**FLOUTING MAXIMS BY EFL TERTIARY STUDENTS IN EFL CLASSROOM INTERACTION**

Wawa Puja Prabawa

*STKIP Pasundan, Indonesia*

Email: wawapuja@gmail.com

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**ABSTRACT**

This present study tries to elaborate the area of study particularly conversation principle on EFL area especially in Indonesia EFL context. This study focuses on the identifying different types of conversational implicatures especially flouting maxim found in EFL classroom interaction. Adopting a qualitative approach, it involved lecturer and students dialogue in classroom interaction through observation and video recording. The results show that students flouting maxim of quality and manner in classroom interaction. Students preferred not to tell the truth information and answer the yes-no question using long response answer and ambiguous words.

**Keywords**: *Conversational implicature, maxim, flouting maxim*

**INTRODUCTION**

A communication device to communicate with each other is confirmed as language. People can make statements, convey facts and knowledge or report something and keep social relations among the language users using language. Thus, language indicates that people can express their ideas, feeling and information through communication. People’s utterances that exist in the context or even beyond the context can be analyzed through the meaning either literal meaning or non-literal one. In understanding people’s utterances, the listeners have to know the speaker’s aim and intention so that they can communicate well to others. It is not an easy task for someone to understand the utterance though they have a good mastery of vocabulary and grammatical rules.

People exchange their ideas, feelings or information in form of written or spoken form with their interlocutor in daily communication. They expect that their exchange utterances should be meaningful in order that the communication can be successful and run smoothly since there are so many various styles of conversation occurs. Levinson (1983) pointed out that conversation freely alternate in speaking which generally occurs outside specific institutional settings like religious services, law, courts, classrooms and the like.

Conversational implicature implied as an idea in pragmatics that is needed to learn and study in understanding the messages conveyed in the daily conversation. Speakers and listeners need to understand each other’s meaning of the utterance to generate a good conversation. As a matter of fact, they tend to follow the cooperative principle and the conversational maxim by giving enough, true, related, and arranged utterance which is assumed as explicit information.

Conversational implicature refers to the indirect conveying of meaning as distinct from what is said by the speakers for cooperative purposes (Davis, 2005). Horn (2004) highlighted the distinction between what is said and what is implied to understand the concept of implicature more clearly. In other words, “What is said” refers to the truth value of the proposition while “what is implied” refers to the non-traditional meaning intended by the speaker (Rizaoglu & Yavuz, 2017).

In different circumstances, conversational implicature tends to flout the conversational maxim. Floats of the maxims happen in which the speaker deliberately does not explicitly show what he or she means so the maxims cannot operate normally. Cooperative principle of conversation is categorized and elaborated into four sub principles. As Grice (1975) in Inayati, Citraresmana, & Mahdi (2014) mentioned maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation, and maxim of manner. It holds that the participants involved in social interaction are expected to speak truthfully, sufficiently, relevantly and clearly (Mohsenzadeh & Derakhsan, 2014). Listener understand that what speaker intends to convey extends beyond the literal meaning of the words when one or more of these maxims are violated by the speaker.

Teaching and learning are always mediated through language in EFL classroom. Moreover, it becomes an intrinsic interest to all teachers to the practical use of language concern. It will be necessary to adopt a dual approach considering both what is taught in language lessons and how language is taught through classroom communication. Since classroom language teaching is an occupation which essentially uses language in a social context to promote the learning and teaching language to be used in a social context, so pragmatics is applicable to language teaching. In addition, the successful teaching derived from teacher’s ability in doing their communication.

Mohsanzadeh & Derakhshan (2014) stated many studies have evidenced that the understanding and conveyance of implied meaning is a difficult task for the majority of EFL learners. Maxim of quantity, quality and manner are sorts of maxim flouted by speaker in EFL classroom interaction (Dwi, 2015). It is in line with Safitri, Seken & Putra (2014), revealed in their study, teachers and students flouting maxim of quality, quantity, relation and manner. The present study tries to elaborate the area of study particularly conversation principle on EFL area especially in Indonesia EFL context. This study focuses on the identifying different types of conversational implicatures especially flouting maxim found in EFL classroom interaction.

**Flouting Maxim**

Grice proposed what a speaker means by an utterance can be divided into what the speaker “says” and what the speaker thereby implicates.”A speaker and a hearer on the conversation are supposed to respond each other in their turn and exchange with the needed information that benefits both of them in a communication (Crowley and Mitchell, 1994). They can understand each other’s utterances and their conversation become smooth by giving required information. In fact, not all the speaker’s utterances in the conversation can be understood by the listener well since it may obviously contain an implicature. It means that there is an implied meaning of the speaker’s utterance and it is contrast to the truth of speaker’s utterance.

Flouting maxims means that speaker violates maxim as an indication that something being said indirectly. Speaker sometimes tends to flout conversational maxim in conveying additional information in the conversation. The speaker does not intend to mislead the hearer but wants the hearer to look for the conversational implicature, that is, the meaning of the utterance not directly stated in the words uttered when flouting a maxim. Thus, the meaning purpose may be to effectively communicate a message when the speaker intentionally fails to observe a maxim.

Khosravizadeh & Sadehvandi (2011) argued that the flouting of maxims is difference from the violation of the maxims because it occurs when the hearer really does not understand with the violated utterances, while the flouting of maxims occurs when the speaker intentionally stops to use the maxims to flatter the hearer to deduce the meaning named implicature.

Grice (1975) described maxim as any four rules that a speaker is assumed to make a contribution that is adequately but not overly informative (quantity maxim), the speaker does not believe to be false and for which adequate evidence is had (quality maxim), is relevant (maxim of relation or relevance), and is clear, unambiguous, brief and orderly (maxim of manner) (Inayati, Citraresmana, & Mahdi, 2014).

Schiffrin (2001) as in Ayasreh & Razali (2018) explained the four maxims as the following:

* Maxim of Quality: One should not say anything about a topic in which he/she lacks adequate evidence of: one is not allowed to lie or say what he/she believe to be false; the key word of this maxim is truth or instatement
* Maxim of Quantity: One should not make the contribution to the conversation less or more informative than is required. In other words, make the contribution as informative as required for the purpose of the conversation.
* Maxim of Relation: One is required to say something relevant to the topic.
* Maxim of Manner: One should avoid ambiguity and obscurity of expression and he/she should be brief and orderly.

Grundy (2000) suggests that flouting maxims is a prominent way of getting an addressee to draw an inference, for example:

*A: Can I borrow your laptop?*

*B: Well, uh, I have so many assignments that need to be done.*

From the example above, B’s answer violated the maxim of quantity. B does not supply as much information as A desired (whether he can borrow the laptop or not).

Brown and Yule (1983) explained that flouting of maxim made by speaker expresses an additional meaning (contextual meaning) to his or her utterance. A speaker who does not follow the conversational maxims can be categorized to be flouting the maxims and consequently, conversational implicature is produced by the speaker. Thomas (1995) suggested that in conversational implicature, what is implied is varied based on the context of utterance.

**METHOD**

Using a qualitative approach, this study aims to investigate how the conversational implicatures especially flouting maxim are being formed in teaching and learning activity in tertiary students’ classroom interaction. The participants of this study were lecturer and students of school of higher learning education in Cimahi.

The data used in this study were collected through observation and video recording. Data were gathered from lecturer and students’ performance during EFL teaching and learning process which were indicated flout the maxim of conversation. The data were limited only the utterances that flout the maxim of conversation since flouting maxim can generate conversational implicature.

Data were analyzed using transcribing the video recording in terms of lecturer and students’ utterances in classroom interaction based on the type of conversational maxim that being flouted.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Taken from one session teaching and learning process, lasted for three hours in listening course, it had been analyzed by transcribing and categorizing the utterances based on Grice’s theory of conversational implicature. The analysis showed that both lecturer and students observe all of the Gricean maxims in certain part of classroom interaction. The total utterances that were indicated to be flouting maxims produced by students were 4 utterances. The following table described the frequency of the flouting maxim.

Table 1. Frequency of Flouting Maxim in EFL Classroom Interaction

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | Flouting Maxim | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
| 1. | Flouting maxim of quantity | 0 | 0 |
| 2. | Flouting maxim of quality | 1 | 25 |
| 3. | Flouting maxim of relation | 0 | 0 |
| 4. | Flouting maxim of manner | 3 | 75 |
| Total | | 4 | 100% |

As it can be seen from table 1, it indicates that majority of speakers flout maxim of manner. It also indicates that the speakers fail to provide clear, not ambiguous and understandable meaning during the conversation. Based on Grice’s theory of conversational implicature, generally speaking, an implicature is generated simply in the case of flouting the maxim. In essence, a maxim happens to be flouted when a speaker is unsuccessful to observe the maxim deliberately and with no intention to delude or defraud the hearer. The following were the examples of flouting maxim produced by students in classroom interaction.

*L : Are you feeling well or sick?*

*S : I’m feeling good today*

In this excerpt, it can be seen that lecturer (L) asked a clear question to the students (S), whether they were feeling well or sick. Nevertheless, students’ answer flouted the maxim of manner since they did not answer the yes-no question posed by the lecturer. Actually, students just need to reply “yes” or “no” to the question then they could give the information whether they were feeling well or sick.

*L : So, who are going to present the speech right now? Which group? Are your members in the class?*

*S : Mira is on the way.*

From the excerpt above, the students’ answer was ambiguous and made the lecturer confuse. The lecturer asked whether the members of the group had been in the class or not. However, the students’ answered by saying one student name (Mira) and told that she was on the way to campus.

*L : So, do you understand completely the content of the speech?*

*S : I understand the speech from the speaking and intonation. In my opinion, the speech is the best in intonation. I can hear clearly even though I can’t understand some vocabularies.*

As it can be seen from the excerpt above, it can be observed that the student had been unsuccessful to monitor the maxim of manner by giving extremely long response for yes-no question posed by the lecturer. Actually, the student just needs to reply “yes” or “no.”

*L : What is the topic of bonteng about?*

*S : You do not have to know it, Mam.*

When the lecturer asked the students about the topic that students talked about, one of students’ answer contained the flouting of the quality maxim. The students were seen to deny in explaining about the topic of *bonteng* discussed. They kept it secret the information only for them and their classmate. Therefore, the student denial in this conversation proved that she flouted the maxim of quality because she was lying. She tried to portray to the lecturer that the topic of *bonteng* was not an important topic to discuss. Alternatively, she explained that the lecturer did not have to know about it.

It is important to understand the context in which a conversation is made so that the hearer is able to identify the underlying meaning produced by a speaker. As Grundy (2008) pointed out that “knowing the speakers well enough would enable us to know what they each mean” (p. 95). Due to the understanding of the context, it was able to differentiate between what was said and what was meant by the students. The above excerpt examples showed that the students tried to fulfill the Cooperative Principle by responding to each question asked by the lecturer. The students blatant flouting of maxims or exploitation of maxims created implicatures (Thomas, 2014).

In some instances, Grice (1975) argued that a speaker blatantly chooses to flout the maxims in order to mislead the hearers. It was noticed from the utterance that student flouted the maxims because she wanted to keep the information secret from the lecturer. Also, students posed a long answer response and ambiguous for yes-no question. While, actually, students just need to reply the question posed by the lecture by saying “yes” or “no.”

**CONCLUSION**

In summary, the students flouted the maxims during the classroom interaction. It was found that there are conversational implicatures (flouting maxim) in the dialogue of a lecturer and her students during the classroom interaction in EFL teaching and learning process. It can be claimed that the way to produce conversational implicature in the classroom interaction is flouting maxim of quality and manner. The students do not want to give the truth information and answer yes-no question by doing a reply yes or no.

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