ANALYSIS OF MAXIM VIOLATIONS IN THE TED TALKS INTERVIEW WITH ELON MUSK

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Abstract: An interview, especially regarding issues or phenomenal figures have currently received a lot of public attention. One of whom is Elon Musk, the co-founder and chairman of Tesla, SpaceX, Neuralink, and The Boring Company. His interview in TED Talk entitled "Elon Musk talks Twitter, Tesla and how his brain works — live at TED2022" also attracts the interest of the audience to add insight by listening to how he thinks and also his vision of the future of the world. In the interview, Elon Musk sometimes provides answers that are irrelevant to the questions, thus violating maxim of conversation. This research is aimed at analyzing maxim violations found in the interview. Qualitative descriptive analysis was used in this study. The result reveals that there are 15 maxim of quantity violations, 9 maxim of relation violations, 6 maxim of quality violations, and 4 maxim of manner violations. Maxim of quantity is mostly violated as the conversation is an interview in which the interviewee (Elon Musk) gives a lot of information and shares his thoughts regarding the topic of the interview. This research suggests that violating maxims is also needed in conversations including interview.

Keywords: cooperative principles; interview; maxim violations; pragmatics

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Conversation is a language activity that involves participants. In conversation, the communication process occurs when there are two participants, namely the speaker and the listener. In a conversation, when the language can be understood by the speaker and listener, good communication can be created. Communication can be categorized into four basic types, namely verbal, nonverbal, written, and visual communication. Verbal communication is a method that uses speech to convey a message or information. This is the most popular and effective mode of communication, usually done during video conferences, phone calls, presentations, meetings and interviews.

An interview, especially regarding issues or phenomenal figures currently receiving a lot of public attention, such as Elon Musk, co-founder and chairman of Tesla, SpaceX, Neuralink and The Boring Company. He is one of the world's most famous people who is highlighted because of his wealth and the large companies he owns in the technology sector, not only because of his role as CEO, but also for various sensitive issues, unique habits, oblique trends, to the problems that have hit him that have brought him into the public spotlight.

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A video on TED's YouTube channel with the caption "Elon Musk talks Twitter, Tesla and how his brain works — live at TED2022" became the video that received several views. The topic in the interview can attract the audience's attention because it goes viral when the news comes out to the public, namely regarding the latest news regarding his offer to buy Twitter and about the future of the world that he dreams of. The video was shot in April 2022 and aired live in the TED studio inviting Elon Musk as interviewee with Chris Anderson as interviewer.

Meanwhile communication between the interviewer and the interviewee can be further analyzed in terms of the language used. The following is an example of script in Elon Musk's video interview:

> *Chris Anderson: You don't like to lose. If in this case, you are not successful and the board does not accept your offer, you said you won't go higher. Is there a plan B?*
>
> *Elon Musk   : There is.*
>
> (Source: Elon Musk talks about Twitter, Tesla and how his brain works — live at TED2022 on Youtube)

In the conversation above, communication was achieved well where the answer from Elon Musk fulfilled what is expected from Chris Anderson as the interviewer. However, sometimes Elon Musk gives answers that are irrelevant or not in accordance with the questions asked. Below is the example:

> *Chris Anderson   : Thank you. Elon, welcome. So, Elon, a few hours ago you made an offer to buy Twitter. Why?*
>
> *Elon Musk   : How'd you know?*
>
> *Chris Anderson   : Little bird tweeted in my ear or something. I don't know.*

(Source: Elon Musk talks Twitter, Tesla and how his brain works — live at TED2022) The speaker lies or says something that is believed to be false. The utterance above is included in the violation of the maxim of quality, where the speaker knows that what is said is not the truth, he says he does not know when he does. It can be seen that there is a linguistic phenomenon, in the scope of pragmatic studies, especially maxims.

Studies on maxim violation study have been conducted. Rahmastra, et al. (2018) analyzed the strategies and reasons for flouting the maxims uttered by the characters in *Lincoln* film script. This study applies Grundy's theory of rhetorical strategies to discover these strategies. The second study by Nuzulia (2020) aims to analyze the flouting of maxims in the transcript of the conversation of an interview between TIME and Donald Trump. This research found the types of violations mostly used by Trump in interviews. The violation of the maxim of quantity was a violation of the dominant maxim, which means that Trump often conveys more information than is necessary. There are differences and similarities between the previous research and this

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research. The similarities lie in the topic of maxim violations and the research objective, which is to identify the types of maxim violations. Grice's theory is also used in this research and the previous research. However, this research is different from those two, in that this research uses different data source. The previous studies use a film script and an interview from Donald Trump on time.com respectively, while this study uses Elon Musk interview on ted.com as a data source.

After watching the video, the researchers identify several violations of maxims in the interview. Based on the description above, this research is aimed at analyzing maxim violations in the interview between Chris Anderson and Elon Musk in the TED talk "Elon Musk talks Twitter, Tesla and how his brain works — live at TED2022".

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Pragmatics
Yule provides an explanation of pragmatics that "pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning communicated by speakers (or writers) and interpreted by listeners (or readers)" (Yule, 1996: 9). According to Grice (1989), there are principles that must be followed by speakers and listeners to achieve successful conversations, namely the Cooperative Principle. Basically, the principle of cooperation explains that in communication each participant must make a good contribution.

Pragmatics conceals the relationship between language and the circumstances in which it is used. The study of language detached from its use in context, which has been a major focus of 20th-century linguistics and philosophy of language, is the only area where pragmatics and a distinct and coherent topic of research are combined. Topics that are typically covered under the heading of pragmatics are those that arise from various obstacles and impasses in the analysis of language taken out of context. As a result, they come in a variety of forms, including deixis, presuppositions, speech acts, implicatures, politeness, information structures, and others.

Cooperative principle
The cooperative principle of conversation is elaborated in four sub-principles, called maxims. Grice argues that in order to carry out the principle of cooperation, every speaker must comply with the observance of conversational maxims, namely the maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relevance, and maxim of manner. This means that if the conversation does not meet the rules of cooperation principles, then it is a violation of pragmatic features called a violation of maxims. Furthermore, Cutting (2002: 40) states a speaker can be said to 'violate' a maxim when they know that the hearer will not know the truth and will only understand the surface meaning of the words. It also happens that people sometimes want to avoid relevance in conversation by being less direct (going round the bush) because they assume the listener already knows what they mean or deliberately chooses to lie. According to Cutting (2002) the strategies to violate maxims are giving too little information, giving too much information, irony, banter, metaphor, being irrelevant, being obscure, and using hyperbole.

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Maxim violations
According to Grice (1975) in Khosravizadeh & Sadehvandi (2011, p.1), a violation takes place when speakers intentionally refrain to apply certain maxims in their conversation to cause misunderstanding on their participants' part or to achieve some other purposes. Based on the Cooperative Principle, people are naturally directed towards cooperation. In other words, they often want their interactions to succeed, they want to solve problems and discuss solutions. But sometimes the purpose is to fail and undermine the conversation, and to be sure that one does not achieve his goal, i.e. to prefer to miscommunicate.

A. Maxim of Quantity Violation
According to Cutting (2002), violating towards maxim of quantity happens when a speaker does not give enough information to a hearer about the whole picture or the topic being discussed. Criteria of violation of maxims used as distinguished guideline: if the speaker does circumlocution or not to the point; if the speaker is uninformative; if the speaker talks too short, if the speaker talks too much, if the speaker repeats certain words (Grice (1975, p.45) in Tupan & Natalia (2008, p.68))

B. Maxim of Quality Violation
Violating towards maxim of quality is a situation where a speaker is not sincere and gives wrong information to a hearer, which can be said as lie. Cutting (2002) says "speaker can violate the maxim of quality by not being sincere and tend to give wrong information to a hearer". Criteria of violation of maxims used as distinguished guideline: if the speaker lies or says something that is believed to be false; if the speaker does irony or makes ironic and sarcastic statement; if the speaker denies something; if the speaker distorts information. (Grice, 1975: 45) in Tupan & Natalia (2008: 68)

C. Maxim of Relation Violation
Violating towards maxim of relation happens when a speaker changes the topic to avoid the answer or topic that brought by other interlocutors in conversation. Cutting (2002) defines that violating in maxim of relation happens when speakers try to distract and change the topic to another one. Criteria of violation of maxims used as distinguished guideline: if the speaker makes the conversation unmatched with the topic; if the speaker changes conversation topic abruptly; if the speaker avoids talking about something; if the speaker hides something or hides a fact; if the speaker does the wrong causality (Grice (1975, p.45) in Tupan & Natalia (2008, p.68).

D. Maxim of Manner Violation
Cutting (2002) defines that violating towards maxim of manner happens when someone gives obscure reference, and vague reference, in order to avoid a brief and orderly answer in a conversation. Criteria of violation of maxims used as distinguished guideline: if the speaker uses ambiguous language; if the speaker exaggerates thing; if the speaker uses slang in front of people who do not understand it; if the speaker's voice is not loud enough. (Grice (1975, p.45) in Tupan & Natalia (2008, p.68))

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RESEARCH METHOD

The data of this research were in the form of video and its transcription. The video was accessed from the Youtube platform at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cdZZpaB2kDM and the transcript was downloaded from https://www.thestreet.com/markets/elon-musk-ted-talk. The research was conducted using a descriptive qualitative study as the research design. A qualitative method is a research strategy that provides descriptive data in both written and oral form (Moleong, 2005). Descriptive qualitative study was used in this study, because the data collected were in form of utterances that were descriptively analyzed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data is in the form of an interview script "Elon Musk talks Twitter, Tesla and how his brain works — live at TED2022" which is analyzed by violating the principle of cooperative conversation in detail. This study found that all kinds of maxims were violated and shown as a percentage in the following table.

Table 1 Findings of Maxim Violations

No	Types of Maxim Violation	Frequency	Percentage
1	Quantity	15	44%
2	Relation	9	26%
3	Quality	6	18%
4	Manner	4	12%
	Total	34	100%

Table 1 shows that there are 34 utterances that violate the maxims. First, there are 15 utterances (44%) which violate the maxim of quantity. Violation of the maxim of quantity occurs when the speaker is convoluted or not to the point and sometimes gives too much or too little information. Second, there are 9 utterances (26%) which violate the maxim of relation. Violation of maxims occurs when the speaker always talks irrelevantly. Third, there are 6 utterances (18%) that violate the maxim of quality. Speakers violate the maxim of quality because they tend to make ironic statements, use hyperbole, metaphor and sarcasm and say something they believe is wrong. Finally, there are 4 utterances (12%) that violate the maxim of manners. This shows that the violation of the maxim of manners is the lowest number in the interview.

After discussing the findings of the maxim violations in the interview, here are some examples found about violating the maxims in the interview "Elon Musk talks about Twitter, Tesla and how his brain works — live at TED2022".

1. Maxim of Quantity Violation
According to Cutting (2002), violating towards maxim of quantity happens when a speaker

does not give enough information to a hearer about the whole picture or the topic being discussed.

Excerpt 1

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CA    : But here's the challenge, is that it's such a nuanced difference between
        different things. So there's incitement to violence. That's a no, it's illegal.
        There's hate speech, which some forms of hate speech are fine. I hate spinach.

EM    : Even if it's sautéd in a cream sauce?
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In the conversation above, Elon Musk (EM) violates the maxim of quantity where he gives uninformative answers. Chris Anderson (CA) talked about the challenge of the algorithm to detect hate speech that has many meanings in one word, some of which are legal and illegal. However, Elon Musk made a joke by saying the word spinach which was previously mentioned by Chris Anderson, this joke made the conversation go off topic. Meanwhile, the word spinach was only used by Chris Anderson to explain what they were talking about.

2. Maxim of Quality Violation:
Violating towards maxim of quality is a situation where a speaker does irony or makes ironic and sarcastic statement (Grice, 1975:45)

Excerpt 2

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CA    : So the idea of opening the algorithm is a huge deal. And I think many people
        would welcome that, of understanding exactly how it's making the decision.

EM    : And critique it.
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In the conversation above, Elon Musk violates the maxim of quality because he uses irony in the conversation. Chris Anderson thinks that many people will welcome and understand Elon Musk's decision to open up the algorithm on the Twitter app but he added that while the decision would be welcomed and understood by people, they would criticize it too. Elon Musk thinks that many parties will always criticize whatever decision is made, but it is undeniable that many parties also agree and can understand it.

3. Maxim of Relation Violation
Violating towards maxim of relation happens when a speaker changes the topic to avoid the answer or topic that brought by other interlocutors in conversation. Cutting (2002) defines that violating in maxim of relation happens when speakers try to distract and change the topic to another one.

Excerpt 3
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CA    : Thank you. Elon, welcome. So, Elon, a few hours ago you made an offer to buy
        Twitter. why?
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EM     : How'd you know?
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Elon Musk is irrelevant in providing an answer. When Chris Anderson asked why Elon Musk made an offer to buy Twitter, Elon Musk even asked back how Chris Anderson could know about it as if Elon Musk avoided the topic.

4. Maxim of Manner Violation
Cutting (2002) defines that violating towards maxim of manner happens when someone gives obscure reference, and vague reference, in order to avoid a brief and orderly answer in a conversation.

Excerpt 4

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CA     : Help me on the economics of this. So what do you picture the cost of one of
         these being?

EM     : Well, I think the cost is actually not going to be crazy high. Like less
         than a car
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Elon Musk gave an answer with an ambiguous statement, it was not clear how much the exact cost for the item was, he only stated that it was not going to be crazy high, like less than a car. while everyone's economic level is different to determine how expensive and cheap an item is and also the price of a car varies greatly.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to investigate linguistic features as flouting of maxims in interview scripts. After conducting research, it was found that four types of flouting of the maxims, namely the maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, relationship, and manner, occurred during the interview. In addition, violations of the maxim of quantity were reported as the largest quantity indicating that Elon Musk often conveys more information than is needed. On the other hand, the number of violations of the maxim of manner contributes less. In addition, after discussing the reasons for Elon Musk's violation of the maxims, it can be related to his background as the leader of a company, so he must create a positive image. Apart from that, to create this good image, Elon Musk explained various important things and rules regarding his ideas.

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