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Conversational Implicature Based on Maxim Variation in EFL Teaching During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT
Misunderstandings between teachers and learners often occurred in online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the unclear information conveyed. To minimize these misunderstandings, knowledge of the conversational implicature is needed. This study aims to identify which forms of maxim violations occurred in the EFL online teaching and the description of the conversational implicatures contained. The subjects in this study were conversational transcriptions during EFL online teaching. A descriptive qualitative design, the research used notes and observation techniques to collect data. The results of data analysis showed that violation of maxims occurred in various kinds of utterances, including violations of the maxim of quality, the maxim of quantity, the maxim of relation, and the maxim of manner. This suggested that conversational implicatures often took place during the EFL online teaching process and could be minimized by obeying the maxim in every conversation.

Keywords: Conversational Implicature, Maxim Variation, Online Teaching, EFL.

1. INTRODUCTION

To convey meaning through speaking, people often focus only on understanding the context to determine the meaning of what is said. Jayaputri [1] states that understanding the meaning of speech is important in various contexts. Someone can understand the meaning of the conversation if the cognition perception is already following the context within which it takes place. However, it is not uncommon for someone to not understand the meaning of the discussion, due to the presence of the implicit meaning in the conversation. Implicit meaning is a linguistic phenomenon called implicature.

The discipline that discusses the implicit or implied meaning in a language is pragmatics. Pragmatics explores deeper into the meaning of a language in use and what it implies [2]. Mey [3] mentioned that the word implicature comes from the verb form 'to imply' which means 'to fold something else'. Because the meaning implied in the speech is 'folded in', to understand it, then, it must be 'unfolded.' Hafdarani [4] maintained that in everyday conversation, propositions in speech are often not conveyed explicitly, but implicitly or covertly. In fact, with an implicature, a person can facilitate the flow of the conversation, because, with the right context, the speech partner or interlocutor can easily understand the intended meaning of the conversation, without the need for a more detailed explanation from the speaker. Thus, implicature is a component of the speaker's intended meaning without being part of what is said [5].

When a conversation takes place, speakers will usually convey information, either explicitly or implicitly. Conversations that are accompanied by expressive delivery of information are conversations that have real meaning; they will not cause an implicative phenomenon in the conversation. On the other hand, a conversation with the implicit delivery of information must have a hidden meaning, so it will give rise to an implicature phenomenon in the conversation. In other words, a conversation which has hidden/implied/covert meaning is a phenomenon of conversational implicature. As expressed by Mey [6] that a conversational implicature is something that is implied in conversation, that is something which is left implicit in actual language use. Huang [7] stated that the conversational implicature is definable as any meaning or proposition expressed implicitly by a speaker in his or her utterance of a sentence which is meant without being part of what is said in the strict sense. The study of the implicature of this conversation is interesting, and it is, according to Levinson [8], one of the single most

important idea of pragmatics. This shows the importance of examining the implicatures of conversation as part of the study of linguistics, especially pragmatics in everyday life.

To find out the implicature phenomena that occur in a conversation, there must be a good communication between speakers and speech partners. This communication is successful when each of the participants follows the Cooperation Principle. This Cooperation Principle was discovered by Paul Grice (1913-1988). In his book, Grundy [9] explained Grice's theory that in speaking a person must make the conversational contribution as required, at the stage at which it occurs by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange engaged. The Cooperation Principle is able to control the speakers to arrange their utterances so that they can be easily understood by the speech partners. In other words, the speakers must provide sufficient and not too much information, then the speaker's words must be connected as much as possible or following the context of the speech so that the speaker can convey the meaning of his speech clearly and, at the same time, avoid uncertainty.

This Cooperation Principle describes how effective communication in conversation is achieved in common social situations. Grundy [9] mentions that Grice's Cooperation Principle is called maxim. Maxim serves as a rule in conversation that speakers and speech partners must use so that the conversation runs well and efficiently. This is in line with the view of Yule [10] which reveals that the conversation can go well if the speaker and the listener obey the maxims of the conversation. Furthermore, Grundy [9] added that the conversation that occurs between speaker and the speech partner must fulfil the maxims to keep the conversation on the right track. Therefore, speakers and speech partners are expected to adhere to this Cooperation Principle as maximally as possible. In Grice's [11] Cooperation Principle, there are four maxims with their respective functions and rules, namely: (1) quantity: say enough, but don't say too much; (2) quality: say only what you have reason to believe is true; (3) relation: say only what is relevant; (4) manner: be brief, clear and unambiguous.

Provided these four principles, in a real act of communication, a violation of maxims cannot be completely ruled out. Hafdarani [4] viewed that if all utterances must rely on the maxims of Grice, you can imagine how stiff the conversations are carried out by speakers and speech partners. Thus, implicatures are deliberately created by the speakers themselves as a result of not being given complete information. However, if viewed from a positive perspective, of course, this is an advantage because it allows enrichment in language use, studied by linguistics. Currently, where the COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing, a study of conversational situations in everyday life is apt.

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused various significant changes in all aspects, one of which is in the aspect of education. When the government urged that teaching and learning activities implement the home learning system or *pembelajaran jarak jauh* (PJJ), this was considered an unusual event. Through a circular from *Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia* Number 4 [12], the government has banned all schools from implementing face-to-face (conventional) learning in schools. As a response, schools have switched to organizing online teaching, commonly referred to as synchronous, by using various kinds of virtual meeting applications such as Zoom-App, Google-Meeting, and others.

In this case, both teachers and learners are required to adapt to the transition of the applicable online learning system. It cannot be denied, however, that the online teaching system has caused various obstacles, such as the concentration power of learners during online learning. Mariati [13] mentioned five factors inhibiting the implementation of online teaching, namely: a lack of self-confidence, the inability to master information technology and telecommunications, an unstable internet connection network and frequent power outages in the regions, the arrangement of time and commitment with the teacher, and the lack of supporting equipment for the implementation of online teaching. With these inhibiting factors, the possibility of violating maxims in conversation will likely to occur.

As the above-mentioned factors would likely trigger a violation of maxims during online teaching, this would serve as a productive site for the study of conversational implicature. Implicature will occur if a violation of the maxims is committed. From the violation of the maxims, we can see the linguistic phenomenon found in online teaching activities. Usually, this maxim violations is done so that the conversation in the virtual class is not rigid and flows as it should be. Based on these considerations this study aims to find out which forms of maxim violations are contained in an EFL online teaching and how are the descriptions of the conversational implicature contained in such EFL online teaching, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research related to the conversational implicature based on the violation of maxims in learning has been carried out by many previous researchers. Among them was by Syafryadin, et al. [14] who examined the types of maxims and implicatures in students' conversations; Martini [15] who addressed the conversational implicatures of Indonesian speaking students in their daily conversations; Isnaniah [16] who dealt with the conversational implicatures of learning in students; Pudyastuti & Zamzani [17] who analyzed the implicature of the conversation in learning Indonesian at

school; and Hafdarani [4] who described student's presentation conversational irregularities from a project assignment in the German-speaking skills course. These studies suggest that research on violations of maxims and implicature is worth taking, especially in learning activities. However, the current research is different from the previous studies that it addressed an online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, and was especially carried out on learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

2. METHOD

This study used a qualitative descriptive analysis research design [18][19][20] to describe the collected data as they are and analyze them qualitatively. This means that the data obtained in this study will be analyzed by describing the conversational implicatures in accordance with the existing context. The data were all forms of utterances containing violations of Grice's maxims.

The subject of this research was conversation pieces in EFL online teaching, obtained from the transcription of the English conversation that took place during the EFL learning through Google Meeting with a duration of 45 minutes. The main instrument in this study was the researcher herself. Cresswell [21] mentioned that the researcher is the key instrument. In addition, additional documents such as the results of conversation analysis from EFL online teaching recordings were also included in this study. The data collection techniques used were observation and note-taking techniques consisting of descriptions of implicatures and analysis of maxim violations.

The stages taken in analyzing the data were the following: first, describing the forms of violations against the Cooperation Principle and maxims; second, interpreting the implications of the conversation; third, ensuring data validity and reliability to strengthen the study's credibility. Based on the research conducted by Hafdarani [4], one way to validate the data can use semantic validity in the form of the meaning of lingual units that contain conversational implicatures. Meanwhile, the way to prove the reliability of the data can be through intra-rate techniques, namely by reading and reviewing it repeatedly.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of an online EFL teaching that has been carried out, it was found that several conversations were identified as having violated the Cooperation Principle in Grice's maxim. Violation of these maxims automatically results in the phenomenon of conversational implicature. In accordance with the

opinion of Yule [23], that the Cooperation Principle does not stipulate the criteria of appropriateness of what is being uttered, speakers may flout the Grice's maxim in an their utterance and thus implicature. However, the implicature of the conversation is not seen as wrong, because when the speaker conveys a message to the interlocutor, the latter can still conclude what the former is saying. So, the conversation process may continue as smoothly. Grice [11] studied cooperation in conversation about how people communicate cooperatively, and proposed the notion of conversational maxims. Lambrou (in Abualadas [22]) emphasized that Grice's basic view is that communication is a cooperative and joint activity where both speakers and hearers cooperate to reach a certain common goal. This shows that implied activity is not a mistake in language, but can be seen as an advantage. As for the results of the transcription of the conversation in this study, it can be concluded that from 11 pieces of conversation, there are as many as 10 conversational implicatures as a result of the violation of the four maxims of Grice, where the violations of these maxims have occurred 23 times (see Table 1).

3.1 Description of Grice's Maxim Analysis and Conversational Implicatures

The forms of maxim violations along with descriptions of the implicatures of the conversation can be seen in the following explanation:

3.1.1. Conversation 1

Teacher : Anyone knows where Raihan is? Raihan? Where did you go?

Learners : *silent*

Teacher : Also, Fadhal and Youri.

Learners : *silent*

Teacher : Alright, let's begin the class everyone.

● Violation of maxims

In this conversation, there is a violation of all maxims. When the teacher asked about the where abouts of the students mentioned, no one answered the question and instead created a quiet atmosphere in the class. This caused a violation of the **maxim of quantity** in which the teacher expected an informative and clear answer. The violation of the **maxim of quality** occured because the teacher expected an actual answer. The violation of the **maxim of relevance** occured because the teacher expected answers in accordance with the context. Finally, the violations of the **maxim of manner** because the teacher expected clear answers negating ambiguity.

● Implicature

This silence ensued when the learners were called implied that they were absent in the class, so the teacher

continued the teaching with the utterance "Alright, let's begin the class everyone '.

3.1.2. Conversation 2

Teacher : Hopefully you are all in a great condition, yeah all of you. Umm. Hana. Hana, I think the audio has a problem huh? The voice is rustling.

Learners : I'm outside, Miss.

Teacher : Alright. So, um.

● Violation of maxims

This conversation shows that there were a violation of the **maxim of relation** and the **maxim of manner**. In this conversation, the learner delivered the answer "I'm outside, Miss" which is very irrelevant to the questions asked by the teacher. He asked, "I think the audio has a problem, huh? The voice is rustling." From that question, the expected answer was "yes or no" but the learner provided no answer. This violated the maxim of manner, in which speakers convey ambiguous and unclear answers.

● Implicature

This implies that because the learner is outside, the atmosphere in that place was automatically sound louder, causing the audio to sound noisy and thus disturbing the learning process.

3.1.3. Conversation 3

Teacher : Because yesterday was not explained for the narrative text, maybe now I will share the screen, umm.. to learn, a little bit about a narrative text. Although you already familiar since you have learned it as well in Junior High. Back still *while sharing screen*. Is my screen seen? Because like errors. Does that look right?

Learners : Looks, Miss.

Teacher : Okay, now for this meeting we are studying narrative text.

● Violation of maxims

Interestingly, in this conversation, there was no violation of maxims. All utterances conform to all principles of maxims. Adherence to the maxim of quantity is proven by providing informative and clear answers, then adherence to the maxim of quality is proven by giving honest and known answers. In addition, adherence to the relation maxim is evidenced by the answers given in accordance with the context being discussed. Also, obedience to the maxims of the method is that the speech in the answer is clear, straightforward, and did not cause ambiguity.

● Implicature

There is no implication in this conversation because the express information appears that the teacher shows a screen containing Power-Point media with a theme that is in accordance with the learning being carried out at that time, namely about narrative text.

3.1.4. Conversation 4

Teacher : Ah my apologize everyone, I have to admit somebody over here. *click" Dhal, please follow.

Learners : Yes, Miss.

Teacher : Is the screen seen? Do you still see it?

Learners : Still miss.

Teacher : Well still, worried about freezing.

● Violation of maxims

In this conversation, there is a speech that violates the **maxim of quantity**, where the teacher gave more answers than necessary by saying "still well, worried about freezing". Even though the answer should be "okay" is appropriate and informative. Meanwhile, for the other three maxims, there was no violation and were still in accordance with the principle's maxim of quality, maxim of relation, and maxim of manner.

● Implicature

This implies that learning continues to run smoothly as it should without any obstacles and disruptions to connections or the like in online teaching.

3.1.5. Conversation 5

Teacher : Then, we will discuss the generic structure, but before that, let me showe a text first. Alright Fadhal, please read the text for us. What is the title of it?

Learners : *silence, no response*

Teacher : Fadhal?

Learners : Yes, Miss?

Teacher : Yes, what is the title of it? This one?

Learners : *no response*

Teacher : Are you sleeping? Or no?

Learners : *still no response*

Teacher : So, Rauf what is the title? This one?

● Violation of maxims

In this conversation, there were violations of all the maxims, namely the **maxim of quantity**, **maxim of quality**, **maxim of relation**, and **maxim of manner**. In the maxim of quality, the expected answer was to make a correct contribution, that is, by not answering

dishonestly. The learner was silent and did not respond to anything so that there was also a violation of the maxim of quantity, of relations, and of manner. Even at the end of this conversation, the teacher delivered a speech that seemed satirical with the sentence "Are you sleeping or no?" This is expected so that the speech partner or learner gave the appropriate answer, but still, there were violations of all maxims with no response from the speech partner (learner).

● Implicature

It implies that the teacher considered that the learner could not answer the questions assuming he was not following the learning process at that time or was asleep, then the teacher returned to giving the same questions to other learners in the hope that these questions would be answered correctly.

3.1.6. Conversation 6

Teacher : Okay, the legend of *Rawa Pening*, yeah. Hana, please read the first paragraph.

Learners : *silent*

Teacher : Hana? This could be heard, right? please read the first paragraph.

Learners : Heard, Miss.

Teacher : Hana or .... the problem is that I can't control it. Hmm, no answer? Well, I think I have to choose somebody else. Fitri, Fitri Najwa please read the first paragraph.

Learners : *read*

● Violation of maxims

In the conversation between the teacher and student named Hana, clearly that there was a violation of the **maxim of quality**. The teacher expected that Hana could follow the instructions given, but often Hana did not respond and only gave an answer "heard, Miss". In the speech, Hana violated the maxim of quality because she did not give real answers and did not even carry out the appropriate instructions, without any information as to why she did not do the "reading" thing as instructed.

● Implicature

It implies that the teacher instructed Hana to read the text in the first paragraph, but it was as if Hana did not want to do this. Then the teacher asks another student to read the first paragraph of the text.

3.1.7. Conversation 7

Teacher : Hana, read the second paragraph, please.

Learners : second, Miss?

Teacher : Yes, all the second paragraph.

Learners : *read*

Teacher : Thank you for your reading,

● Violation of maxims

In this conversation, there were no violations of all three maxims. These utterances were appropriate and adhered to the maxim of quality because both speakers provided an honest and true speech. This conversation also obeyed the maxim of quantity because the speaker provided the information in accordance with what was needed. Then adherence to the maxim of relevance was found in this conversation as both speakers had the same perception of the context being discussed. However, in the speech "second, Miss?," what the learner said was the violation of the **maxims of manner**. This is because speakers (learners) felt that the speech partner (teacher) was speaking ambiguously, even though the speech by the speech partner already had the true meaning, namely "all the second paragraphs". Therefore, the speaker should have answered with "Okay" and refrained from asking further confirmation.

● Implicature

In implied conversation, the learner assumed that the teacher's words were less clear and ambiguous. The learner may have had the assumption that the intent of the teacher instructed him not to read a full paragraph, provided that it was a long one. But it was not the case.

3.1.8. Conversation 8

Teacher : Safa, is Safa here or not? Is Safa there? Ok Safa if you look at the first paragraph, what can you explain in terms of structure? Is Safa here or not?

Learners : *silent*

Teacher : If no answers, somebody can answers. How about Fadhal? Dhal? Do you want to explain? Or Gauri?

Learners : *keep silent*

Teacher : *back to explain*

● Violation of maxims

As in previous conversations, in this conversation, clearly that there was a violation of all maxims: the **maxim of quality, maxim of quantity, maxim of relation,** or **maxim of manner**. This is because the interlocutor of the speaker or the partner did not give the expected answer at all. Therefore, the principles of Grice's maxims were completely violated.

● Implicature

This implies when the teacher tried to ask questions related to learning material, not a single learner responded and provided answers. Therefore, the teacher assumed that her students could not explain and could not give the correct answer, so the teacher again took

over the class and continued explaining the learning material.

3.1.9. Conversation 9

Teacher : Here I'll show you a video and you guys please take notes, then we'll discuss too. If not slow. If it is slow, it doesn't work. Wait a minute, the connections is really not good here.

Learners : Okay, Miss.

● Violation of maxims

There was a violation of the **maxim of quantity** because there was too much information provided, as in the statement "if not slow. If it's slow, it doesn't work". It was not necessary to say this, because in the next sentence the speaker also said "Wait, the connections is really not good here". From the speech alone, it was a clear or explicit that if the connection was not very good, the discussion would not proceed.

● Implicature

The speech implies that the teacher would show a video and hoped to hold a discussion session after the video was shown. However, it turns out that the internet connection at that time was not very good, although in the end the discussion session was still held.

3.1.10. Conversation 10

Teacher : If Safa can't, I want to ask Felma. What's the problem with this, Felma?

Learners : For a moment, Miss. I don't remember.

Teacher : Come on the clue is the third house. Come on, ring a bell not yet Felma?

Learners : Haven't, Miss.

Teacher : Did you watch it Felma?

Learners : Yes, but I forget, Miss.

Teacher : *explains until finished*

● Violation of maxims

In this brief conversation, there was only a violation of the **maxim of quality**. Because the answer said by the learners with the speech "For a moment, Miss. I don't remember", could not unfold properly the actual circumstances of whether he was lying or not. The answer that the teacher hoped was in the form of a detailed answer to the problem in the story as displayed in the video. However, it turns out that the learner offered an inconclusive answer without any sufficient evidence whether he watched it or not, indicated by the speech "Yes, but I forget, Miss". Hence, it indicates non-compliance with the quality maxim.

● Implicature

This implies when the teacher asked the student about the problems contained in the story in the video, the learner could not answer the question because of 'forgetting'. Therefore, the teacher tried to help and came back to explain again the problems contained in the story in the video.

3.1.11. Conversation 11

Teacher : Alright so far, any questions? You can understand that for the assignment, do it later and just submit it directly to Edmodo.

Learners : *silent*

Teacher : Okay, I hope you could understand, good luck everyone.

● Violation of maxims

In this conversation, all the maxims were violated again, namely the **maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation, and maxim of manner**, as the questions from the teacher did not succeed in getting answers from the learners. In the Grice's maxim, it cannot be said whether a speech obeys the principle if there is not one speech that can be analyzed. Therefore, in this conversation, it is clear that the violation of maxims did indeed occur in all of its principles.

● Implicature

This conversation implies that when the teacher asked the student whether or not there were any questions regarding the learning material that may be felt unclear at that time, for the many times it has happened, the teacher did not receive clear responses and answers even for a single word. In the end, the teacher assumed that all learners understood all learning material related to narrative text. Then the learning was completed.

3.2. Analysis Results of The Grice's Maxim Violation

When the conversation is in progress, in interpreting whatever utterance is said by the speaker, the listener will as much as possible assume that the speaker has adhered to certain principles of truth, informativity, clarity, and relevance of the information being exchanged [22]. Ideally, when we speak, we are supposed to be providing genuine, adequate, relevant, and clear information that listeners expect us to do so. But in fact, we also do not realize how frequent violations of certain principles are, as is the case with violations of the Cooperation Principle in the Grice's Maxim. From the above analyses, it can be seen that violations of these maxims occured frequently during the learning process. To make it easier, the following is a summary of the results of the analysis of maxim violations:

Table 1. Short cut keys for the template

Conversation	Violations of Maxim				amount
	Quantity	Quality	Relation	Manner	
(1)	√	√	√	√	4
(2)	-	-	√	√	2
(3)	-	-	-	-	0
(4)	√	-	-	-	1
(5)	√	√	√	√	4
(6)	-	√	-	-	1
(7)	-	-	-	√	1
(8)	√	√	√	√	4
(9)	√	-	-	-	1
(10)	-	√	-	-	1
(11)	√	√	√	√	4
SUM	6	6	5	6	23

The table above explained that the 11 conversations transcribed have demonstrated various kinds of speech that contained maxim violations. The total violations of maxims occurred as many as 23 times, with the following distributions: violations of maximal quantity (6 times), maximal quality (6 times), maximal method (6 times), and violations of relation maxims (5 times). This shows that violations of maxims often occur, even in speeches during the EFL online teaching process.

Violation of the maxims occurs because of the implicit meaning of the elements of speech is conveyed in an unclear and even ambiguous manner. For someone who does have a good knowledge in the field of pragmatics, he must be able to easily understand the cause of the violation and at the same time categorize the position of the violation. The rest, he could have guessed the flow and context of the ongoing conversation by referring to the phenomenon of conversational implicatures. However, for someone who doesn't have enough knowledge in the field of pragmatics or doesn't even knows at all, of course, this will be quite difficult, especially when someone speaks ambiguously but expects the other person to understand the meaning of the conversation. Neither the speaker nor the interlocutor will be able to reach and carry on the conversation as smoothly as they should. In this case, it is important to always refer to the Grice's Cooperation Principle, to pinpoint the problems.

In this study, the implicature dealt with occured in the online learning process. Utterances that contain implicatures arose because of the violations against the maxims. These violations were caused by various reasons, the most frequent of which was due to learners's no response to what the teacher said. This lack of response is always a point of misunderstanding in conversation, whether it was done on purpose or not. In fact, this research has new implications both in linguistics and in education. To minimize misunderstandings in an online learning during this COVID-19 pandemic, it is required that teachers and learners build active interactions. Teachers are not supposed to talk a lot without clear responses from the learners. For example, the teacher could not assume that the learner did not attend the class because of falling asleep, or the learner did not respond because they could not answer the questions given, or any other assumptions. For further research, it is recommended to conduct a more in-depth study of these assumptions in the online teaching process, done with a pragmatic analysis tool of presupposition studies, so that misunderstandings in the online learning process could be reduced.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGETIONS

During the learning process, it will be very difficult to avoid misunderstandings in conversation, especially in online teaching, during the COVID-19 pandemic period. This misunderstanding occurs because speeches convey information with unclear meaning. The lack of clarity about the meaning conveyed is related to the implied meaning in the conversation, called the conversational implicature. The implication of this conversation occurs as a result of a violation of the Cooperation Principle, known as the Grice's maxim. From the analysis of this study, it was found that violations of the Grice's maxims were often committed, in all four: maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation, and maxim of manner. This violation leads to the appearance of the implicature phenomenon, especially in conversation.

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