

MAXIM VIOLATION IN THE NOVEL IT STARTS WITH US

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ABSTRACT

This research discovers the exploration of Maxim Violation within the characters of “It Starts with Us” by Colleen Hoover. Drawing upon Grice’s theory, the study uncovers various instances of maxim violations. A qualitative descriptive method was employed, with the primary data source being the English dialogues from the novel. Tables were used in the analysis to enhance reader comprehension and present the findings in a structured manner. The investigation revealed ten maxim violations, categorised into three types: Maxim of Quantity, Maxim of Quality, and Relevance. It was further observed that the Maxim of Quantity emerged as the most frequently violated maxim among the characters in the novel. This study provides a comprehensive understanding of how Maxim Violations manifest in the book and their significance in the storyline. In conclusion, this study contributes to understanding literature's character interactions and narrative techniques.

Keywords: Maxim Violation, Grice Cooperative Principle

INTRODUCTION

Communication, the process of exchanging information, is fundamental to human interaction. Lasswell's (1948) concept of communication as transmission has influenced our understanding of how information is conveyed effectively. Effective communication hinges on adherence to rules or principles of cooperation, a discipline that transcends boundaries (Morreale et al., 2000).

Grice (1975) introduced the Cooperative Principle, which posits that one’s contribution to a conversation should be proportionate to its stage and aligned with its accepted goals. Good communication skills can enhance an individual’s appeal, while poor skills can detract from it. Furthermore, how one communicates can reveal much about one's behaviour and personality.

The Cooperative Principle theory, as discussed by Karim (2016), provides a framework for effective communication. It suggests that while some people focus on the information provided, most are more attuned to the impressions they form during the conversation. This allows them to discern whether the other party is friendly, arrogant, ambiguous, honest, or deceptive. Brown and Yule (1983) noted that speech and attitude can reveal personality. For instance, those who speak politely are often perceived as polite and good-natured. Lakoff (1973) further posited that politeness mitigates interaction shifts, underscoring the need to study the Cooperative Principle to communicate effectively.

Grice expanded on this by developing four maxims under the Cooperative Principle: Quantity, Quality, Relevance, and Manner. Violations of these maxims, known as Maxim Violations, disrupt the cooperative nature of communication and can impact the conversation. These violations include Quantity, Quality, Relevance, and Manner Maxim Violations.

Several studies have examined how Gricean Maxims, rules that guide conversation, are used and broken. Dewi et al. (2023) studied this in the movie "Emily in Paris". Hernanda (2022) found that in the movie "Front of the Class", the receptionist followed these rules, but the guest did not always. Hutahaeen (2020) showed that these rules are essential in classrooms, too. Karim (2016) found that people often give more information than needed when making complaints, breaking the 'Quantity' maxim. Kurniadi (2021) also found that this maxim is often broken in higher education. These studies help us understand how these rules affect our daily communication and why they can be hard to follow.

This research focuses on maxim violation in communication, which signifies a breakdown in cooperative communication. Often encountered daily, such violations must be avoided to ensure effective communication. By understanding these violations, readers can learn to avoid them. Sinafa et al. (2018) explained that maximum violations directly affect the speeches. Dewi et al. (2023) further noted that some people are occasionally uncooperative, leading to maximum violations. This research analyses these violations using the qualitative-descriptive method to contribute a broader understanding of effective communication.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Grice's Cooperative Principle, encompassing the maxims of quality, quantity, relevance, and manner, is a cornerstone in the study of effective communication. As Bakoko and Pratiwi (2021) elucidate, Grice's principle aims to clarify how listeners interpret the intended meaning behind spoken words. The principle underscores the importance of relevance, clarity, precision, truthfulness, and appropriateness in communication.

However, when these maxims are violated, communication may falter. Hutahaeen (2020) highlights indirect statements as a common violation, while Putri and Aprasi (2020) point out that violations often occur when speakers fail to grasp the deeper meaning of a conversation, leading to poor quality communication.

The violation of the Maxim of Quality, as discussed by Hossain (2021), occurs when a speaker provides false or misleading information. This violation can lead to mistrust and potential complications, as the speaker may be compelled to substantiate their false claims, as noted by Al-Zubeiry (2020).

Maulin G & Sembodo (2021) explain that the Maxim of Quantity violation arises when a speaker provides more or less information than required. This can lead to confusion and dissatisfaction, as the interlocutor may struggle to comprehend the speaker's intent. Kurniadi (2021) further emphasises that excessive information beyond what is asked can violate this maxim.

According to Nahak and Bram (2021), the Maxim of Relevance is violated when a speaker deviates from the topic of conversation, avoids discussing a particular topic, conceals information, or draws incorrect conclusions about cause and effect. This violation disrupts the shared goal of the conversation, leading it astray. Medina (2023) further explains that straying from the main subject during a conversation violates this maxim.

The violation of the Maxim of Manner occurs when a conversation lacks structure and coherence and the speaker deviates from the listener's expectations. Simamarta and Nasution (2021) point out that such violations often result in ambiguous language that confuses the listener. Widiasih and Winarta (2022) further elaborate that violations of

the Maxim of Manner involve actions that lead to ambiguity, obscurity, and a lack of brevity and orderliness in communication.

Conversations not adhering to the Maxim of Manner can lead to ineffective communication. The listener may struggle to discern the purpose and meaning of the speaker's statements, mainly when using ambiguous words with multiple interpretations. This lack of clarity and coherence can lead to misunderstandings and further questions, disrupting the flow of communication.

In essence, violations of this maxim can significantly impair communication between individuals. Such violations can lead to imperfect communication, resulting in misunderstandings and confusion. Poor communication can be detrimental to the listener and the speaker, as it can lead to misinterpretations and misconceptions.

Understanding and avoiding maxim violations are crucial for effective communication. Adherence to the maxims ensures that communication is conducted with quality, quantity, relevance, and manner. Future research could delve into the implications of these violations in various communication contexts and propose strategies to mitigate their occurrence. This would contribute to the broader understanding of effective communication and the role of Grice's maxims in facilitating it.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach, a method well-suited for generating rich, detailed data derived from people's spoken or written words and observable behaviour (Moleong, 2011). The primary source material for this research is Colleen Hoover's novel, "It Starts with Us". The data extracted from this novel pertains to interactions and dialogues related to Grice's maxims theory.

The data collection process is systematic and involves several key steps. The first step involves carefully selecting text from the novel that aligns with the research objectives. This ensures that the data under analysis is relevant and contributes to the study's goals. The selected data is then classified based on whether it includes instances of Violation of the Maxim Cooperative Principle. This classification process helps to organise the data and prepare it for further analysis. Once the data is classified, it is interpreted in line with the theoretical concept of Grice's maxims. This involves thoroughly examining the data to uncover the underlying meanings and implications of the maxim violations. The final step involves identifying specific instances of Violation of the Maxim Cooperative Principle within Colleen Hoover's novel *It Starts with Us*. This step combines the findings of the previous steps and provides concrete examples of maxim violations.

This thorough methodology aims to comprehensively analyse Maxim Violation within the novel's context, contributing to a broader understanding of effective communication.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

The Novel "It Starts with Us" is the literary work under consideration. The analysis discovers maxim violation toward a character in a novel, with the case of Maxim Violation, which means the Novel includes maxim violation. There are maxim violations found in the case:

Table 1: The types of Maxim Violation in the novel *It Starts with Us*

Maxim Violation	Page of case
Maxim of Quantity	<i>It Starts with Us</i> , page 16
Maxim of Quantity	<i>It Starts with Us</i> , page 27
Maxim of Quantity	<i>It Starts with Us</i> , page 27
Maxim of Relevance	<i>It Starts with Us</i> , page 45
Maxim of Quality	<i>It Starts with Us</i> , page 68
Maxim of Quality	<i>It Starts with Us</i> , page 124
Maxim of Quality	<i>It Starts with Us</i> , page 156
Maxim of Quality	<i>It Starts with Us</i> , page 157
Maxim of Relevance	<i>It Starts with Us</i> , page 158
Maxim of Quality	<i>It Starts with Us</i> , page 257

Source: author's work.

Table 1 illustrates that the Maxim of Quantity is violated three times, found on pages 16 and 27. The Maxim of Relevance is violated twice, found on pages 45 and 158. The Maxim of Quality is violated the most, with five instances found on pages 68, 124, 156, 157, and 257.

This table provides a clear overview of where and how often each type of Maxim Violation occurs in the book, which could be helpful for a detailed analysis of the text. It is interesting to note that the Maxim of Quality is violated more frequently than the others in this particular book. This could suggest that the characters in the book often make statements that are not entirely truthful or lack evidence, which could be a significant aspect of their interactions and the overall narrative.

DISCUSSION

The following sections will provide a detailed description of the results derived from analysing the maxims. Each instance of Maxim Violation Grice (1975) and Lakoff (1973) identified in the novel will be examined in depth, focusing on the context in which it occurs, the characters involved, and the implications of the violation on the narrative and character development. The aim is to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Maxim Violations are manifested in the novel and their significance in the overall storyline.

1. Violation of Maxim Quantity

Atlas: *“So, what do I do? Text her? Call her. Wait until she reaches out to me?”*

Theo: *“It has been eight hours, Atlas. Calm down.”*

Atlas: *His advice is giving me whiplash.*

In this context, Atlas converses with Theo about his ex, Lily Bloom, who has not been in contact with Atlas. The dialogue takes place in Atlas’s office, set against the backdrop of a post-work environment. Theo attempts to assuage Atlas’s concerns about Lily, as Atlas’s persistent worry is evident in his repeated questioning. Atlas’s intent is clear - he seeks to re-establish contact with Lily. However, Theo’s advice falls short of a satisfactory solution, only worsening Atlas’s worry about Lily. Atlas’s reaction indicates his dissatisfaction with Theo’s lack of informative guidance.

This conversation between Atlas and Theo does not adhere to the principle of cooperation. Atlas, seeking advice, poses multiple questions to Theo. However, Theo’s response does not directly address Atlas’s inquiries. Instead of providing a clear ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer, Theo responds with an unrelated statement: “It has been eight hours, Atlas. Calm down.” While implying a ‘no’, this response does not provide Atlas with sufficient information to resolve his doubts. Therefore, this interaction violates the maxim of quantity, as Theo’s reaction lacks the necessary details to answer Atlas’s questions fully.

2. Violation of Maxim Quantity

Atlas: *“Are you dying?”*

Sutton: *“Am I dying?”*

Atlas: *She repeats my question with laughter as if I am absurd and unreasonable and an ass... whole.*

In this conversation context, Sutton, Atlas’s mother, abandoned him during his teenage years and treated him harshly, leading to Atlas leaving home. The conversation is a telephone exchange where Sutton reaches out to Atlas after no contact. Atlas discerns that Sutton’s outreach is not driven by concern for him but rather by her needs. He responds to Sutton sarcastically, implying that perhaps only a life-threatening situation would prompt her to show concern for him. Otherwise, he believes he would continue to be neglected by her. This dialogue underscores the strained relationship between Atlas and Sutton and Atlas’s deep-seated feelings of abandonment.

This interaction between Atlas and Sutton does not adhere to the principle of cooperation. Atlas poses a direct question to Sutton, inquiring about Sutton’s health. However, Sutton mirrors Atlas’s question instead of providing a clear ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response. This response violates the principle of cooperation in communication, as it fails to give Atlas the information he seeks. Sutton’s ambiguous response leaves Atlas uncertain about the actual state of Sutton’s health. Therefore, this dialogue violates the maxim of quantity, as Sutton’s reaction lacks the necessary details to answer Atlas’s question fully.

3. Violation of Maxim Quantity

Atlas: *“Do you need money?”*

Sutton: *“Who does not?”*

Atlas: *Every ounce of anxiety she used to fill me with returns in just these few seconds on the phone with her. I immediately end the call. I have nothing to say to her. I blocked her number, regretful that I gave her as long as I did to speak. I should have ended the call when she told me who she was.*

The strained relationship between Atlas and his mother, Sutton, led Atlas to speculate about the reasons behind her sudden contact after prolonged neglect. Atlas’s question carried a hint of sarcasm, reflecting his belief that Sutton’s concern for him was conditional, limited only to situations that would benefit her. This dialogue underscores the deep-seated resentment Atlas harbours due to his mother’s indifference and self-serving behaviour.

This interaction between Atlas and Sutton demonstrates a violation of the Maxim of Quantity. Atlas directly questions Sutton about his financial needs. However, instead of providing a straightforward ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response, Sutton replies with a rhetorical question: “Who does not?” While this response implies a ‘yes’, it does not directly

answer Atlas's question. Sutton's ambiguous response leaves Atlas uncertain about Sutton's actual financial needs. Therefore, this dialogue violates the maxim of quantity, as Sutton's reaction lacks the necessary details to answer Atlas's question fully. The implications of such violations can be significant, potentially leading to misunderstandings and confusion.

4. Violation of Maxim Relevance

Atlas: "I do not want to talk about me. How are you? How is the floral business? What is your daughter like?"

Lily: "That is a lot of questions."

This dialogue unfolds during a video call between Atlas and Lily Bloom, marking their first contact after a significant period of separation. Atlas appears keen to catch up on Lily's life, reflecting his eagerness in the rapid-fire questions he poses. He is anxious to uncover the details behind his inquiries, attentively observing Lily's movements for clues. In stark contrast, Lily responds to his questions relaxedly, even as she multitasks by washing her face. This juxtaposition of Atlas's urgency and Lily's casual behavior underscores the complex dynamics of their relationship as portrayed in the novel.

This interaction between Atlas and Lily violates the Maxim of Relevance. Atlas poses several questions to Lily, expecting her to respond to each one to sustain the conversation. However, Lily comments, "That is many questions," instead of answering Atlas's inquiries. This response does not directly address any of Atlas's questions, thereby violating the principle of cooperation in communication.

According to the Maxim of Relevance, responses should be directly related to the topic. Lily's reaction does not adhere to this maxim as it does not provide relevant answers to Atlas's questions. This violation disrupts the flow of the conversation and leaves Atlas without the information he sought. Therefore, this dialogue violates the Maxim of Relevance, highlighting the importance of providing relevant responses for effective communication.

5. Violation of Maxim Quality

Lily: "Do I have any bad ones?"

Atlas: "Everyone does love your flowers."

This dialogue unfolds during a car ride with Atlas and Lily on a date. They engage in a mutual exchange of questions and answers, fostering a lively conversation. Atlas shares his interest in reading business reviews of acquaintances, believing that a person's business reflects their character. This prompts Lily to inquire about the reviews of her own business.

In this context, Lily is portrayed as uncertain about herself, reflecting her apprehension about the potential negative reviews. Sensing her unease, Atlas reassures her by stating that everyone admires her business. However, while comforting, this statement does not necessarily reflect reality, as some may hold contrary opinions. This dialogue underscores the complexities of their relationship and the delicate balance between truth and reassurance in their interactions.

This interaction between Lily and Atlas demonstrates a violation of the Maxim of Quality. Lily poses a question to Atlas, inquiring if there are any negative aspects. However, instead of providing a straightforward 'yes' or 'no' response, Atlas replies with a statement, "Everyone does love your flowers," which implies a 'no'.

This response violates the principle of cooperation in communication, specifically the Maxim of Quality, which stipulates that one should not say what they believe to be false. In this case, Atlas's response can be interpreted as a lie to prevent Lily from feeling upset. Therefore, this dialogue violates the Maxim of Quality, highlighting the importance of truthfulness and accuracy in effective communication. The implications of such violations can be significant, potentially leading to misunderstandings and confusion. It underscores the importance of adhering to Grice's maxims for effective and efficient communication.

6. Violation of Maxim Quality

Atlas: "Where have you been staying?"

Josh: "Place."

The conversation takes place, and to his surprise, Atlas encounters a young man who turns out to be his mother's son, making him Atlas's younger brother. This newfound sibling, named Josh, had been covertly observing Atlas and causing disruptions to his restaurant business through acts of vandalism. Josh harboured a deep resentment towards their mother, Sutton, and by extension, he also harboured negative feelings towards Atlas, Sutton's other son.

Having experienced a similar situation of running away from home, Atlas tried to empathise with Josh's circumstances. However, Josh responded with indifference to Atlas's attempts at understanding. Josh was careful to conceal his current living situation, fearing that Atlas might discover it and report him to their mother. This narrative underscores the complex dynamics within the family and the challenges they face in their relationships.

This interaction between Atlas and Josh violates the Maxim of Quality. Atlas directly questions Josh about his current residence. However, instead of providing a clear and specific response, Josh replies with a vague term, "Place." Josh's concise response is brief and adheres to the Maxim of Quantity. However, it fails to satisfy the Maxim of Quality, which stipulates that one should provide a truthful and straightforward response. The term 'place' is general and could refer to many locations, such as a house, a building, an apartment, a school, a large field, a parking lot, a street, a mountain, and many more.

Josh's ambiguous response leaves Atlas uncertain about Josh's actual residence. It can be inferred that Josh did not want Atlas to know where he lived, hence the vague response. Therefore, this dialogue violates the Maxim of Quality, highlighting the importance of providing truthful and straightforward responses for effective communication. The implications of such violations can be significant, potentially leading to misunderstandings and confusion. It underscores the importance of adhering to Grice's maxims for effective and efficient communication.

7. Violation of Maxim Quality

Theo: "Why didn't I know you had a brother?"

Atlas: "Long story,"

Theo: "Don't you think that is something your therapist should know about?"

Atlas: "You have not been here all week,"

The conversation unfolded as Theo visited Atlas's office and encountered Josh, a newcomer at their school. Taken aback by Josh's presence in Atlas's office, Theo inquired about the purpose of his visit. It was then that Josh revealed that he was Atlas's younger brother. Despite his long-standing acquaintance with Atlas, Theo was unaware of this sibling relationship. Atlas, however, remained reticent about his familial ties and left unanswered why he had not previously disclosed this to Theo.

This interaction between Theo and Atlas violates the Maxim of Quality. Theo expresses curiosity about Atlas having a younger brother and expects a truthful and detailed response. However, Atlas responds with "Long story" and later deflects Theo's follow-up question with "You have not been here all week," neither of which directly answers Theo's inquiries.

Atlas's responses violate the Maxim of Quality, which stipulates that one should not say what they believe to be false or that for which they lack adequate evidence. In this case, Atlas's responses can be interpreted as mysterious, leaving Theo without the information he sought. Therefore, this dialogue violates the Maxim of Quality, highlighting the importance of providing truthful and straightforward responses for effective communication. The implications of such violations can be significant, potentially leading to misunderstandings and confusion. It underscores the importance of adhering to Grice's maxims for effective and efficient communication.

8. Violation of Maxim Quality

Atlas: "You finish your homework?"

Josh: "Sure"

Atlas: "Is that yes? A no? A mostly?"

Josh: "Yes." "Mostly. I will finish it tonight; my brain hurts."

In the conversation context, Josh is engrossed in a lively chat with Theo. However, Atlas, concerned about Josh's academic responsibilities, inquired about his homework. Given that it was already evening, Atlas believed that Josh should not be at ease and engaged in casual conversation if his homework was still pending. Josh's response, however, failed to convince Atlas, prompting him to question Josh again. Atlas found it hard to trust Josh's words, as they had only recently met, and Josh's behavior was far from courteous and respectful. Consequently, Atlas suspected that Josh might be lying, a suspicion that was later confirmed when Josh admitted to his deceit.

This interaction between Atlas and Josh violates the Maxim of Quality. Atlas poses a direct question to Josh about his homework completion. However, instead of providing a clear 'yes' or 'no' response, Josh replies with an ambiguous term, "Sure."

Josh's response, while seemingly affirmative, does not provide a definitive answer to Atlas's question. This ambiguity leaves Atlas uncertain about the status of Josh's homework, prompting him to seek further clarification. Therefore, this dialogue violates the Maxim of Quality, as Josh's response lacks the necessary clarity for effective communication.

9. Violation of Maxim Relevance

Atlas: "How well do you know Josh?"

Theo: "He has only been in school for two days, so he is not well. We have a couple of classes together."

Atlas: "How is he doing in that school?"

Theo: "No clue. I am not his teacher."

Set against the backdrop of Atlas's office, Atlas questions Theo about Josh's behaviour at school. Now aware that Theo attends the same school as Josh, Atlas believes that Theo can satiate his curiosity. However, Theo appears hesitant to respond to Atlas's inquiries, giving the impression that he might be concealing specific facts.

This interaction between Atlas and Theo demonstrates a violation of the Maxim of Relevance. Atlas poses questions to Theo about Josh's personality and performance at school. However, Theo's responses do not directly address Atlas's inquiries.

Theo's first response provides information about the duration of Josh's school attendance and shared classes but does not offer insight into Josh's personality. When Atlas further inquires about Josh's performance at school, Theo responds with "No clue. I am not his teacher," which does not provide the information Atlas seeks.

These responses violate the Maxim of Relevance, stipulating that reactions should be directly related to the topic. In this case, Theo's responses do not provide relevant answers to Atlas's questions. Therefore, this dialogue violates the Maxim of Relevance, highlighting the importance of delivering relevant responses for effective communication.

10. Violation of Maxim Quality

Allysa: "While you are undergoing anger management, I would prefer your visits with Emerson to occur here, or somewhere Marshall or Allysa are present."

Lily: "Depending on your interactions with me going forward, we will decide as a family when we feel comfortable with you having unsupervised visits with the girls."

Ryle: "The girls?" "Did she convince you I am not safe around my niece?"

Marshall: "Your mom has the girls in the living room,"

The conversation took place as Lily explored alternatives to reporting her ex-husband, Ryle, to the authorities for assault. The discussion involved Lily, Ryle, Allysa (Ryle's older sister), and Marshall (Allysa's husband and Ryle's brother-in-law). They sought a solution that would not harm anyone, considering anger management for Ryle, who had committed domestic violence against Lily during their marriage and even after their separation. Lily was aware that Ryle's involvement with numerous women post-separation could complicate the problem-solving process. However, Ryle further exacerbated the situation by lying to Lily.

This interaction between Lily and Ryle demonstrates a violation of the Maxim of Quality. Lily sets forth a condition for Ryle to have unsupervised visits with the girls based on his future interactions with her. However, instead of directly addressing Lily's statement, Ryle responds with a question, implying that he might not be safe around his niece.

Ryle's response can be interpreted as a lie, as it avoids directly addressing Lily's condition and instead redirects the conversation. This evasion violates the Maxim of Quality, which stipulates that one should not say what one believes to be false or for which one lacks adequate evidence. Therefore, this dialogue violates the Maxim of Quality, highlighting the importance of honesty and openness in effective communication.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This research findings reveal ten instances of Maxim Violation within the novel's dialogues. The characters in the novel navigate through various stages of communication, often deviating from Grice's Cooperative Principle. This deviation results in communication that does not adhere to the principle of cooperation, leading to maximum violations. The Maxim Violations identified in the novel's characters vary and have been classified according to their types for a more nuanced understanding. The ten cases analysed in this study demonstrate three kinds of Maxim Violations: Violation of Maxim Quantity, Violation of Maxim Relevance, and Violation of Maxim Quality. These violations occur due to the specific situations and conditions of the characters at the time of speaking. Each Maxim Violation has a rationale, often tied to the character's circumstances or intentions. In conclusion, this research provides a comprehensive exploration of Maxim Violations within the context of a novel, contributing to the broader understanding of effective communication and the role of Grice's maxims in facilitating it. Future research could investigate the implications of these violations in various communication contexts and propose strategies to mitigate their occurrence.

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