

## Conversational Maxim Violation by the Main Character in the *Shang-Chi and The Legend Of The Ten Rings* Movie

Putu Ameylia Maheswari Dewi\*, Ni Nyoman Deni Ariyaningsih  
Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar, Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia

\*Corresponding Author: ameyliamaheswari@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

The conversational maxim is a set of rules proposed by Grice (1975). They are categorized into four types, which are maxim of quantity, quality, relation, and manner. These rules are important to make an effective and straightforward conversation. By violating maxims, the participants of the conversation broke the rules of the cooperative principle. Participants of the conversation seem to hide the real intended meanings and certain purposes conveyed by the speaker behind the utterance. Furthermore, this study aims to identify the most frequent type of conversational maxim violation that the main character found in the *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* Movie. This research uses theory by Grice's theory of the Cooperative Principle and supports with theory by Cutting to analyze four types of conversational maxim violation. The method used to conduct this research is the descriptive qualitative method. The amount maxim violation of quantity is 6 (40%), which appears most frequently throughout the film. The violation of the maxim of quality becomes the second most frequently found violation, which brings a total of four violations (26.6%). Also, the third violation that occurs is a violation of the maxim of relation, with three violations in total (20%). The main character violates the maxim of manners two times in total (13.4%) more than any other violation, which is the least common infraction in the film. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the most frequent occurrence in this movie was the violation of the maxim of quantity.

**Keywords:** Conversation, Cooperative Principle, Main Character, Maxim, Movie, Violation.

### INTRODUCTION

Language has the function of a link between two or more individuals. Language is used for communication. Each person tries to convey their concept and its significance in a way they both comprehend (Mubarak, 2019). People express their idea, feeling, or intentions to others by communicating with them. Communication is how language is used that can make people connect through conversation. It is more than usual when

each other tries to convey their idea and the significance and meaning they both comprehend. Communication will be successful if the speaker and listener have the same understanding. On the other hand, communication in language should be straightforward and productive to get an association among speakers.

In a normal situation, people commonly convey a significant quantity of information and be truthful, which makes the dialogue clear and pertinent, Yule (1996, p. 37). The speaker should

participate in generating a good sentence in a discussion that is sufficiently informative, obeying the maxim principles, the truth, and the discussion will cooperate (Geurts, 2010, p. 10).

According to the cooperative concept, the speaker and listener should work together to create effective interactions and address the situation. The cooperative principle is a fundamental idea in conversation which is a part of pragmatic inference. Even though it is not required, people can obey the Cooperative Principles through dialogue to create effective communication. Participants in a discussion are required to adhere to basic conversational principles in order to communicate effectively. According to Cheirchia and McConnell-Ginet (1990), violations of maxims might occasionally happen from listeners mistaking speakers or being unable to reach conclusions from the speaker's intentions. Therefore, this can only be understood if the listener and the speaker have the exact prior comprehension. Coulthard (1977) believes that comprehension is not only limited to instructions for comprehending linguistics concerns but also includes any awareness of the broader world that the speaker may allude to or suggest.

According to Grice (1975), the four maxims that can make a conversation successful and understandable contribute the cooperative principles. If participants obey the cooperation principle defined in the four maxims, they will have successful conversations. Maxim is a "rule of communication" that discusses how to get people to stay on the discussion topic in order to prevent ambiguity or misunderstanding. Grice divides conversational maxims into four categories: the maxims of quantity (no more or less information), quality (truthful), relation (being relevant), and manner (understandable or less ambiguous).

A conversational saying is a component of the cooperative principle. In noticing the agreeable guideline, as per Cutting (2002, p. 34), the speaker typically attempts to satisfy the term of the conversational adage, which comprises four sayings. These proverbs are communicated through the speaker with the goal that they add to the discussion. Paltridge (2006, p. 45) additionally expresses that following the cooperative principle will keep away from certain mistaken assumptions of the

correspondence; it is on the grounds that the agreeable rule comprises a few conversational sayings utilized to participate and share the comprehension of the member in the discussion. At the point when somebody is talking, the audience will attempt to have a presumption about what the speaker is talking about as his/her getting it. Both speaker and audience ought to observe specific guidelines actually to convey.

As stated by Cutting (2002), violation happens when a speaker neglects to notice the saying yet anticipates that a listener should perceive the suggested meaning. By violating action, a few more profound implications are attempted to be conveyed by the speaker. That is the point at which the speaker deliberately breaks the rules to convey more profound implications. According to Alvaro (2011), in various circumstances of ordinary life and on numerous occasions, people do not keep or follow the principle of maxims conversation. We may employ this as an example for various situations, such as when someone tends to tell lies intentionally and when they struggle to talk effectively due to anxiousness, panic, stuttering, fear, etc. Also, Thomas (1995) explained how the speaker violates the maxims to have a deceptive implicature. He adds that these types of utterances may be found in different situations, such as government discussions and debates or in commercials. Violation of conversational rules do not conduct just in day-to-day discussion. However, this peculiarity likewise occurs in the film character discussion on electronic media, like TV or telephone. Everybody for sure can disregard the saying of the Helpful Standard whether the discussion is, in actuality, or even in a film.

A movie or film resembles a portrayal of our life. In the movies, bunches of activities and discussions are like the discussion in reality. Hornby (2006) expressed that a movie refers to a collection of visual pictures captured with sound to convey a story and afterward presented as a video or movie. The movie's characters regularly used dialogue while having a conversation to bring the movie to life and for viewers to consider each character's motivation. Through the cooperative principle, it is reasonable to investigate a movie or film's principal characters that contain a violation of the conversational maxim proposed by Grice. Therefore, finding out conversational violation maxim in a movie can

address an examination of manhandling saying in human life.

This study analyzes the movie *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* (Cretton, 2021), considering that in daily life, someone often says something that has hidden meaning in their conversation, such as telling a piece of half information, containing ambiguity, giving incorrect information, etc., whether consciously or unconsciously and break the rule of the cooperative principle. It is interesting to identify why people did that.

A superhero movie based on Marvel Comics in 2021 that stars Shang-Chi is entitled *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* (Cretton, 2021). It is the 25th movie in the Marvel Cinematic Universe and was made by Marvel Studios and released by Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures. Shang-Chi and The Legend of the Ten Rings movie were chosen as data sources, considering there are a lot of ambiguous, incorrect, or untruth conversations and interactions that might appear to support the analysis. This movie has many interesting conversations to analyze, especially in the scope of pragmatics study in conversational maxims. Moreover, this movie caught the researchers' intention to analyze intended meanings and the conversational maxim violation that has been done by the main character.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Conversational maxim violations play a crucial role in a conversation, and several studies have been conducted to analyze these violations from numerous perspectives. Similar topics related to this literature were carried out by previous studies in analyzing conversations in the form of data validation. This section will review some studies that are related to the current study.

For instance, Apriyantha (2020) focuses on identifying the different kinds of maxim breaches and examines the intended meaning of the utterances that include maxim violations in the movie *Spider-Man: Homecoming*. Several violations of maxims happen in the film. Some of the conversation's intended meaning may be derived through maxim violations in the dialogue between the film's

protagonists. Some characters wanted to keep things from the other characters, and they did so for their own reasons.

The second reference is an article by Raharja and Rosyidha (2019). This study examined the cooperative rules that were created in stand-up comedy season 4, which are the aftereffect of the review that can be recognized as 12 expressions of violation of the quantity maxim, 13 expressions of violation of the quality maxim, 22 of the relevance maxim and two violation of the manner maxim. The closeness that can be distinguished in that review with the past review is the hypothesis that was proposed by Grice to break down kinds of Saying infringement contained in the information source. The information source is where there has been a difference between this review and the previous review; the previous review used stand-up comedy performance as its information source, whereas this study uses the film *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* as the data source and is also concerned with violation maxim and setting circumstance research.

Another study on violations was done by Andy and Ambalegin (2019). This study aimed at the maxim violations in the movie *Night at the Museum*. In order to build an engaging narrative for the movie scenario, all maxims were violated. The movie was definitely alive with a variety of maxim violations. The findings of this analysis presented that four subs of maxims were violated. This study was predicated on the crucial of good language usage; communication is considered effective if the message is unambiguous, understandable by both speaker and listener and clear. This study used theory by Grice's (1975) cooperative principles to explain how individuals effectively and efficiently utilize language.

The fourth study is Pratiwi (2019). This study was concerned with analyzing the maxim violation in the movie and also analyzing the intended meaning behind the utterance, which contains maxim violation. Characters that disobey the rules try to hide something by providing false information that lacks relevant evidence while speaking with others, providing more or less information than is necessary, responding inanely, and providing confusing or inaccurate information.

The last related study was written by Pradani and Sembodo (2020). The fundamental target of this study is to find the different conversational principles from the roles in the Divergent Series. This focus, moreover, attempts to get a handle on the motivations driving the encroachment of conversational principles and recognizes various purposes behind the roles in the Divergent film series to disregard explicit talk rules. The study discovered that there had been 100 violations happened in the Divergent series; the number of violations was 43 numbers (43%). Those are violations of the maxim of relevance, which is most well-known in the movie. The maxim of manner is the second most violated maxim, with a total of 24 violations (24%), while the maxim of quantity is violated a total of 22 times (22%). The maxim of quality violated, which totals 11 violations (11%), is the least in the film. Disobeying the conversational norm in the film fills various needs, including staying quiet about something, keeping specific data, staying away from specific subjects or questions, and puzzling the audience.

The current study aims to find the types of violations of the maxim in the conversation of the main character in the movie Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings. The film gives several examples of the violations that the main character in films with various backgrounds commits.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A few essential theories are employed as the theoretical foundation for this research. Based on Grice's (1975, 1989) Cooperative Principle Theory, with reinforcement from Cutting's Types of Maxim Violation Theory (2002).

### Cooperative Principle

One of the key concepts in pragmatics is the cooperative principle. The cooperative principle discusses how people communicate or interact with one another. Everyone in a discussion must adhere to specific conversational standards to communicate effectively how the sender and the recipient engage. influences whether such communication will

succeed. The cooperative principle may be defined as the intention undertaken by both the speaker and the hearer to make their conversations engaging and effective. In order to communicate and absorb messages clearly throughout each conversational turn, the speaker and the hearer need to work together. This will ensure that the speaker aims to convey their message in an acceptable manner and that the listener intends to comprehend it at each point in the conversation.

This presumption was identified by Grice (1975, p. 45) as the Cooperative Principle, which is the fundamental aspect of the conversational cooperative principle. He stated, "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged." Cooperative Principle has four types of maxims to assist the speakers and the audience members with figuring out the importance of the expression. Be that as it may, basically in our day-to-day routine, humans at times disobey these rules as they will not necessarily, in every case, share their considerations in a real sense since they have different expectations, for example, to make a joke, to save themselves, or even outrage individuals' sentiments. The four maxims are presented and discussed below.

### *Maxim of Quantity*

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

Grice (1975, p. 45) stated that the first type of maxim connected to quantity is obviously necessary when engaging in an argument since every type of discussion tries to provide certain information that must be appropriate for the conversation's purpose. Otherwise, the listener might not successfully receive the intended message. From a different perspective, Grice acknowledges that it is arguable whether the maxim "quantity" should be violated. At the same time, it would be seen as time-wasting, but it would not violate the Cooperative Principle.

***Maxim of Quality***

1. Try to make your contribution one that is true.
2. Do not say what you believe to be false.
3. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

According to Grice (1975), the maxim of quality requires that you refrain from speaking in a discussion about things you know to be false or for which you lack sufficient proof. In other words, avoid the sin of lying. The Quality Maxim requires that statements given in conversations be accurate and justified. Grice offers this maxim as an explanation for a specific type of consistency in conversational behavior about the validity of the information discussed at the stage of the conversation.

***Maxim of Relation: Be relevant.***

According to Grice (1975), the relation maxim assumes that you are relevant when you communicate. Considering the information significance conveyed at each level of a discussion, Grice proposes this maxim as clarification for a certain sort of regularity in conversational activity.

***Maxim of Manner***

1. Be perspicuous
2. Avoid obscurity of expression.
3. Avoid ambiguity.
4. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
5. Be orderly.

Grice provides that the maxim of manner refers to how a topic is conveyed in conversation. Grice proposes this maxim as a justification for a certain amount of regularity in conversational activity with how information is provided at each conversation turn.

As stated by Cutting (2002), when a speaker fails to provide a listener with sufficient information regarding the point of the subject discussion, it means the maxim of quantity is violated. The case when a speaker is deceptive and conveys to the listener

incorrect facts, which can be characterized as a lie, is indeed a violation of the quality maxim. Moreover, the speaker breaks the relation of maxim when they accidentally switch the subject to avoid the topic discussion by other participants in the conversation. Cutting (2002) explains that breaking the rule of relation occurs when speakers attempt to distract people by switching the subject. The final example violates the manners maxim. Violation of the manner maxim occurs when someone uses ambiguous or to prevent providing a short and polite response to a question.

## METHODS

This study used the observation method, which is used to collect the data in the *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* movie (Cretton, 2021). The method is implemented by observing the conversation and the conversational maxim violation by the characters in the movie. According to Ary, Jacob, and Sorensen (2010), observation is an essential strategy for getting information in subjective exploration, and the design is to figure out complex connections in a characteristic setting. The data were analyzed using the descriptive qualitative method to give more explanation about the maxim violations. As stated by Creswell (2012), qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a human social problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures; collecting data in the participants' setting; analyzing the data inductively, building from particulars to general themes; and making interpretations of the meaning of data. The final written report has a flexible writing structure. The data were collected through several steps; (1) Watch the movie and read the script to get more understanding of the story and make it easy to find the conversational maxim violation and the intent behind that by the characters in the *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* movie, (2) Take notes and observe all the dialogue or conversation that contains the maxim violations, (3) Classify the data into the types of maxim violation.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There are 15 maxim violations identified in the movie *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings*. Those violations were classified using Grice's theory of cooperative principle supported by Cutting's theory. The main character in the film *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* frequently violates the conversational rules, as seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The frequency of maxim violations in the movie

No	Maxim Violation	Token	%
1	Maxim of Quantity	6	40.0
2	Maxim of Quality	4	26.6
3	Maxim of Relation	3	20.0
4	Maxim of Manner	2	13.4
<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The table above shows that the maxim of quantity is violated the most in the movie, whereas the maxim of relation is violated the least frequently. The researcher found that there are six times a violation of the maxim of quantity had been violated (40%). Then, maxim violation of quality is the second maxim that reaches four times in the total amount violation, which is (26,6%). The third most frequently happened is the violation maxim of relation, which reaches three times of violation (20%). A minor violation that happens is one that violates the maxim of manner, reaching two violations (13,4%). The violations of each maxim are presented and analyzed in detail in the following subsections.

### *Violation of the quantity maxim*

Violations of the maxim of quantity happen when the speaker attempts to conceal total data by saying not as much as what is generally anticipated by the listener. The speakers do not give the whole information or facts since they do not believe the listener should get the complete data they need. It is commonly understood as a violation of the maxim of quantity when the speaker provides more information than is required.

- (1) Katy: "Shaun, Hey! You need to tell me what the hell is going on. What are you doing? Where are you going?"

Shang-Chi: "**Macau.**"

The dialogue that happens between Shang-Chi and Katy is considered a violation. It happens at Shang-Chi's apartment, specifically after the incident on the bus, when Shang-Chi surprisingly shows his "*extraordinary fighting skills*" in front of Katy to fight five assassins at the same time. After that incident, a scene shows Shang-Chi putting his things into a bag as if he wanted to go abroad, which makes Katy even more confused, and she aggressively asks him so many questions at once. Katy has a lot of questions after everything that she has seen. She is baffled and shocked, knowing his best friend can do that fighting skill and seems to be dealing with those stranger assassins. From the data above, Shang-Chi, as the main character, violates the maxim of quantity by answering Katy's curiosity not much as required. Shang-Chi gave less information to Katy about the situation. It's clear that Katy asks more than one question, but Shang-Chi just answers one question, which is the last one, and ignores the other.

### *Violation of the quality maxim*

A maxim of quality expects the speaker to make a correct and unambiguous statement rather than a lack of supporting evidence. If those standards are disobeyed, it can be considered that the speaker violates the maxim of quality. For instance, the quality of the maxim violated in this film, along with some conversational background, can be seen below.

- (2) Katy's Mom: "Shaun, did my daughter apply to any new jobs this week?"

Shang-Chi: "**She really likes her job.**"

The dialogue happens at Katy's apartment while Katy and her family are having breakfast. At the time, Shaun or Shang-Chi also joined that family's breakfast. It is clear that the relationship between Shang-Chi, Katy, and her family is really that close. Then Katy's mother asked Shang-Chi about her daughter's job, and Shang-Chi answered that "Katy really likes her job". By saying that, it means Shang-Chi violates the maxim of quality because his answer did not clearly answer Katy's mother's question. His utterance has an implied

meaning. He does not even answer Katy's Mom question directly as a "yes she did or no she didn't." But he indirectly gives the real answer that Shang-Chi said is "no she didn't", or it can be that "Katy didn't apply for another job this week" because Katy really likes her current job as a valet parking attendant.

### ***Violation of the relation maxim***

In this study, two violations of the maxim of relation by the main character in the movie *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* exist. Violations of the maxim of relation are to avoid unwanted questions by giving unrelated answers or unwanted statements by giving irrelevant responses because the speakers are only speaking for themselves and are not trying to reply or provide actual responses to others. However, they misdirect the listener to switch the discussion's subject. They do not want to answer or respond to the answer that the hearer needs to change the topic, or they respond or provide an appropriate response.

- (3) Katy: "Did you think valet is easy? It's like the most challenging job ever!"

Shang-Chi: "You need people skills, driving skills..."

Katy: "Soo can't even parallel park."

Shang-Chi: "**Well, it's almost midnight. We got the early shift. Should probably be responsible, go to sleep.**"

Katy: "Yeah, we can be responsible. We can do that."

This scene happened after Shang-Chi and Katy met Soo and her boyfriend in the restaurant. They talked about a lot of topics, and one of the topics was about getting a proper job. Soo said that Shang-Chi and Katy should have a better job than just being valet parking when they have more potential. Since Shang-Chi suddenly changed the subject in the above dialogue, his response is regarded as a violation of the relation principle. Shang-Chi needs to get rid of further discussion of Soo's ability to parallel park, although Katy was obviously frustrated with what Soo has said to them.

### ***Violation of the manner maxim***

Violation of the maxim of manner is to mislead the listener by not speaking correctly, concisely, and in sequence. The Maxim of Manner states that you must speak in an understandable and straightforward way when getting involved in a conversation. In this study, three violations of the maxim of manner has been violated by the main character in the movie *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings*. From those three violations, it can be assumed that those violations are intended to mislead the listener. The speakers purposely avoid giving their responses in a direct manner.

- (4) Katy: "You changed your name from Shang to Shaun?"

Sang-Chi: "**Yeah, I don't. Yeah.**"

Katy: "What?"

This dialogue happens when Shang-Chi and Katy are on the airplane because they want to go to New York to find Xialing, Shang-Chi's sister. At the time, Katy was still asking about the incident on the previous bus. She also wants to know about the problem and all her curiosity about Shang-Chi's life before she met her. The problem that made Shang-chi run away from his house, specifically run away from his father, who forced him to become a murderer. Their conversation kept flowing until Shang-Chi honestly said that his real name was Shang-Chi, not Shaun. Shang-Chi, as the main character, is considered to violate the maxim of manner by not answering Katy's orderly. His answer contained an ambiguity that made Katy confused. It shows his inconsistency when answering Katy's questions. Therefore, Katy was even more confused than ever by Shang-chi's answers.

## CONCLUSION

This research examined occurrences of conversational maxim violations in the movies *Shang-Chi and The Legend of the Ten Rings*. According to the examination of the main character's statements in the *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* movie in the chapter before, there are four different

types of maxims that the main character has violated. It is the maxim of quantity, quality, relation, and manner. There are a total of 15 violations found in the movie, with the violation of the maxim quantity as the most frequent and the maxim violation of manner as the least. According to this study, the movie's main character mainly violates the quantity maxim. The primary intent of breaking conversational norms is to deceive listeners by conveying a surface message. In order to avoid complications that may arise from stating the unacceptable truth, the violation of conversational rules permits speakers to respond to uncomfortable topics without being aware of their actual responses or the factuality.

In conclusion, in the conversation, people still tend to break the rules consciously or unconsciously even though there is a cooperative principle of maxims. It is very typical, and there was a lot of reason that might cause the violation that could not only be found in real life but also in the movie, for instance, in the film of Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings, which the writer analyses.

## REFERENCES

- Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., & Sorensen, C. (2010). *Introduction to research in education* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Alvaro, R. N. (2011). *The role of conversational maxims, implicature and presupposition in the creation of humour: An analysis of Woody Allen's Anything Else* (Master's dissertation). Universidad Complutense de Madrid.
- Apriyantha. (2020). *The analysis of violation of maxim found in the Movie Spider-Man: Homecoming by John Watts* (Unpublished undergraduate thesis). Mahasaraswati Denpasar University.
- Andy, & Ambalegin. (2019). Maxims violation on *Night at the Museum* movie. *Journal Basis UPB*, 6(2), 215-224. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.33884/basisu pb.v6i2.1421>.
- Chierchia, G., Mc Connell-Ginet, S. (1990). *Meaning and grammar*. MIT Press.
- Coulthard, M. (1977). *An Introduction to discourse analysis*. Longman Group Limited.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: planning, conducting, evaluating, quantitative and qualitative research* (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Pearson Education Inc.
- Cretton, D. D. (Director). (2021). *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* [Film]. Marvel Studios.
- Cutting, J. (2002). *Pragmatics and discourse: A resource book for students*. Routledge.
- Geurts, B. (2010). *Quantity implicatures*. Cambridge University Press.
- Grice, P. (1989) *Studies in the way of words*. Harvard University Press.
- Grice, P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole and J. Morgan (Ed.), *Syntax and semantics, speech acts*, (3), 41-58. Academic Press.
- Hornby, A.S. (2006). *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary*. Oxford Dictionary Press.
- Mubarak, Z. H. (2019). The analysis of repetiton as part of lexical cohesion in talk shows. *Journal Basis UPB*, 6(1), 81-94. <https://doi.org/10.33884/basisupb.v6i1>.
- Paltridge, B. (2006). *Discourse analysis*. Continuum Books
- Pratiwi. (2019). The analysis of maxim violation in the Movie *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom*, (Unpublished undergraduate thesis). Mahasaraswati Denpasar University.
- Pradani, A. F., & Priyo Sembodo, T. J. (2020). The violation of conversational maxims in the movie series *Divergent*. *Lexicon* 7(2), 224-232. <https://doi.org/10.22146/lexicon.v7i2.66572>.
- Raharja, A. U. S. & Rosyidha, A.. (2019). Maxim of cooperative principle violation by Dodit Mulyanto in Stand-up Comedy Indonesia Season 4. *Journal Pragmatics Research* 1(1), 62-77. <https://doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v1i1.62-77>.
- Thomas, J. (1995). *Meaning in Interaction: An Introduction to Pragmatics*. Longman.
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.