

# Dominant Maxim violations in ‘Behind the Lawyer Profession’ of Hitam Putih Talk Show

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**Abstract - Maxims are often violated in TV talk show programs, including Hitam Putih. This study is to find out the dominant maxim violations and their causes in the first segment of Behind the Lawyer Profession in Hitam Putih talk show. The source data in this qualitative study is the transcription of a conversation by a host/co-host and a guest (a famous Indonesian lawyer) with the duration of 08.25 minutes. The data are then analyzed by Grice’s four maxims quantitatively and interpreted qualitatively. The findings show 32 maxim violations including all four types. Of these violations, maxim of relevance is the most dominant since the speakers wanted to create jokes and humors.**

**Keywords: Grice’s maxims, television talk show, conversation, maxim violation.**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is a process of transferring messages and ideas. People communicate with the help of language. In communication, people express their ideas, something that they want to say. However, sometimes, what people say is not what they meant. It depends on the contexts. Grice as cited in Levinson (1983) states his opinion on how people use language. It is called Cooperative principles. He proposes four basic maxims of conversation or principles of how people use language in conversation. These principles help people to communicate effectively. These principles are called observance maxims.

The first maxim is maxim of quality. In order to obey this maxim, the speakers should say the truth and do not say something which is less of evidence. Meanwhile the second maxim is maxim of quantity. It means that the speaker should be as informative as possible. The next maxim is maxim of relevance. In order to obey this maxim the contribution of the participants should be relevant. The last maxim is maxim of manner. The speaker can obey this maxim by avoiding obscurity of expression, avoiding ambiguity, be brief and be orderly.

However, in everyday conversation, people often do not obey the principles. It is called non-observance maxims. As Yule said that if it is clear to the hearer that the non-observance is deliberate; and the speaker can nonetheless be assumed to be obeying the Co-operative Principle and is therefore breaking the rules for good communicative reasons (Yule, 2003). Some main types of non-observances of Gricean maxims are clashing, infringing, opting out, flouting, and violating the maxims. This study focuss on the violation of maxim as one of the non-observance maxims. The violation of maxim not only happens in daily conversation but also in television talk shows. The conversations in television talk

shows are usually done by famous people. For examples, they are celebrities, officials, or prominent figures. Hitam putih is one of the famous television talk shows in Indonesia with a famous Indonesian mentalist, and a famous Indonesian actress as the hosts. It is broadcasted by Trans 7 on Monday to Friday at 6 PM.

This study investigated the first segment of *Hitam Putih* television talk show which was on the episode of “Behind the Lawyer Profession” with a famous Indonesian lawyer as the guest. He is known as a controversial lawyer in Indonesia. Moreover, He is famous with his properties and style of fashion. The talk show on that episode mainly talked about His properties and rich clients. In Hitam Putih, the main host always asks a straight forward question to the guests. Therefore, it is interesting to investigate the conversation happened during the segment to know how the guest answer the questions and how the hosts asks the questions. Moreover, it is interesting to know whether or not the talk show has achieved its purpose as a talk show which is to entertain its audience by investigating the maxim violation happened during the show.

According to Timberg and Erler (2004) Television talk show, as opposed to television talk, is the television show that is entirely structured around the act of conversation. It usually invites famous figures to be interviewed. Meanwhile, according to Grice as cited in Levinson (1983) there are four types of maxim violations. They are violation of maxim of quantity, violation of maxim of quality, violation of maxim of relevance and the violation of maxim of manner. Each of them is explained in detail as follows.

### 1. Violation of maxim of quantity

Speakers are considered violate the maxim of quantity when they speak less or more than is required. When the speakers give less information, they violate of the maxim since they do not provide sufficient information to the hearer. Meanwhile, when speakers provide more information than is required, they also violate this maxim since the information they provide will be too much.

### 2. Violation of maxim of quality

Speakers are considered violate the maxim of quality when they provide false information. When speaker provide information but they do not have evidence is also considered as violating the maxim.

### 3. Violation of maxim of relevance

Speakers are considered as violating the maxim of relevance when they speak something that is not relevant. It

happened when speakers change the subject of the conversation.

#### 4. Violation of maxim of manner

Maxim of manner is violated when speakers speak in obscurity and doing ambiguity.

Several studies in the same field have been conducted before; the first study was done by Sembiring and Pulungan (2014) who investigated the maxim violation in *Awas Ada Sule* situation comedy. The results show that there were four types of maxim violations. The most dominant type of violation happened in the maxim of quantity. The characters in the situation comedy did the violation to create a joke or humor.

Second study was conducted by Khosravizadeh and Sadehvandi (2011). They investigated the extent to which the maxim of quantity is either violated or flouted by the two main characters, in a movie entitled “Dinner for Schmucks”. In addition, it investigated if there is any occasion in which one party opts out of the conversation. The results showed that in five occasions the characters violated the maxim of quantity. It means that although cooperative principles describes the best practices in communication in order to facilitate the process of conversation to be smoother for both the listener and speaker, people frequently disobey these maxims in order to achieve certain purposes.

The difference between the present study and the previous studies is that this presents study investigate the maxim violation happened in a television talk show and this study only focuses on the first segment of the talk show.

The research question of the present study are what types of violation of maxim, what is the most dominant type of violation of maxims used in the talk show and what are the causes of the violations happened in the first segment of *Hitam Putih* television talk show in the episode of “Behind the Lawyer Profession”.

*Table 1. The Results of Maxims Violation Analysis*

Types of Violation of Maxims	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Quantity</b>	8	25%
<b>Quality</b>	5	15,625%
<b>Relevance</b>	10	31,25%
<b>Manner</b>	9	28,125%
<b>Total</b>	32	100%

The table above shows that there are total 32 maxim violations in the first segment of *Hitam Putih* in the episode of “Behind the Lawyer Profession”. The violation of maxim of relevance was 10 utterances (31.25%). This is the dominant violation of maxim in the script of the first segment of *Hitam Putih*. Then, the violation of maxim of manner was 9 utterances (28.125%). The other violation happened in the maxim of quantity. It happened in 8 utterances (25%). In the conversation between the hosts and the guest, Hotman Paris Hutapea, there were 5 utterances (15,6%) which violated the maxim of quality.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

The study uses both quantitative and qualitative designs. Creswell (2012) said that quantitative research “employ strategies of inquiry such as experimental and surveys, and collect data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data”. The study involves the statistical data in order to know the dominant maxim violation happened in the conversation between the hosts of *Hitam Putih* talk show and its guest. Meanwhile, Creswell said that qualitative research explores problem and develops a detail understanding of certain phenomenon. The study is qualitative study since it explains the detail of the findings through words or by explaining them.

The data of the study were the script of the first segment of *Hitam Putih* television talk show in the episode of “Behind the Lawyer Profession”. The study involves three people in the first segment of the talk show. They were the host, the co-host and the guest. The data was taken from Youtube which accessed on June, 10th 2016. First of all, the data were downloaded, watched, transcribed, translated, identified and analyzed and interpreted based on the categories of maxim violation. Then, the dominant types were counted and the findings were explained.

## 6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data that were analyzed were *Hitam Putih* television talk show in the episode of “Behind the Lawyer Profession” in the first segment. It was a conversation between the hosts and a controversial lawyer. The results of analysis showed that there are several maxim violations happened in the conversation. They are explained in the table below.

### Violation of Maxim of Relevance

Maxim of relevance is the most violated maxim in the conversation between the hosts and the lawyer. It happened because the speakers uttered information which was not relevant with the topic. Sometimes the speakers did that to make a joke or humor. It is in line with Pan (2012) who states that people speak irrelevantly to create humor or jokes. The example is below.

Example (1)

Co-host : emm pengacara lawyer yang harga 30 miliar dari ujung kaki sampai ujung kepala katanya om.  
(emmm...lawyer with 30 billion from head to toe. People say that, Uncle)

Host : katanya, beritanya om  
(People say, the news says)  
Guest: ah itu berita itu  
(ah..that's just a news)  
Host : sebenarnya berapa om? 40?  
(How much exactly, Uncle? 40?)  
Host : hehe  
(Laughing)  
Co-host: haha lebih lagi  
(haha..more than that)  
: kita nawarr kita nawar  
(We bargain, we bargain)

In this example, The host violated the maxim of relevance by saying "We bargain, we bargain". The word "bargain" usually used when there is a seller and buyer. However, in the conversation, they were talking about the news that said the lawyer is a lawyer with IDR 30 Billion from head to toe. So, there was no connection between host's utterances with the topic they were talking about. The host said that in order to make a joke or a humor since one person said 30 Billion but the other said 40 Million. It seemed like they were bargaining.

#### Violation of Maxim of Manner

The speakers in the first segment of Hitam Putih violated the maxim of manner by giving ambiguous information during the conversation. They were done to avoid arrogance.

#### Example (2)

Co-host: emm pengacara lawyer yang harga 30 miliar dari ujung kaki sampai ujung kepala katanya om.  
(emmm...lawyer with 30 billion from head to toe)

Host : katanya, beritanya om  
(People say, the news says)

Guest : **ah itu berita itu**  
**(ah..that's just news)**

The example above shows that the guest violated the maxim of manner by saying "Ah that's just news". The utterance is considered as maxim violation since the utterance is ambiguous and obscure. Of course, that was news because host had already said that but it make the hearer think whether they had to believe with the news or not. The example below shows more about the effort of the guest in avoiding arrogance by violating the maxim of manner.

#### Example (3)

Host : sebenarnya berapa om? 40?  
(How much exactly, Uncle? 40?)

Guest : **hehe**  
**(Laughing)**

In the example 3, the guest, again, violated the maxim of manner by giving an ambiguous and obscure response towards the question asked. In example 3, he violated the maxim by laughing to response the question

from host about the price of things which he wore from top to toe. It was done by him to avoid arrogance.

#### Violation of Maxim of Quantity

Maxim of quantity deals with how informative the speakers are in a conversation. Violation of maxim of quantity happened when speakers are more and less informative than are required. In the conversation of the first segment of Hitam Putih, one speaker did some violation of this maxim by being more informative than was required. Those violations are explained in detail in the example below.

#### Example (4)

Host : kalo jam om..beli apa dikasih om?

(How about the watch? Is it a gift or not?)

Guest : **Gini eehhh saya punya klien konglomerat eehhh yang punya gulaku, sugar group. Udah meninggal ibu itu. Orang chinese uda umur 86. Sampai ulang..7 tahun berturut-turut saya tiap tahun dikasih jam rolex. Inilah yang terakhir dari almarhum.**

(Let me tell you, I had a rich client who have Gulaku sugar group company. She is died now. She was a Chinese 86 years old. Every year for 7 years she gave me a watch, a Rolex watch and this is the last.)

In the example above, the host only asked the guest whether the watch which he wore was a gift or not but the guest answer with long sentences. The example shows that the guest was more informative than was required. Therefore, he violated the maxim of quantity. The violation was done because he wanted to explain in detail the background of the gift but it is considered as more informative.

#### Violation of Maxim of Quality

Maxim of quality deals with the quality of information that the speakers provide. It is whether the speakers have sufficient evidence towards the information or not. violation of this maxim happened in the conversation between the hosts of Hitam putih and an Indonesian lawyer as a guest. It is presented in the example 5 below.

#### Example (5)

Host : sebenarnya berapa om? 40?

(How much exactly, Uncle? 40?)

Guest : hehe

(Laughing)

Co-host: **haha lebih lagi**  
**(haha..more than that)**

The Co-host, in example 5 violated the maxim of quality since she uttered something with no sufficient evidence. They were talking about the price of the things that the guest wore from top to toe. Then, the co-host said that those were expensive even when the guest, the owner, did not provide any information about all of them. Moreover, the co-host did not know the brand of the shoes and suit that the guest wore at that occasion. How she know that those were expensive. Because of that, the co-

host is considered as violating the maxim of quality. That violation happened because the co-host wanted to respect the guest which is a famous lawyer. There is another reason why the speakers in the conversation violating this maxim. It is presented in detail in the example as follows.

Example (6)

Co-host: **Ini cincinnya yang 100rb dapet 3 kan om?**

**(The rings are IDR 100.000 for 3, right?)**

Guest : hehehe

(Laughing)

The co-host, in example 6, violated the maxim of quality by saying that the rings that the guest wore were IDR 100.000 for 3. It is considered as maxim violation since she did not have sufficient evidence about the rings. Even if the utterance is a question, still it is a violation of maxim of quality. The violation happened here because the co-host wanted to make a joke or humor.

From the analysis above, it can be seen that all the maxims were violated. The reasons that the speakers violated them were because they wanted to create jokes and humors. It is in line with Pan (2012) who states that people speaks irrelevantly, exaggeratedly, ambiguously, and provide more information to create a joke and humor.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis above, this study concludes the following. First, there were four types of maxim violations in the first segment of Hitam Putih television talk show in the episode of "Behind the Lawyer Profession". As many as 10 utterances (31.25%) violated the maxim of relevance, 9 utterances (28.125%) violated the maxim of manner, 8 utterances (15.625%) violated the maxim of quantity and 5 utterances (25%) the maxim of quality.

Second, the results of analysis showed that the most dominant type of maxim which was violated in the first segment of *Hitam putih* television talk show in the episode of "Behind the Lawyer Profession" was the maxim of relevance.

Third, the violations of the maxims happened when the speakers provided information or utterances which were not relevant with the topics that were talking about, sometimes they gave more information than was required and answer the questions ambiguously. Those violations happened because the speakers wanted to create a joke or humor.

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