaker's utterance to be understandable or comprehensible or not ambiguous. It should be not be blurred. Thus, to make a successful conversation, people's utterances must be the truth, enough information given, relevant and clear.

Nevertheless, people do not always follow the maxim or violate it in daily life, but they accept, and the communication continues well. The Grice Cooperation Principle is frequently violated by many people when they communicate (Albiansyah et al., 2021). In the teaching process, teachers violate a lot of maxims (Kurniadi, 2021). The teachers and the students did not observe Gricean maxims and often violated the cooperative principle of conversation (Safitri, 2014). The students violated the maxim of quantity, the maxim of quality, the maxim of relation, and the maxim of manner during the presentation (Sukriwati & Salija, 2019). Thus, the participants are not always cooperative with one another.

A number of related previous studies toward violation of maxim in the scope of EFL setting focus on the types that often appear. It is in line with (Sukriwati & Salija, 2019) researched, A Gricean Maxim Analysis In EFL Classroom Interaction. The study concluded that maxim of quantity was the most frequently applied by the EFL students to promote classroom presentation. Similar to (Sukriwati & Salija, 2019), (Ayu et al., 2021) conducted research under the title The Violation Maxim of Student in Faculty of Foreign Languages, Mahasaraswati Denpasar University, and the study found that the most dominant violation of maxim is a violation of the maxim of quantity. Different from the two previous studies, (Hutahaean, 2020) researched about The Cooperative Principle Violation In Classroom Teaching Learning Process, the research found that there are four types of cooperative principle are violated by the teacher and the students in grade eighth classroom teaching and learning process in one of Junior High in Pematangsiantar. There are maxim of quantity 8 (25%), the maxim of quality 4 (12,5%), the maxim of relevant 13 (40,625%), the maxim of manner 7 (21,875%). Then, this research showed that the teacher and the students primarily violated the maxim of relevance.

Based on the previous studies above, most have found that the number of violation appearances is categorized as high. It means that the use of maxim violation regularly occurs, but not many studies examine why people did the violation. Therefore, to fill the gap, this research focused not only on the types used but also on analyzing the reasons related to the use of violation of maxim in the EFL classroom setting.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In the context of communication, speakers and hearers should always conform to some communication rules. In the literature, these rules are known as the cooperative principles which were put forward by Grice (1975). Within those principles, according to Kamila (2014), there is a unique term called implicature which was defined as the capacity of the interlocutors to understand the utterances that being exchanged in spite of some missing elements.

Another term that marks this principle is maxim. In these cooperative principles, Liu (2017) who also bases his explanation on Grice's cooperative principles explain that there are at least four different maxims that both speakers and hearers need to comply. The first maxim is maxim of quantity. Speakers should make sure that they contribute to the conversation by giving the information as required and not beyond what is expected. The second maxim is maxim of quality which means that the speakers should only say the truth and not say what the speakers believe to be false. The third maxim is maxim of relation in which the conversation between both interlocutors is closely related to the topic being discussed. The fourth maxim is the maxim of manner. This maxim refers to the rule that requires the speakers to avoid ambiguity during the conversation. It should be maintained that the conversation should be brief and orderly.

## METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative approach since it focused on the authenticity and naturalness of the data, and there is no treatment term or specific conditioning on the research subject/object. It was in the form of utterances spoken by students naturally during the learning process, starting from pre-activity and then while-activity to post-activity. Moreover, this study revealed the phenomenon of using the violation maxim by students and understanding the meaning behind the phenomenon. As stated by (Creswell, 2012), the function of qualitative research was to explore a problem and develop a detailed understanding of a phenomenon. Thus, the qualitative approach was applied to this study.

A case study approach was utilized because, in this research, there were a series of scientific activities carried out intensively, in detail, and in-depth about the activities of students during classroom interaction to gain in-depth knowledge about what types of maxims were violated and why they do it. Moreover, as noted by (Yin, 2018), for the research questions that seek to explain some current circumstances, for example, "why" some social phenomenon performs, and the research questions that require an extensive and "in-depth" description of some social phenomenon, a case study was relevant the more.

This research setting was one of the senior high schools in Garut. The school was chosen because it has an English club extracurricular program that focuses on speaking activities. Hence, the student's level of maturity when speaking in class was presumably good. It was shown by their achievements: the winner of the speech competition at national English day Surabaya, the winner of the poetry competition at national English day Surabaya, the runner-up of English Olympic, etc. Thus, this school was qualified for this study.

The participants were eleventh-grade science students because they were considered mature in language. They have studied grammar, tenses, types of texts, speeches, etc. In addition, the selection of the science students was based on their involvement in the English club program, which indicated that their intensity in using English was higher than the social science students.

To collect data, this study used observation and interview. Observation in this study was used to collect the data in the form of utterances from the students who violated the maxims during the learning process. This study used the semi-structured interview to collect the students' reasons for violating the maxim during classroom interaction.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study found that the students violated three maxims when interacting with the teacher. They were violating the maxim of quality, violating the maxim of quantity, and violating the maxim of relevance. There were 25 conversations of student-teacher interaction contained violated Grice's maxim. This study found 2 violating the maxim of quality, 14 violating the maxim of quantity, and 9 violating the maxim of relevance

**Tabel 1. Data Distribution of Violating Maxim**

Violating of Maxim	Frequency	Percentage
Quantity	14	56%
Quality	2	8%
Manner	-	-
Relevance	9	36%
Total	25	100%

### a. Violation of Quantity Maxim

Quantity maxim requires a contribution that is informative as required (Grice, 1975). Therefore, when someone contributes more or less required information, it can be said they violated the quantity maxim. This study found 14 utterances containing violations of the quantity maxims done by the students. The following examples show the violation of the quantity maxim that S20 and S1 have done.

#### (1) Excerpt 1

(This conversation occurred during the pre-activity session where the teacher asked the students about the material that had been discussed at the last meeting).

- T : *"oke minggu kemarin kita udah membahas?"*  
 Okay, for the last meeting, we discussed about?
- S20 : *"Invitation, yang praktek kedepan tea bu"*  
 Invitation, where we practice in front of the class,  
 Miss

Based on the data above, the teacher and student conversation happened. Therefore, we can see that the teacher (T) only asked about the material discussed in the previous meeting. However, student 20 (S20) answered more than was required by mentioning

*“where we practice in front of the class, Miss,”* even though the information needed was only enough to say *“invitation.”* From the explanation above, S20’s utterances violated the quantity maxim by answering more than required as he talked about *“where we practice in front of the class, Miss,”* which his interlocutor did not ask. This expression reveals that he wants to be seen as a student who pays attention during the learning process until he remembers the previous week’s learning activities, i.e., practice in front of the class, and this also indicates that he wants to be trusted and noticed by his teacher as an active student. According to (Christoffersen, 2005), building one’s belief is when a speaker expands something to drive the hearer more to believe. Thus, what was said by S20 is included in the category of building one’s belief.

**(2) Excerpt 2**

(This conversation occurred during the while-activity session where the teacher explained about formal and informal invitation).

- T : *“Bisa berikan contohnya kalau formal invitation itu seperti apa?”*  
 Can you give me an example of a formal invitation?
- S1 : *“formal”*  
 Formal

Similar to the first data, the second data is also included in the violation of the quantity maxim because S1 was not cooperative. He broke the rule of the maxim of quantity by conveying less information. The point asked for was an example, but S1 tends only to repeat the words mentioned by the teacher before. Thus, he did not answer the question as needed. Then it is the same as the first data that his intention, in the end, was to attain the trust of his teacher. Then this is also included in the category of building one’s belief according to Christoffersen’s (2005) categorization.

b. Violation of Quality Maxim

Statements that can be said to violate the quality maxim are the ones that utter something that is not true. Quality maxim requires utterances with enough evidence and accuracy (Grice, 1975). This study found two statements that violated the quality maxim done only by S11 and S1. Here are the examples of utterances that have violated the quality maxim.

**(1) Excerpt 1**

(This conversation happened during the student’s practice session about active and passive voice).

- T : *“Meuni diujung kitu dudukna, kenapa pindah han?”*  
 you're too cornered, why you move han?
- S11 : *“asa ... kahalangan bu”*  
 I’m ... feeling blocked, Miss  
 (S11 is a boy, and he sat in the girl’s row)

The data above showed a violation of the quality maxim. When S11 said he was feeling blocked, he answered the teacher’s question hesitantly, as seen from his stammered and doubtful answer, whereas if he delivered the truth and felt blocked, he would respond confidently. Therefore, S11, as the speaker, violated the maxim of quality by answering the thing that was not what he felt was true. In this context, he chose to be untruthful because it was to save his face. It is in line with Christoffersen (2005) that speaking the untruth means that people are surviving and avoiding anything that could

put them in an inconvenient condition.

**(2) Excerpt 2**

(This conversation happened during the practice session on questions about active and passive sentences where the teacher dictates the questions that students must do).

- T : *"Iyah, sok silahkan tulis, dictation aja yah.. I fix a car, yang kanan, I fix a car..."*  
Please write the question, just dictation, okay? ... I fix a car, for the right row, I fix a car ...
- S9 : *"apa bu?"*  
Pardon me, Miss?
- S1 : *"P...I...C...K...S"*  
*"P...I...C...K...S"*  
(S1 was spelling a word)

Same as the first data, the second data also violated the maxim of quality since S1's answer to student 9 (S9)'s question seemed false; it can be seen from how he replies to it. He seemed unsure of his reply. He also felt that the answer was incorrect but still tried to answer to be noticed as an active student by his teacher and gain extra marks. It means that he wanted to build trust from his teacher. Therefore, it was included in one of Christoffersen's (2005) categories, called building someone's belief.

c. Violation of Relevance Maxim

The relevance maxim requires relevance between the speaker and the hearer. In addition, this maxim demands that the speakers be relevant to the discussed topic (Grice, 1975). There are nine utterances containing violations of the relevance maxim. Two of the examples can be seen below.

**(1) Excerpt 1**

(This conversation happened occurred during the while-activity session where the teacher asked a question about formal and informal invitation).

- T : *"Apa itu meeting?"*  
What is the meaning of meeting (in the Indonesian Language)?
- S1 : *"Rapat"*  
Meeting
- S11 : *"sholat"*  
Salat

From the conversation above, we can see that S11's answer was irrelevant to the topic being asked. He was asked about the meaning of the word meeting in the Indonesian Language, yet his answer *"Sholat"* was unrelated to the topic. In the context of this conversation, he said *"Sholat,"* which was irrelevant to the topic being discussed, was to make a joke. In line with what was mentioned by (Fatmawati, 2020), she stated that one of the reasons for violating the maxim of relevance was because of humor or jokes. While S11 was supposed to give an explanation related to the question like S1's answer. Therefore, it can be said that S11 violated the relevance maxim.

**(2) Excerpt 2**

(This conversation happened occurred during the pre-activity session where the teacher asked a question about the student's activity during holiday).

- T : *"Ever or never? Kalian pernah membuka buku pelajaran bahasa"*

*inggris nya selama liburan”*

Have you ever opened the English textbook during the holiday?

AS : No

S11 : No no

T : *“Padahal kalian libur kan yah? Before ramadhan yah, selama ramadhan kalian juga libur, jadi kalian tidak belajar dibulan ramadhan yah?”*

Whereas you're on off-days, aren't you? So, for example, before Ramadan and during Ramadan, you also have a day off, so don't study during Ramadan?

S1 : *“ngaji atuh bu”*

we read al Quran Miss

The data above was the same as the first data, which violated the relevance maxim. It can be seen from the S1's answer to T's question about whether the students open the English textbooks during the Ramadan holiday or not, and he answered *“ngaji atuh bu”* which was out of the topic being discussed. The declaration *“ngaji atuh bu”* from S1 shows that he was hiding the truth that he did not open the English book during the Ramadan holidays. Still, he wants to keep showing that he did other necessary things, namely praying. According to (Christoffersen, 2005), hiding the truth occurred when a speaker saved their privation.

They conceal information from someone and do not allow someone to know it. S1 covered the fact that he did not open his English book by revealing other things irrelevant to the topic asked by his teacher. Thus, hiding the truth is why he violates the maxim of relevance. To conclude, the maxim of quantity, relevance, and quality are the three maxims violated by the students during classroom interaction.

## CONCLUSIONS

There are two conclusions in this study, the types of violating maxim used by the students during classroom interaction and the students' reasons for violating the maxim. The first conclusion, the types of violating maxims used by the students are violation maxim of quantity, violation maxim of relevance, and violation maxim of quality. First, the violation of maxim quantity is the highest with a total of 56%, followed by the violation of maxim relevance with 36% and 6% for the violation of quality. In the second conclusion, the reasons why students violate the maxim are categorized to Christofferson's categorization; hide the truth, save face, feel jealousy about something, satisfy the hearer, cheer the hearer, avoid hurting, build one's belief, and convincing the hearer. However, there are only two students' reasons for violating the maxim. First, save face, and second, build one's belief.

The suggestion from this study are; first, for the students who do not give the necessary information during classroom interaction or violate the quantity maxim, the maxim that was violated the most during the learning process to develop their knowledge about the lessons they learn to answer the questions appropriate to the studied topics. Because they already dare to be active in class by answering questions from the teacher, but unfortunately, it is not balanced with their knowledge. They

often answer questions that are irrelevant to the topic being discussed. Second, for further research, it is recommended to find out whether the violation of maxims committed by students during the learning process will have a significant impact or not on learning activity.

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