

## **A Pragmatic Analysis of Maxim Flouting Performed by the Characters in *This Boy's Life* Movie**

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### **Abstract**

This research is under pragmatic study. The objectives of this study are to identify the types and strategies of maxim flouting performed by the characters in *This Boy's Life* movie. Qualitative-quantitative method was applied in this research. The researcher and data sheet became the instrument of this research. The form of the data was lingual units. The context of the data was dialogues. Moreover, *This Boy's Life* movie and its transcript became the sources of the data. Furthermore, the analyses were conducted by using visual analysis. The steps were (1) identifying the data, (2) classifying and coding the data, (3) analyzing the classified and coded data, (4) checking the accuracy of the analyzed data, and (5) reporting and drawing the conclusions of the data. The trustworthiness of this research was gained by having routine consultations and peer discussion. The results of this research show that all maxims of Cooperative Principle are flouted by using some strategies. Overstatement and understatement are the strategies to flout maxim of quantity. Then, metaphor, hyperbole, irony, and sarcasm are the strategies to flout maxim of quality. Meanwhile, changing the topic becomes the strategy to flout maxim of relation. Finally, being obscure becomes the strategy to flout maxim of manner. In *This Boy's Life*, quantity maxim flouting is the most often used types of maxim flouting. The strategy which is mostly used to flout this maxim is overstatement. It happens because there is a character named Dwight who wants to dominate the other characters. There is also the other character named Toby who often flouts the maxims by giving too much information to prove that what his stepfather thinks to control the other characters is false.

Key words: Pragmatics, Cooperative Principle, Maxim Flouting, *This Boy's Life*

### **INTRODUCTION**

As social being, people need to interact with each other by using communication. Communication is

used by people to share information and to express their ideas. It also becomes a way in which people can express their ideas and build up their social relationships. In short,

communication occurs when the meaning delivered by a speaker can be interpreted by a listener as the partner of the conversation.

The study which is concerned with the field of communication and its meaning is called Pragmatics. According to Yule (1996:3), pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker and interpreted by a listener. Linguistically, to make a good conversation, people need to work together. In other words, both the speaker and listener have to ensure that the meaning carried in communication can be delivered properly. Thus, they must have good intention to be shared with each other. The way in which they cooperate when they are communicating is called Cooperative Principle. Grice in Yule (1996:37) says that people will have a successful conversation if they fulfill the Cooperative Principle. They are maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation, and maxim of manner.

However, people may break the rules of Cooperative Principle. It happens because people may utter something which is difficult to be understood. There are implied meanings behind their utterances. The phenomena when people do not follow the rules of cooperative principle are called maxim flouting. Cutting (2002:37) says that the condition when a speaker seems not to follow the maxims but accepts to appreciate the meaning implied is known as maxim flouting. There are some problems that deal with maxim flouting. They are types and strategies of maxim flouting. Therefore, this research has two objectives which are to identify the types and the strategies of maxim flouting performed by the characters in *This Boy's Life* movie.

There are some significant knowledge which can be gained through this research. This study can give additional knowledge in studying pragmatics, especially maxim flouting. Furthermore, this study can motivate people to study more about the

meaning of language in communication.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

Qualitative-quantitative method was applied in this research. Qualitative method was concerned with the description of the data.. However, the researcher also used quantitative method only to determine the percentage of the data and to support analyzing the data.

In this research, the data were in the forms of lingual units such as utterances found in the conversation of *This Boy's Life*. Denscombe (2007:286) states that qualitative data take the form of words, either spoken or written, and visual images which are observed or creatively produced. Meanwhile, the contexts of the data were dialogues since the object of the research was a movie. Finally, the sources of the data of this research were *This Boy's Life* movie and its transcript.

Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009:189) state that visual analysis, such as film analysis is one of data

collecting techniques. Therefore, visual analysis became the method for collecting the data. There were some steps which were used to analyze the data of this research. First, the researcher identified the data. Then, the researcher classified and coded the identified data based on types and strategies of maxim flouting. After that, the researcher began to analyze the classified data. The researcher also checked the analyzed data again to ensure the accuracy of the data. Finally, the researcher reported the data and drew conclusions.

## **FINDINGS**

The findings of the research show that all types of maxim flouting are performed by the characters in the movie. They are quantity maxim flouting, quality maxim flouting, relation maxim flouting, and manner maxim flouting. However, the total frequency of occurrence of each type is different. The occurrence of quantity maxim flouting with 33.33% becomes the highest among all. This percentage means that quantity maxim flouting

occurs 20 times out of 60. On the second rank, quantity maxim flouting is followed by quality maxim flouting with the percentage of 28.33%. The percentage means that the total occurrence of quality maxim flouting is 17 times out of 60. The third rank is relation maxim flouting with the percentage of 21.67%. It means that the occurrence of relation maxim flouting is 13 times out of 60. Then, manner maxim flouting with the percentage of 16.67% becomes the least prominent among all.

All types of maxim flouting are flouted by using some strategies. In this research, overstatement strategy becomes the most used strategy which is used to flout maxim of quantity with the occurrence of 15 times out of 60. This phenomenon happens because some characters tend to give too much information when they are talking about something. They wanted to give detailed information with the utterances they uttered. Overstatement strategy is also used when one

character in the movie tries to dominate the other characters.

## DISCUSSION

Meanwhile, the discussion of maxim flouting is explained by giving a detailed example. The dialogue below is an example of quantity maxim flouting which is flouted by using overstatement strategy.

Toby : I'll be through in a minute.

Dwight: You left the lid off the damn toothpaste again.

Toby : Dwight, is that the best you can come up with?

Dwight: **This is my house, and I get to say about the toothpaste. You got that? Huh? Have you? Huh? If you lived with your dad, Duke, and his rich wife, things might be different. But he's not here now, is he? Is he? Oh, Duke. Duke, are you here? Duke? Dukie? Are you here? Oh, how sad. Duke's not here. Oh, boo-hoo. My house. My bathroom. I get to say about the toothpaste. You got that?**

54/Qn/Ov

The dialogue happens when Toby is brushing his teeth in the bathroom after having dinner with Caroline, Pearl and his father-in-law, Dwight. Not long after that, Dwight also enters the bathroom. Then, he is angry to know that Toby left the lid the toothpaste. He pushes Toby's shoulder and grumbles a lot about the toothpaste. Toby disputes what Dwight says about him. Then, Dwight answers Toby's anger by using overstatement strategy. Here, Dwight fails to observe maxim of quantity since he provides too much information which is not needed by Toby. By using overstatement strategy, Dwight wants to say more that all of people in his house have to be obedient with his rule.

Furthermore, the following example shows the used of hyperbole strategy to flout maxim of quality.

Arthur: Wanna walk home with me and Pepper? I knew I'd like you, because you're an alien.

Toby : An alien?

Arthur: You and I don't belong in Concrete. **This place would like to kill us.**

#### 44/QI/Hy

The dialogues **happens** when Toby and Arthur are going home together after attending the scout meeting. The use of hyperbole strategy appears when Arthur says that Concrete will kill them. In this case, Arthur fails to observe maxim of quality since he exaggerates his statement by saying something which cannot happen in real life. Actually, Arthur wants to make Toby know that Concrete is a hard place to live.

Then, the example of relation maxim flouting which is performed by using changing the topic strategy is explained as follow.

Caroline: What time is it?

Toby : Almost 7

Caroline: Why didn't you wake me?

Toby :**The potatoes are frying and I'm heating up hot dogs. I'm sorry.**

Caroline: I know you are

**5/RI/Ct**

The dialogue happens when Caroline asks the reason why Toby does not wake her. Here, Toby answers Caroline's question by changing the

topic into what he did when she was asleep. Actually, to observe maxim of relation, Toby should give an answer about the reason why he does not wake his mother. On the other hand, Toby provides an irrelevant answer. By giving an irrelevant answer, Toby tries to make Caroline realize something behind his utterances. He wants to say sorry about his mistake and expects his mother to forgive him. Therefore, this datum is categorized as an example of relation maxim flouting.

Finally, the example of manner maxim flouting is explained in the following dialogues. Meanwhile, the strategy which is used to flout the maxim is being obscure strategy.

Toby : Let me copy your math homework.

Arthur: No. But I'll show you how to do it.

Toby : **I tell you I'm thirsty and you offer me a sandwich.**

#### 56/Mn/Ob

Dialogue above happens when Toby asks for Arthur's math homework. However, Arthur does not grant Toby's wish. It makes Toby gets

furiously and gives some obscure words. By saying "I tell you I'm thirsty and you offer me a sandwich", Toby says some obscure words which break the rule of maxim of manner. The aim of Toby's obscure word is to heighten the ambiguity in order to make a point that Arthur does not help him give the way to solve his problem.

## CONCLUSIONS

The researcher found that all types of maxim are flouted. They are quantity maxim flouting, quality maxim flouting, relation maxim flouting, and manner maxim flouting. The characters in the movie flout the maxims by using some strategies. Maxim of quantity is flouted by overstatement and understatement strategy. Maxim of quality is flouted by hyperbole, metaphor, irony, banter, and sarcasm. Meanwhile, maxim of relation is flouted by changing the topic. Lastly, maxim of manner is flouted by being obscure.

Quantity maxim flouting becomes the most often used type of maxim flouting. It happens because

there is one character named Dwight who often flout maxim of quantity by giving too much information to show his dominance to the other characters. Meanwhile, overstatement strategy becomes the most often used strategy to flout maxim.

### **SUGGESTIONS**

By reading this research, it is expected that linguistics students will explore more about the phenomena of maxim

flouting in other areas. There is possibility that sometimes there are misunderstandings between the speaker and the listener when they are having conversation. Therefore, it is expected that the other researcher will understand more about pragmatics and explore more about the phenomena of language use, especially the phenomena of maxim flouting.

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