

A Gricean Maxim Analysis in English Teaching and Learning Process at English Learning Centre

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Abstract: *This study explored the violations from Grice's cooperative maxims within English language classroom interactions at an English Learning Centre. The research aimed to identify which maxim is most frequently violated and to explain the pragmatic functions of these violations. Applying a qualitative research approach, the researcher examined two audio-recorded classroom sessions: recordings were transcribed and analyzed using interactive analysis (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana). Data underwent reduction, classified under the four Gricean maxims (specifically Quantity, Quality, Relation, Manner), and demonstrated through selected extracts. Finding indicated that breaches of Relation Maxim occurred most often (50%), with Manner (21.42%), Quality (19.04%), and Quantity (9.52%) following in order. Data excerpts indicated that many breaches serve pragmatic purposes to create humor and elicit laughter, maintain rapport, control speaker exchange, and allow self-correction instead of signaling communicative breakdown. The study contended that within informal classroom interaction, dynamic interaction frequently emphasized social interaction instead of rigid information transfer, and that sensitivity of maxim flouting is essential to pragmatic competence. The limitations include a small dataset and lack of reported inter-rater validation. The study closed with a recommendation of explicit pragmatic instruction and future studies utilizing larger samples and verification measures to enhance teaching approaches aimed at fostering pragmatic ability among EFL learners.*

Keywords: *EFL Learners, Gricean Maxim, Manner, Quality, Quantity, Relevance, Violation,*

INTRODUCTION

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, effective communication extends beyond grammatical accuracy to include pragmatic competence, the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts. It is a naturally collaborative effort that depends on shared norms and expectations to work efficiently. In any conversational interaction, conversational partners assume a mutual willingness to collaborate and conform to implicit rules to ensure utterances are comprehended as intended. This concept supports the study of pragmatics, the subdiscipline of language study, dealing with linguistic practice in social contexts and how interpretation is constructed beyond literal expressions (Yule, 2020).

In recent years, there has emerged a remarkable surge in concern regarding the implementation of pragmatics, including Grice's Maxims, in language pedagogy. Many researchers acknowledge that simple proficiency of linguistic structure is inadequate for effective communication; an understanding of how language is used within social contexts is comparably important (Ayunon, 2018). This continues to be relevant as well as for direct verbal interactions but also extends to digital discourse and even the development of advanced Large Language Models (LLMs) (Krause & Vossen, 2024). In the field of pragmatics, H. P. Grice's Cooperative Principle (GCP) provides a foundational framework for conceptualization of verbal interactions. According to Grice (1975), effective communication is based on speakers following four maxims: Quantity (providing as much information as needed), Quality (truthfulness), Relation (relevance), and Manner (clarity and brevity). These maxims guide participants to generate utterances that are informative, honest, relevant, and clear, facilitating coherent and significant conversations.

Research into the Implementation of Grice's Maxims in English language teaching and learning is becoming more comprehensive, encompassing multiple contexts such as digital communication (Wicaksono, 2022) and classroom discourse analysis. These studies emphasize that Grice's Maxims function as a practical framework to etiquette in communication and the socially appropriate use of language (Eleftheriou, 2022). By focusing on these maxims, teachers can enhance students' awareness of adaptive and effective communication principles. Moreover, a profound understanding of these maxims can support teacher to design activities deliberately focusing on the development of pragmatic competence, thereby preparing students for the complexities of authentic communication. The Gricean Maxims also form the basis for inferences, which Grice termed conversational implications, to distinguish them from formal logical implications. As a result, researcher is encouraged to analyze pragmatic features in these contexts in enhancing effective EFL instruction.

Despite the robust theoretical foundation and rising concern in pragmatic competence, fewer empirical studies have comprehensively examined how Gricean maxims apply in dynamic learning centers focused on English teaching. Language learning centers provide a regulated yet interactive environment where teacher serve crucial function in facilitating communication. Violations of maxims by teachers, for instance, can have significant implications on students' comprehension and the communication models they acquire (Kurniadi, 2021). Such violations may conceal the speaker's intended meaning, prompting students to develop incomplete or misleading pragmatic understandings of classroom discourse. Moreover, when maxim violations occur frequently, students may internalize these communicative tendencies as appropriate pragmatic norm, which can diminish their pragmatic performance and the effectiveness of their later interactions. This gap motivates investigation into how Gricean maxims are observed and violated in authentic classroom discourse at English Learning Centers. Specifically, the study aims to identify which maxim is most frequently violated and how these violations affect comprehension and interaction.

In summary, this research contributed in expanding academic literature on language teaching pragmatics by providing a refined analysis of Gricean maxims violations during English teaching and learning processes. It specifically emphasizes on pragmatic competence development, discourse structure, and implications for teaching strategies in current learning environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

H.P. Grice Cooperative Principle has four conversational maxims. They are Quantity, Quality, Relevance and Manner. They become a fundamental basis in the philosophy of language. Furthermore, they clarify how participants implicitly cooperate to achieve effective communication. From a philosophical linguistic perspective, these maxims are not obligatory standard but rather empirical summary of how rational communicators interact. These maxims need to be adopted to achieve coherent discussions or conversations. When speakers do not intentionally disregard these maxims, there will be maxim violation (Grice, 1975). Each maxim addresses a different aspect of communication, providing a guideline for what makes a conversation effective and meaningful. These maxims are:

Table 1. *Gricean maxims and their descriptions*

No	Maxims	Description
1.	Quantity	Provide as much information as required; do not provide more than necessary.
2.	Quality	Do not say what you believe to be false; do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
3.	Relevance	Make your contribution relevant to the current exchange.
4.	Manner	Be perspicuous: avoid obscurity, avoid ambiguity, be brief and orderly.

The theoretical framework supporting the application of Gricean maxims in English language teaching and learning asserts that understanding and applying these maxims significantly influences to enhancing pragmatic competence in learners. Pragmatic competence allows learners to comprehend and produce appropriate language in various communicative context, including recognizing conversational inferences and engaging social interactions effectively (Ayunon, 2018). In learning centers, explicit instruction on Gricean maxims can promote effective interaction by making learners aware of the implicit norm regulating conversations. This pedagogical approach helps learners move beyond mere linguistic accuracy to cultivate a deeper understanding of how context and communicative purposes construct meaning, which is crucial for authentic language use. Developing students' pragmatic competence helps them better recognize and understand how form and context interact to create meaning (Eleftheriou, 2022).

Recent academic articles demonstrate a continued interest in Gricean maxim analysis within English as foreign language (EFL) educational context, notably in evolving contexts such as online interaction and focused learning centres. The emergence of online learning platforms, accelerated by recent global events, has

also stimulated study on Gricean maxims in virtual environments. A study by Wicaksono (2022) that analyzed Grice Maxims Breaking in the digital discourse between teacher and students, emphasizing how teacher and students adapt or deviate from maxims in digital communication to preserve effective interaction. Furthermore, the researcher examined maxim violation in the online classroom interactions between teachers and students. These studies suggest that while the fundamental concept remain consistent, the expressions and interpretations of maxim observance can differ in online classroom contexts. A further study addressed "Demystifying Students' Observance and Violation of Gricean Maxims in Online ESL Classes" (Reyes et al., n.d.). reinforcing the ongoing significance of Gricean maxims in interpreting online linguistic behavior.

Furthermore, the pedagogical implications of Gricean maxims for developing communicative skills in EFL student-teachers have been examined. A study intended to examined the impact of applying Gricean maxims theory program to improve EFL student-teachers' conversational skills (Muhammad et al., 2022) revealing a pedagogical implementation of the theory in teacher training. The implementation of Grice's Cooperative Principle in EFL classroom interaction, addressing potential misunderstandings between teachers and students, highlights the ongoing academic discourse concerning this issue (Yusro et al., 2020).

While the majority of studies confirms the utility of Gricean maxims, some discussions focus on their precise interpretation and implementation. For instance, certain researchers emphasize that Grice did not propose the maxims to be taken as conversational rules or norms, instead as observational tendencies of how implied meaning is derived. This distinction is important for teachers, as it redirect the focus from rigid adherence to understanding the implicit communicative purposes (Setiadi et al., 2025). The influence of the maxim of manner in second language acquisition has also been investigated, underlining its influence on how pragmatic fluency is achieved (She, 2022). The literature consistently reveal that Gricean pragmatics holds significance in pedagogical linguistics to encourage the use of language in social contexts (Ayunon, 2018). The sustained research into how these maxims is observed, violated, or flouted, particularly in varied pedagogical contexts, reinforces their sustained significance in applied linguistics and language pedagogy.

Integrating the findings from the reviewed literature indicates multiple developing patterns and significant implications for English language education at learning centers. There is widespread acknowledgement that pragmatic competence, heavily influenced by Gricean maxims, is essential for effective communication in English as a second or foreign language. Learning centers inherently are ideal environments for overt pedagogical guidance in this aspect, as they typically serve to students pursuing focused language improvement.

During teaching and learning process, there could be a lot of maxim flouts and violation performed by teachers that could lead students to misinterpretation or misunderstanding. The researcher determined to analyze maxim violations occurs during learning process in the classroom, regardless of the motivation behind the productions. Briefly, this research focuses on analyzing the maxim violations

identified during the teaching and learning process particularly identify the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. This could involve exercises in interpreting implied meanings (implicatures), analyzing discourse interaction for maxim violations, and developing contextually appropriate responses.

In summary, while the underlying framework of Gricean maxims maintains its relevance, recent research highlights their adaptive implementation in diverse teaching and learning contexts, particularly with the emerge of online learning. For learning centers, this indicates a sustained focus on pragmatic instruction is not merely advantageous but indispensable for preparing English language learners with comprehensive communicative skills.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design in order to analysis Gracian maxim in English teaching and learning process. A qualitative approach is considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to analysis meanings and interpretation related to the topic of the research.

Research Context and Participants

Data consisted of two audio recordings of English conversation classes at Ganesha Operation Learning Centre, totally 120 minutes. Recording 1 (duration 60 minutes) capture eleventh class level with 25 students age 16 – 17 years old, focusing on analytical Exposition text. Recording 2 (60 minutes) involved 25 students at Alumni class level, discussing main idea and information based on the texts. These recording selected because its interactional dynamics reflect regular pedagogical practices within the program, thereby enabling the data to reflect authentic communicative patterns across classroom communicative interactions. In this study, the researcher used primary data source because the researcher collected the data independently. Meanwhile the kinds of data in this study are qualitative data in the form of spoken discourse. As supported by Ajayi (2025) that there were two types of information sources: essential and optional information. Essential information (primary data) were simply the data obtained by the researcher, while optional information (secondary data) was the data that had been obtained by prior researchers.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection technique was conducted based on the documentation steps. The first step was recording the conversations. Then, the researcher thoroughly listened the audio recordings several times and transcribed them. Afterwards, the researcher chose the data contained in the audio recordings that were relevant to the research objectives. Then after identifying the data related to the research objectives, the researcher chose several examples from each category to be presented in the data display. Then the researcher classified and derived data regarding the maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relevance, and maxim of manner from the audio recordings as a result of this research.

Data Analysis Procedure

This research implemented a qualitative design as Creswell states that in qualitative research, commonly researcher collect a text database, so the data analysis of text consists of categorizing it into groups of sentences, called text segments, and determining the meaning of each group of sentences. Rather than using statistics, researcher analyzed verbal or visual data to describe the main concept under study (Creswell, 2019). qualitative methods were used in research procedures to elaborate information about a certain individual, behavior, or documents being considered. In this case, a digital document was used as it related to audio recording of teaching and learning process.

Concerning the research site, this study was conducted using two audio recordings which conducted in English teaching and learning process of an English Learning Centre. In particular, the subject was two audio recordings from the teaching and learning process that had been transcribed. The object of this study was all the utterances containing violations of Gricean maxims generated by the teacher and students. In conducting the analysis, the researcher used documentation as the research instruments. First, it is Observed Communicative Events which is used in conversations and narratives. Second, it is Staged Communicative Events which can be represented audio recordings as implemented within this investigation. Third, it is Elicitation. This last type is commonly applied within linguistic frameworks and interpretive evaluations. As a result, in this study, the researcher used two audio recordings which was classified into documentation type 1.

Thereafter, the data were analyzed using Interactive Analysis as suggested by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana. The analytical process involved three steps, which outlined as follows. First, data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming data into more relevant data in accordance to the research objective Second, the data were presented in the form of table demonstrating the comparison of maxim violation. Finally, the data are verified based on each classification, whether they are maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relevance, and maxim of manner to derive conclusion from

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that the Maxim of Relevance was violated most frequently (50%), followed by the Maxim of Manner (21.42%), the Maxim of Quality (19.04%), and finally the Maxim of Quantity (9.52%). This pattern suggests that in the analyzed conversation, discourse transition, irrelevance, and informal contextual conversations were the most common sources of non-cooperation according to Grice's cooperative principle. The relatively high rate of Relevance and Manner violations implies that the speakers frequently digressed from the topic or expressed their ideas in ambiguous, indirect, or incoherent ways. Typical features of casual or informal classroom discourse such as English Learning Centre. The results are as seen in the following table 2.

Table 2. The result of maxim violation

Maxim of quantity	Maxim of quality	Maxim of relevance	Maxim of manner	Total
4	8	21	9	42
%	9.52%	19.04%	50%	21.42%
				100%

1. Relevance Maxim Violations (n = 21)

Excerpt 1.1 (Student, Intentional)

Teacher: *Sekarang posenya The King.* (Now, pose like 'The King').

Student: *Pendengaranku 3B, jadi saya pose 3B.* (I heard pose 3B. So, I Pose 3B)

Analysis:

The teacher directed the students to pose called "The King," yet the student responds with, "*Pendengaranku 3B, jadi saya pose 3B*" ("I heard pose 3B, so I pose 3B"), which represented a violation of Grice's Maxim of Relevance by giving an unrelated response to the teacher's instruction. This violation is intentional, as the student engages in playful humor by intentionally giving an unreliable answer that diverges from the expected obedience. Pragmatically, the student's response operates as a humorous act, changing the conversational focus to amusement rather than fulfilling the instruction. This intentional irrelevance serves as an interactional approach to create social connection or reduce tension within the classroom setting.

Pragmatic function: Creating humor to evoke a relaxed learning environment.

Excerpt 1.2 (Student, Intentional)

Teacher: *Materinya adalah analytical Exposition.* (Our topic is Analytical Exposition).

Student: *Kak izin dulu ke bawah.* (Miss, Can I go to downstairs).

Analysis:

The teacher presented the topic, 'Analytical Exposition,' but the student's response, "*Kak izin dulu ke bawah*" ("Miss, can I go downstairs?"), violates Grice's Maxim of Relevance by giving irrelevant response to the current topic. Rather than contributing to the academic discourse, the student shifted the focus away to a personal concern, indicating an urgent need instead of an intentional conversational strategy. The student's response acts as a permission request and disrupting the cooperative flow.

Pragmatic Function: Shifting conversational focus away from learning activity.

2. Manner Maxim Violations (n = 9)

Excerpt 2.1 (Teacher, Unintentional)

Teacher: *Kita mulai dari soal sebelas ya. Jadi untuk simulasi sepuluh ini, Eh! simulasi lima ini, berarti sisa satu yaa simulasinya.* (We'll start from question number eleven. So, for simulation 10, um, I mean simulation five, that means one simulation remains).

Analysis:

The teacher's utterance, "*Kita mulai dari soal sebelas ya. Jadi untuk simulasi sepuluh ini, Eh! simulasi lima ini, berarti sisa satu yaa simulasinya*" ("We'll start from question number eleven. So, for simulation 10, um, I mean simulation five, that means one simulation remains"), demonstrated a violation of Grice's Maxim of Manner, which requires clarity, brevity, and orderliness in communication. The teacher's self-correction and hesitations generate ambiguity and confusion, undermining the clarity and simplicity of the message. This kind of violation is often unintentional and may result from information processing problems or hesitancy. However, it significantly impacts the effectiveness of communication.

Pragmatic function: Direct student attention and manage learning activity.

Excerpt 2.2 (Student, Intentional)

Teacher: *TKA? Buat apa TKA untuk kalian?* (TKA? What makes you talk about TKA).

Student: *Saya asbun kak.* ("I am just guessing, miss").

Analysis:

The student's response, "*saya asbun kak*" ("I am just guessing, miss"), in response to the teacher's question, "*TKA? Buat apa TKA untuk kalian?*" ("TKA? What makes you talk about TKA?"), exemplifies a violation of Grice's Maxim of Manner, which calls for clarity and prevention of ambiguity in communication. The student's deployment of the phrase "*asbun*," an abbreviation of *asal bunyi* (meaning 'merely producing sounds' or 'random guessing'), expresses hesitation but conveys potentially ambiguous expression that may obstruct clear perception, especially for conversational partners not acquainted with the term. This pragmatic strategy reflects an intentional recognition of the speculative nature of the student's contribution, yet it simultaneously introduces some ambiguity and casualness contradictory to the expectation for clarity in academic communication.

Pragmatic function: self-repairing or mitigating response

3. Quality Maxim Violations (n = 8)

Excerpt 3.1 (Student, Intentional)

Teacher: *Cukup sekian pertemuan kita. Intinya jangan lupa 3B yaa. Belajar, berlatih, ber?* (That's all for our meeting today. The main point is, don't forget 3B. Study, practice and ...?).

Student: *Bergosip.* (Gossiping).

Analysis:

When the teacher instructed students to complete the “3B” memorization sequence “*Belajar, berlatih, ber...?*” (“Study, practice, and ...?”), the student answered by saying “*Bergosip*” (“Gossiping”), which constitutes a deliberate violation of Grice’s Maxim of Quality. This maxim obliges speakers to deliver accurate utterances and reinforced by appropriate evidence. However, the student intentionally response with an utterance that they clearly realize is false within the instructional context, as “gossiping” is not an authentic or reliable part of the teacher’s intended principle. The humorous and deliberately inaccurate response signals the student’s playful attempt to undermine normative assumption, generating humorous impact instead of providing factual or pedagogically relevant content. This intentional falsification illustrates how participants may intentionally use the maxim of quality to produce humor.

Pragmatic function: humor-oriented to create playful atmosphere.

Excerpt 3.2 (Teacher, Intentional)

Student: *Bahasa England katanya kak.* (He said England language, Miss).

Teacher: *Ooo Bahasa England. Ooo iya iya.* (Ohh England language. Ohh Okey).

Analysis:

The teacher’s response, “*Ooo Bahasa England. Ooo iya iya*”, (Ohh England language. Ohh okey”), represents an intentional violation of Grice’s Maxim of Quality, which requires speakers to provide correct and reliable content. The teacher deliberately repeats the student’s inaccurate phrase “*Bahasa England*” although aware it is grammatically incorrect, not to confirm its accuracy but as an instructional technique to highlight the mistaken implicitly. By repeating the student’s utterance with marked intonation, the teacher subtly indicates the phrase is wrong.

Pragmatic function: An implicit corrective feedback strategy.

4. Quantity Maxim Violations (n = 4)

Excerpt 4.1 (Student, Unintentional)

Teacher: *Ke Buku Sakti atau ke suplemen, tapi kemungkinan pindah ke mapel yang lain.* (Move to *Buku Sakti* or *Suplemen*, but may be change to another subject).

Student: *Oooo.* (Oooo)

Analysis:

The teacher provided relatively detailed information about the upcoming learning activity “*Ke Buku Sakti atau ke suplemen, tapi kemungkinan pindah ke mapel yang lain*” (“Move to *Buku Sakti* or *Suplemen*, but may be change to another subject”). However, the student replies solely with “*Oooo.*”. Maxim of quantity which requires that participant should be as informative as is required, that they should not give too little informative or too much information (Hidayati, 2018). This brief response represents a violation of Grice’s Maxim of Quantity, which requires speakers to provide sufficient information for the purposes of the conversation. The student’s utterance conveys less information than the contextually necessary in conversation. Such insufficient response can cause ambiguity regarding the student’s comprehension level or engagement, possibly obstructing the teacher’s ability to evaluate learning readiness or adjust instructional strategy.

Pragmatic function: a minimal acknowledgment.

Excerpt 4.2 (Student, Intentional)

Teacher: *Di sekolah sudah pernah belajar* simple present *dan* present perfect tense?
(Have you learned simple present and present perfect tense at school?)

Student: *Sudah* (Yes)

Analysis:

The teacher asked the students, “*Di sekolah sudah pernah belajar* simple present *dan* present perfect tense?” (“Have you learned simple present and present perfect tense at school?”), to which the student replies briefly, “*Sudah*” (“Yes”). The speaker will violate the maxim when intentionally misleads the topic, give incomplete information, and be unreliable (Christ et al., 2020). This brief utterance constitutes a violation of Grice’s Maxim of Quantity, which requires speakers to convey adequate information that is sufficiently informative for the aims of conversation. The student’s utterance, while indicating prior learning of the tenses, fails to explain on details such as comprehension, scope of knowledge, or specific experiences. Students convey less information can create ambiguity about the student’s actual comprehension and restrict the teacher’s ability to assess readiness for further learning instruction.

Pragmatic function: a concise acknowledgment of prior experience.

The dominance of Relevance and Manner violations suggest that the interactional pattern in this classroom environment highlighted interpersonal engagement over strict adherence to informational exchange. This finding aligns with the perspective that the cooperative principle proposed by Grice operates contextually in educational and informal discourse settings. The classroom interaction reveals a cooperative yet flexible interaction model, where maxim flouting serves pragmatic purposes such as humour, engagement, and maintaining

social rapport. It Apparently indicates maxim violations can actually promote effective interaction.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the implementation of Grice's Cooperative Theory in English teaching and learning interactions at a Learning Centre. Through qualitative analysis of two documented and recorded classroom sessions, the research discovered various occurrences of maxim violations; quantity, quality, relation, and manner, and analyzed their pragmatic consequences within the pedagogical context.

The findings and results demonstrated that the maxim of Relation was the most frequently violated (50%), followed by Manner (21.42%), Quality (19.04%), and Quantity (9.52%). These findings reveal that maxim violations in this context serve important pragmatic functions rather than representing communicative failures. Teacher and learners strategically violate maxims to build rapport, create humor, manage turn-taking, and facilitate self-correction, suggesting that successful communication in informal EFL settings may require flexibility in maxim observance. Nevertheless, the analysis reveals that these kinds of violations commonly function as constructive pragmatic purposes, such as developing interpersonal bond, eliciting humor, managing classroom interaction, and enabling self-correction. Therefore, maxim flouting in this setting should not be seen merely as communicative failure, but rather as a purposeful linguistic pattern that supports facilitates classroom interaction and learning engagement.

The study determines that awareness of Gricean maxims and their violation is a fundamental aspect of pragmatic competence in EFL learning. Teachers or instructors are encouraged to integrate clear pedagogical input and consideration on conversational implicature into classroom activity to support learners cultivate awareness to meaning beyond literal expression. However, this study is constrained by its small data collection and lack of inter-rater validation, which restricts generalization of findings. The upcoming investigations are advised to involve broader datasets and sample, multiple instructional settings, and structured data coding validation to enhance comprehension of how pragmatic concepts function in English language education.

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