

A Pragmatic Analysis of Maxim Flouting Performed by the Main Character in *Philomena* Movie

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Abstract

This study has two objectives; they are (1) to identify the types of maxim flouting performed by the main character in *Philomena*, and (2) to describe the strategies of maxim flouting used by the main character in *Philomena*. In term of approach, the researcher analyzed the types and strategies of maxim flouting performed by the main character in *Philomena* by using pragmatic approach. Meanwhile, the type of study was qualitative-quantitative method. The instruments used were the researcher himself and data sheet. The data were collected by taking the dialogues which contained maxim flouting with careful observation. The analysis was conducted by (1) coding the identified data (2) interpreting the coded data (3) checking the accuracy of the interpreted data, and (4) drawing conclusions. In ensuring the trustworthiness of the data, peer discussions were conducted by the researcher. In the movie, Martin, the main character, flouts all types of maxim; they are maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation, and maxim of manner. In term of strategies, there are seven strategies which were used by him to flout those maxims; they are giving too little information, giving too much information, hyperbole, metaphor, irony, being irrelevant, and being obscure.

Keywords: pragmatics, maxim flouting, *Philomena*

INTRODUCTION

Language is an important part in any society because it is used by people to communicate with others. Conversation, which is a part of daily communication, can be created by two or more people. In having a conversation, even though it is not necessary, people can fulfill the Cooperative Principle, which was proposed by Grice. Yule (1996:128)

states that Cooperative Principle is a basic assumption in conversation that each participant can attempt so that they contribute appropriately, at the required time, to the current exchange of talk. It can help people understand the message in an utterance so that communication problems do not occur.

In analyzing maxim flouting pragmatic approach is the appropriate approach. According to Yule (1996:3),

pragmatics can explore how listeners make inferences about what is said so that the speaker's intended meaning can be understood. Besides, it also explores the unsaid meaning. Therefore, pragmatic approach is appropriate because there is a discussion about meanings in pragmatics.

Maxim flouting occurs when Cooperative Principle is not observed and implicatures rise from it (Grice, 1975:49). In addition to Grice, Thomas (1995:65) states that maxim flouting does not occur coincidentally, but rather intentionally. The hearer is also expected to understand the meaning behind the utterances.

This research has two objectives; they are (1) to identify the types of maxim flouting performed by the main character in *Philomena*, and (2) to describe the strategies of maxim flouting used by the main character in *Philomena*. This study can give benefits to the readers since it can enrich the knowledge about pragmatics, or specifically maxim flouting. It can also be used to increase the knowledge

about communication, since maxim flouting can occur in conversation.

RESEARCH METHOD

Descriptive qualitative is a research which has descriptive nature (Jensen and Jankowski, 1991:44). Since this research deals with describing maxim flouting, it is considered as a qualitative research. However, the researcher also used quantitative method which is limited to determine the percentage of the data. In other words, this research belongs to qualitative-quantitative research.

Heigham and Croker (2009:11) state that the primary research instrument in qualitative research is the researcher him/herself. Therefore, the researcher became the main instrument of this research. Data sheet also became an instrument in this research and was used to illustrate the data.

In this research, the forms of the data were lingual units consisting of words, phrases, clauses and sentences in the *Philomena* movie. Meanwhile, the contexts of the data were dialogues which contain maxim flouting since the object of the

research was a movie, which has a lot of dialogues. Next, the sources of the data were *Philomena* movie and its transcript.

The data of the research were collected by using visual analysis. First, the researcher downloaded them. Next, the researcher watched the movie and carefully checked the script and the dialogue to increase the accuracy of the data. Lastly, the data were identified.

In analyzing the data, data coding became the first step to ease the data analysis. Then, the coded data were interpreted. In this step, more detailed explanations were made. After that, the interpreted data were checked again. Lastly, the conclusions were made.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Martin, the main character, flouts all types of maxim; they are maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation, and maxim of manner. Maxim of relation flouting becomes the most dominant type of maxim flouting since it occurs 18 times with the percentage of 39.1%.

Maxim of quantity flouting follows maxim of relation flouting closely. It occurs 16 times with the percentage of 34.7%. Next, there is maxim of quality flouting which occurs 9 times with the percentage of 19.6%. Lastly, there is maxim of manner flouting. It occurs 3 times with the percentage of 6.6%.

Meanwhile, in case of strategies, seven strategies are used; they are giving too little information, giving too much information, hyperbole, metaphor, irony, being irrelevant, and being obscure. The most frequently used strategy is being irrelevant since it occurs 18 times with the frequency of 39.1%. Next, giving too much information follows. It occurs 14 times with the percentage of 30.4%. Then, hyperbole comes after giving too much information since it occurs 4 times with the percentage of 8.7%. Next, there are metaphor and being obscure. They occur 3 times with the percentage of 6.6%. Lastly, there are giving too little information and irony because both of them occur twice with the percentage of 4.3%. More detailed explanations about types

and of maxim flouting can be seen below.

The dialogue below is an example of maxim of quantity flouting.

Waitress: We also have pancakes.

Martin : **Thank you. Trying to have a private conversation.**

27/ QT/TM

Martin, who is talking with Philomena, is suddenly approached by a waitress. She offers him and Philomena a lot of food and beverages continually. However, he does not appear to be interested in her offers.

As a result, he expresses his gratitude to her by saying ‘Thank you’ because he wants to at least appreciate her. Besides, he says that he is trying to have a private conversation as well, which is not expected by the waitress, to make her go away. In other words, he flouts the maxim of quantity since the information in his utterance is too much.

The following dialogue is an example of maxim of relation flouting.

Sally : Dead or alive, happy or sad.

They're both good. Spin it. Find a story.

Martin: **Look, if I stay here and she goes home, no one's going to answer my questions.**

33/ RL/IR

After Martin tells Sally that Anthony is already dead, she thinks that the story is good no matter how it ends. However, she does not appear to be satisfied and demands more from Martin. She orders him to falsify the story so that it looks more interesting than what was actually happened.

In this case, Martin flouts maxim of relation because his response is not relevant to Sally’s order. He says that if he stays in America without Philomena, nobody is going to answer his questions since he does not have anything to do with Anthony. In other words, he tries to say to Sally that if Philomena goes home, he will find it difficult to look for the information related to her son and therefore cannot make the story more interesting, which is what she wants.

The following dialogue is an example of hyperbole, a strategy to flout maxim of quality.

Kate : I wish you had. You need to get back to work. What happened to that book on Russian history?

Martin: **No one's interested in Russian bloody history.**

6/QL/HB

Kate wants to see Martin work again because he has just sacked recently. Fortunately, Martin has a plan to make some money by writing a book about Russian history. However, Martin feels pessimistic about his plan.

Martin flouts the maxim of quality by using a hyperbole. He wants to tell Kate how pessimistic he is about his plan by stating that Russian history is bloody, while in fact it does not only contain horrendous events. He also says that no one is interested in what is going to be discussed in the book while there is no way that no one is interested on that subject, at least there are some people who are interested in it such as historians, history teachers and students who are majoring in history.

An example of being obscure, the strategy to flout maxim of manner, can be seen in the following dialogue.

Kate : How's Philomena?

Martin: Well, I've finally seen, first hand, what a lifetime's diet of the *Reader's Digest*, the *Daily Mail* and romantic fiction can do to a person's brain.

26/MA/OB

The setting is inside Martin's hotel room. He is there to get some rest and to talk to his wife. He keeps talking to her and the Irish mother comes up because Kate asks about her condition.

To answer his wife's question, Martin says that he finally knows what lifetime's diet of the *Reader's Digest*, the *Daily Mail* and romantic fiction can do to a person's brain. He uses the word 'a person', which makes his utterance sound obscure and funny, to refer to Philomena since she likes reading them. Even so, Kate knows what he means. He chooses to be obscure to make fun of Philomena since he thinks that reading them can make her look silly. Hence, it can be said that Martin flouts maxim of manner by being obscure.

CONCLUSIONS

In term of types of maxim flouting, all types of maxim flouting occur in the movie, and maxim of relation flouting is the most dominant type of flouting. It is because the main character is good at relating irrelevant things. Meanwhile, maxim of manner flouting is the least dominant type of flouting. The main character is an assertive man. Therefore, he rarely says something obscure to avoid misunderstanding.

In strategies term, seven strategies occur in the movie; they are giving too little information, giving too much information, hyperbole, metaphor, irony, being irrelevant, and being obscure. Being irrelevant is the most dominant strategy because maxim of relation flouting is the most dominant type of flouting. Meanwhile, giving too little information and irony are the least dominant strategies. In the former's case, it is because the main character likes to put emphases on his thoughts, which can be done better by giving more information rather than giving too little information. In the

latter's case, it is because the main character has a preference to insult others directly since he is blunt.

SUGGESTIONS

It is suggested to the English Language and Literature students who are majoring in linguistics to learn more about maxim flouting because it has become a part of everyday life, which means that it can be found in any form of social interaction since people do not always observe the Cooperative Principle and give implicatures to their utterances.

This research is solely focused on maxim flouting because its objectives are identifying the types of maxim flouting and describing the strategies of maxim flouting. The combination of maxim flouting, which is a part of Cooperative Principle, with other topics of a particular linguistic branch, such as sociolinguistics can widen the range of a research. Therefore, it is suggested that other researchers combine maxim flouting with other topics of discussion of linguistics.

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