

**AN ANALYSIS OF MAXIM VIOLATION IN SOFIA  
VERGARA'S INTERVIEW ON THE ELLEN SHOW**

**SCIENTIFIC PAPER**

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**PROGRAM STUDI S1 BAHASA INGGRIS**

**UNIVERSITAS LIA**

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**Submitted as a partial fulfillment of the requirement for**

*Sarjana Linguistik Degree*

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**TITLE : AN ANALYSIS OF MAXIM VIOLATION IN  
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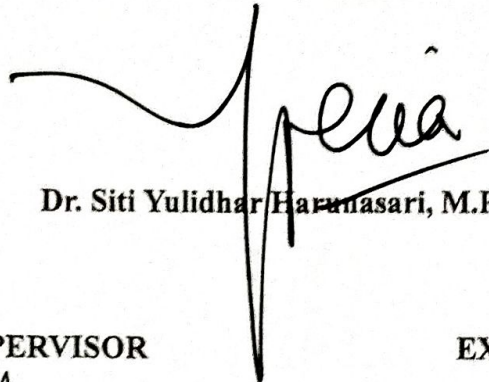
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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this scientific paper to myself. Throughout the journey of researching and writing this scientific paper, I have learned the value of perseverance, hard work, and determination. I have pushed myself to new heights and have grown both personally and academically. I am proud of what I have accomplished and grateful for the opportunity to pursue my passions and interests. This scientific paper is a testament to my dedication and commitment to my field of study, and I am excited to see where my future endeavors will take me. Thank you to myself for never giving up and for always striving for excellence.

## PREFACE

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Allifatul Mardhatillah

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## An Analysis of Maxims Violation and Contextual Effects in Sofia Vergara's Interview on The Ellen Show

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to identify and analyze conversations that violate the principles of maxims in communication and to elucidate the violations of maxims by interpreting the contextual factors associated with these violations. The analysis is conducted using Grice's theory of flouting maxim and Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory on conversations in The Ellen Show program. A qualitative approach is used in this study to analyze and identify violations of communication principles that occur during these interviews. Out of twenty-seven cases, there are twenty cases where Grice's maxims are violated. The maxim of quality has the highest frequency of violations, with eleven cases, or 55.0% of total violations. This is followed by maxims of manner and relevance, each with 14 (20.0%) and 13 (15.0%) cases respectively. The maxim of quantity has two cases of violation, accounting for 10.0% of the total. The dialogues between Ellen DeGeneres and Sofia Vergara show a significant presence of assumptions that are closely related to the specific context of their discussions and produce contextual effects that drive the conversation. The relevance of these assumptions is determined based on their ability to establish connections with the surrounding context and generate contextual effects, such as implications, contradictions, or strengthenings. In general, their conversations illustrate the importance of contextual effects in establishing the significance of assumptions and influencing the course of a dialogue.*

*Keywords: Maxim Violation, Relevance Theory, Interview, The Ellen Show, Communication, Assumption, Contextual Effect*

### ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis percakapan yang melanggar prinsip maksim dalam komunikasi dan menjelaskan pelanggaran maksim tersebut dengan menginterpretasikan faktor-faktor kontekstual yang terkait. Analisis dilakukan dengan menggunakan teori flouting maxim Grice dan teori relevansi Sperber dan Wilson pada percakapan dalam program The Ellen Show. Pendekatan kualitatif digunakan dalam penelitian ini untuk menganalisis dan mengidentifikasi pelanggaran prinsip komunikasi yang terjadi selama wawancara. Dari dua puluh tujuh kasus, terdapat dua puluh kasus di mana pelanggaran maksim Grice terjadi. Maksim kualitas memiliki frekuensi pelanggaran tertinggi, dengan sebelas kasus, atau 55.0% dari total pelanggaran. Ini diikuti oleh maksim cara dan relevansi, masing-masing 14 (20.0%) dan 13 (15.0%). Maksim kuantitas memiliki dua kasus pelanggaran, atau 10.0% dari total. Dialog antara Ellen DeGeneres dan Sofia Vergara menunjukkan adanya asumsi yang erat kaitannya dengan konteks spesifik diskusi mereka dan menghasilkan efek kontekstual yang mendorong percakapan. Relevansi asumsi-asumsi ini ditentukan berdasarkan kemampuan mereka untuk membuat koneksi dengan konteks sekitar dan menghasilkan efek kontekstual, seperti implikasi, kontradiksi, atau penguatan. Secara umum,*

*percakapan mereka menggambarkan pentingnya efek kontekstual dalam menetapkan signifikansi asumsi dan mempengaruhi jalannya dialog.*

*Kata kunci: Pelanggaran Maxim, Teori Relevansi, Wawancara, The Ellen Show, Komunikasi, Asumsi, Efek Kontekstual*

## INTRODUCTION

Language is a diverse and dynamic system that consists of symbols and non-verbal cues that individuals depend on for the purpose of communication (Repka, 2021). The dynamic nature of language is intricately connected to its interaction with the surrounding context, and transformations in linguistic structures are essential for enhancing efficient communication. There is a wide array of conventional and contemporary perspectives on language, leading to a variety of deliberations on its definitions.

Language and communication possess a strong interconnection. Language can be defined as a complex system comprising symbols and non-verbal signs that individuals set up as a means of communication. People use this tool to effectively communicate meaning and disseminate information to others. Communication, on the other hand, refers to the systematic exchange of significant messages (Beccaluva et al., 2022).

Within the realm of communication, there exist intriguing phenomena that possess the potential to influence the comprehension and efficacy of transmitted messages. One of the relevant concepts is Paul Grice's violation of maxims. This theory posits that humans, in their pursuit of effective communication, tend to adhere to cooperative principles with the aim of fostering mutually advantageous comprehension.

Shifting the focus to the domain of journalism and entertainment, The Ellen Show stands out as a noteworthy platform that intertwines language and communication in a unique manner. As a widely recognized talk show hosted by Ellen DeGeneres, the program not only serves as a source of entertainment but

also as a fascinating example of communication dynamics in the realm of celebrity interviews. The journalistic nature of The Ellen Show becomes evident through its distinctive format, where open conversations often delve into personal aspects of the guests' lives. This blend of entertainment and journalistic elements offers an intriguing backdrop for analyzing communication patterns and violations of maxims within the show. Understanding the distinct characteristics of The Ellen Show is crucial for unraveling the intricate layers of language use and communication strategies employed in this captivating media context.

Grice introduced the idea of maxim's violation, which refers to instances where a speaker deviates from one of the cooperative principles outlined in Grice's theory of conversational implicature. Grice identified four cooperative principles that are used in everyday communication to facilitate the attainment of optimal comprehension and mutual understanding among individuals. Westby (2023) stated that the maxims proposed by Grice encompass a collection of principles that serve as guidance for the acceleration of cooperative communication and conversation. There are four maxims:

1. Maxim of Quantity: It suggests that speakers ought to provide an appropriate amount of information, neither exceeding nor falling short of what is deemed necessary.
2. Maxim of Quality: It is imperative for speakers to adhere to the principles of truthfulness and substantiate their claims with evidence.
3. Maxim of Relevance: It is imperative that the speakers chosen for a conversation are pertinent to the subject matter being discussed.
4. Maxim of Manner: It is advisable for speakers to refrain from embracing

obscure or ambiguous language and instead strive for conciseness in their communication.

According to Grice (1989), speakers and listeners follow these maxims to interact with one another constructively and cooperatively. Maxim violation refers to the act of speakers breaching one or more of the established conversational maxims, which can result in the occurrence of misunderstandings and misinterpretations regarding the intended meaning of the discourse. The act of flouting a maxim is characterized by a deliberate violation of one of the maxims in order to convey a meaning that surpasses the literal interpretation of the uttered words. As an instance, an individual may intentionally violate the maxim of quantity by uttering the statement *“I have a million things to do”* with the intention of conveying a sense of excessive activity, despite the fact that the literal quantity of tasks may not amount to a million. Flouting a maxim can be used to create humor, sarcasm, or irony in communication (Hossain, 2021).

Relevance theory is one such example of communication principles, providing a framework for understanding how language is processed and interpreted by the recipient. Sperber and Wilson (1995) formulated the relevance theory, a psychological framework aimed at comprehending the cognitive interpretation of language. Sperber and Wilson argue that the distinguishing factor that renders an input conspicuous among others is its pertinence to the recipient, and further assert that each verbal expression engenders in the listener an expectation of relevance. The fundamental premise of relevance theory posits that within a specific context, the recipient must infer that the information conveyed by individuals is pertinent.

The concept of a contextual effect holds significant importance in elucidating the process of comprehension. During the course of a discourse, the recipient engages in the retrieval or construction of various assumptions, which are subsequently processed. These elements constitute a progressively evolving backdrop against which novel information is assimilated. The process of interpreting a statement encompasses more than simply recognizing the assumption that is explicitly stated.

As stated by Sperber and Wilson (1995), the presence of contextual effects is an essential requirement for establishing relevance. According to the theoretical framework, communication can be conceptualized as a cognitive process of inference, wherein the recipient of a message utilizes contextual cues and information to deduce the intended significance of a verbal expression (Al-Hindawi and Abdulmajeed, 2017).

During a sequence of video interviews conducted for The Ellen Show, hosted by Ellen DeGeneres, an interview was held featuring Sofia Vergara. Sofia Vergara is a Colombian-American actress, model, and television personality. She is well known for her distinctive accent and rose to fame for her role as Gloria Delgado-Pritchett on the hit TV show “Modern Family”. Throughout the interview between Sofia Vergara and Ellen DeGeneres, numerous violations of Grice’s maxim principle were observed.

The study at hand, which was conducted by Alfina (2016), aimed to analyze the instances of conversational maxim violations made by speakers on the Mata Najwa talk show. The focus of this study was to identify the various instances in which the speaker in the talk show violates the maxims and to explore



the underlying motivations for such violations. The results of this study revealed that the Mata Najwa talk show contains a total of fifteen instances in which the speakers intentionally violate conversational maxims. The underlying motivations for individuals who engage in the violation of conversational maxims include the demonstration of politeness, the preservation of one's own self-esteem, or the positive perception of others, as well as the avoidance of potential offense and humiliation.

In addition, a study conducted by Akmal and Yana (2020) seeks to categorize various types of conversational implicature and instances of flouting maxims within the screenplay of the movie 'Kingdom of Heaven'. This study revealed the presence of both general and special implicatures within the text, with a higher frequency observed for special implicatures. The occurrence of flouting the maxims is predominantly observed in relation to the maxim of quantity, as the characters in the film tend to offer superfluous or unnecessary information. This phenomenon suggests that the characters in the film either exceed or fall short of providing the necessary amount of information. The unique historical and genre elements of the film may also contribute to this discovery.

Furthermore, Al-Zubeiry (2020) carried out a study to examine the comedic elements present in the Arabic comedy series *Madrasat Al-Mushaghbeen* (School of Troublemakers) and their impact on the portrayal of scenes on screen. The analysis reveals a total of sixty-one instances in which the maxims were flouted in the show. The research findings suggest that the existence and interpretation of humorous implicature are contingent upon the conventions of the speaking community and the specific language employed within that community.

Humor emerges from the actions and expressions of the speaker, which deviate from the behavioral norms and conceptual frameworks prevalent in the culture of the other individual. This study further emphasizes the significant influence of personality and language on implicit humor.

The primary objectives of this study are to (i) provide identification as well as analysis of the provided conversations that contravene the principles of maxims in communication and (ii) to elucidate the violations of maxims that occurred by interpreting the contextual factors associated with these violations. The analysis and identifications provided will explore the instances of maxims violation by employing Grice's theory of flouting maxim and examine the application of the theory of relevance by the speakers on The Ellen Show program by drawing upon the relevance theory proposed by Sperber and Wilson. Previous research has examined the violation of maxims in various contexts, including an exploration of the motivation behind maxims violation in the talk show *Mata Najwa* by Alfina (2016), an identification of conversational implicature types and maxims violation by Akmal and Yana (2020), and an analysis of humorous implicatures and flouting of maxims by Al-Zubeiry (2020). The theory under consideration equates the intricacies of human communication and comprehension, proposing that effective communication occurs when the recipient accurately discerns the intended message of the sender (Allott, N., 2014). Thus, this research specifically connects the theory of relevance with violations of the maxims principle in the context of programs such as The Ellen Show.

## **METHOD**

This study implemented a qualitative approach to examine the dialogues that took place during an interview session between Ellen DeGeneres and Sofia Vergara at The Ellen Show. A qualitative approach is a general way of thinking about conducting qualitative research. It focuses on describing a phenomenon in-depth and in detail, using non-numerical data (TeachersCollegesj, 2020). The qualitative approach was selected for this study in order to conduct a thorough analysis and identify instances of communication principle violations that occur during these interviews. By employing a qualitative approach, the researcher is able to gain insight into the situational backdrop of the dialogue as well as elucidate the mechanism of comprehending and interpreting information within the context of communication.

One approach that can be employed is the utilization of the case study method. This method entails conducting a thorough and comprehensive examination of an individual, situation, or institution through qualitative analysis. The primary objective is to meticulously observe and scrutinize each aspect of the subject under investigation, subsequently drawing generalizations and conclusions based on the data obtained from the case study (Rashid, 2022)

The data collection technique used in this study entailed the utilization of video interviews posted on The Ellen Show's YouTube channel collected during the period spanning from April 2015 to June 2021. The data for this study was obtained through an assortment of interviews conducted between Ellen DeGeneres and Sofia Vergara, and the primary source utilized for analysis was the video transcripts of these interviews. The transcriptions were personally

conducted by the researcher to ensure accuracy and reliability during the analysis process. Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognise that a portion of the transcripts were obtained from YouTube in order to augment the dataset and improve the overall comprehensiveness of the study. The data collection process involves meticulously observing and listening to interviews as well as gathering conversations that exhibit instances of violating the principles of maxim in communication. Furthermore, the researcher also collected Sofia Vergara's responses to the inquiries posed by Ellen DeGeneres, with the aim of incorporating pertinent contextual information into the analysis.

In the analysis of the research, the researcher relied on the maxim theory proposed by Paul Grice and the relevance theory developed by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson. The researcher conducted a content analysis of all conversations that exhibited a violation of the principles of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner, as observed within the context of interview conversations. The analysis is conducted through the identification and interpretation of the contextual factors within the violation. The initial phase of this analysis involves identifying dialogues that exhibit potential violations of conversational maxims, and subsequently classifying the utterances that contain such violations into distinct categories. Afterwards, the researcher performed a comprehensive analysis with the aim of identifying contextual effects within the dialogue. In this examination, the researcher aims to elucidate the violation of the conversation between Ellen DeGeneres and Sofia Vergara. Additionally, the study endeavor aims to elucidate the mechanisms involved in the processing and comprehension of information, drawing upon relevance theory.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this study is to explore the violations of Grice's maxims in The Ellen Show, as well as identify and interpret the contextual factors within the violations. The researcher presented the violations of maxims and classified them according to their quantity and category. The subsequent chart illustrates the findings of the analysis.

### 1. Maxim Quantity

#### Dialog 1.1

- Ellen DeGeneres : What is number two? Is that cotton? What is the second year? **I think it's cotton.** You're supposed to do something like — Yeah, cotton.
- Sofía Vergara : Cotton what?
- Ellen DeGeneres : Anything cotton.
- Sofía Vergara : But what do you do with the cotton?
- Ellen DeGeneres : You know what I did? For our second year, Portia and I, we do the thing every year. And for the second year it was cotton, and this is how much I love her because I hate cotton balls, but I glued cotton balls and I made the number two on a canvas and framed it, and did two out of cotton balls. Because it was cotton, so that's what I did. You can do anything stupid.
- Sofía Vergara : But for what? To present it to him?

In this conversation, Ellen DeGeneres and Sofia Vergara are discussing the tradition of giving gifts made of specific materials for wedding anniversaries. Ellen congratulates Sofia on her second wedding anniversary and asks if the traditional gift for the second year is cotton. Sofia is unsure and asks what one would do with cotton. Ellen explains that for her own second wedding anniversary, she made a gift for her wife Portia by gluing cotton balls onto a canvas to form the number two, representing their second year of marriage. Sofia is still confused and asks why one would present such a gift.

Maxim of Quantity states that one should provide as much information as is required. In this part of the conversation, Ellen violates the Maxim of Quantity by not providing sufficient information and instead relying on uncertain statements such as "*I think it's cotton.*" Ellen's explanation of what she did for her second wedding anniversary with Portia violates this maxim as well as it provides more information than is necessary for the conversation.

### **Contextual Effect**

According to the theory of relevance, the assumptions expressed by Ellen and Sofia connect with the context of their conversation about wedding anniversaries and traditional gifts. The cotton anniversary represents all the delicacy and purity that both have managed to achieve since at this point in their marriage, it is interpreted that there are no more secrets between them and that they have come to know each other in a deeper way. Ellen's assumption that the traditional gift for the second year is cotton has a contextual effect in that it leads to further discussion about what one would do with cotton as a gift. Similarly, Sofia's assumption that she doesn't understand the purpose of such a gift also has

a contextual effect in that it prompts Ellen to explain her own experience with giving a cotton gift.

### **Dialog 7.1**

Ellen DeGeneres : **What body part are you most proud of?**

Sofia Vergara : I mean, please, Ellen.

Ellen DeGeneres : [laughing] Oh my God, I love you.

Sofia Vergara : Do I really have to say? I've opened doors.

In this conversation, Ellen DeGeneres asks Sofia what body part she is most proud of, to which Sofia responds with a comment that implies the answer is obvious. Ellen laughs and expresses her affection for Sofia, who then jokes that she doesn't really have to say because she's "*opened doors*".

In this part of the conversation, Ellen's question, "*What body part are you most proud of?*" violate the Maxim of Quantity. This maxim states that one should provide as much information as is required. Since Ellen and the audience likely already know the answer to this question, it could be seen as unnecessary and a violation of this maxim.

Sofia's response, "*I mean, please, Ellen,*" indicates that she finds the question unnecessary or redundant. Her follow-up statement, "*Do I really have to say? I've opened doors,*" further implies that the answer to Ellen's question is already well-known and does not need to be stated explicitly. The phrase 'opened doors' serves as a humorous and euphemistic way of implying that the answer to Ellen's question, referring to a specific body part, refers to her chest or breasts.

Ellen's response, "[laughing] *Oh my God, I love you,*" acknowledges the redundancy of her question and attempts to shift the focus of the conversation away from it.

### **Contextual Effect**

In this dialogue, the assumptions expressed by Ellen and Sofia connect with the context of their conversation about body parts that Sofia is proud of. Ellen's assumption that Sofia has a specific body part she is proud of has a contextual effect in that it leads to further discussion about what that body part might be. Similarly, Sofia's assumption that the answer is obvious and that she doesn't really have to say it also has a contextual effect in that it adds humor to the conversation.

## **2. Maxim Quality**

### **Dialog 10.2**

Ellen DeGeneres : **I mean, literally, you've been on the show for 10 years, and your accent has gotten worse. How is that possible?**

Sofia Vergara : Well, it's a talent. It really is. I made a commitment with myself that I am going to be Gloria, very thick Latin spoken woman.

Ellen DeGeneres : **Yes, you sure have. It is-- it's gotten worse and worse over the years. I can barely understand you.**

In this conversation, Ellen DeGeneres comments that despite being on an American TV show for 10 years, Sofia's accent has gotten worse. Sofia responds by saying that it's a talent and that she made a commitment to herself to portray



her character in *Modern Family*, Gloria, as a woman with a thick Latin accent. Ellen jokes that Sofia's accent has gotten worse over the years and that she can barely understand her.

In this part of the conversation, Ellen's question, "*I mean, literally, you've been on the show for 10 years, and your accent has gotten worse. How is that possible?*" violate the Maxim of Quality. This maxim states that one should not say what they believe to be false or for which they lack adequate evidence. Ellen's statement that Sofia's accent has gotten worse over the years could be seen as a subjective opinion rather than a fact.

Sofia's response, "*Well, it's a talent. It really is. I made a commitment with myself that I am going to be Gloria, very thick Latin spoken woman,*" provides an explanation for why her accent may have remained thick over the years. She states that it is a deliberate choice on her part to maintain her character's accent.

Ellen's follow-up statement, "*Yes, you sure have. It is-- it's gotten worse and worse over the years. I can barely understand you,*" continues to express her subjective opinion about Sofia's accent and could be seen as a further violation of the Maxim of Quality.

### **Contextual Effect**

According to the theory of relevance, the assumptions expressed by Ellen and Sofia connect with the context of their conversation about Sofia's accent. Ellen's assumption that Sofia's accent has gotten worse over the years has a contextual effect in that it leads to further discussion about why this might be the case. Similarly, Sofia's assumption that her thick accent is a talent and a deliberate

choice also has a contextual effect in that it provides an explanation for why her accent has not changed.

### **Dialog 27.2**

Sofia Vergara : You're going to be like Ebenezer Scrooge.

Ellen DeGeneres : Who? You don't even know who that is.

Sofia Vergara : **It's an American, famous, old person. But I love you. And I have something special for you, that's most important. I didn't just come here to say happy birthday.**

In this dialogue, Sofia Vergara surprises Ellen DeGeneres on her birthday and mentions Ebenezer Scrooge, a character from Charles Dickens' novel "A Christmas Carol." Ellen questions Sofia's knowledge of the character, and Sofia responds by describing him as an American, famous, and old person. Sofia then expresses her love for Ellen and mentions that she has a special gift for her.

In this dialogue, there is a violation of the maxim of quality. Sofia Vergara incorrectly identifies Ebenezer Scrooge as an "American, famous, old person," when in fact Ebenezer Scrooge is a fictional character from the novel "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens. This statement could be seen as providing information that is false or not supported by evidence, which would violate the maxim of quality.

### **Contextual Effect**

According to the theory of relevance, Sofia's initial comparison of Ellen to Ebenezer Scrooge has contextual effects in the conversation because it provides new information and connects with the topic of their discussion. However, Sofia's

description of Ebenezer Scrooge as an American, famous, old person is not accurate, as he is a fictional character from a British novel. This misunderstanding may be due to a difference in their assumptions or knowledge about the character.

This exchange can be seen as an example of how people use communication to express their feelings and intentions. Sofia's surprise visit and mention of a special gift for Ellen demonstrate her affection and desire to make Ellen's birthday special. Despite the misunderstanding about the origin of the character Ebenezer Scrooge, the overall sentiment of Sofia's message is clear and relevant in the context of their conversation.

### 3. Maxim Relevance

#### Dialog 5.3

Sofia Vergara : **I'm gonna win.**

Ellen DeGeneres : It is time to play-- there's no winning. It's just a game. It's time to play Burning Questions.

In this conversation, Ellen DeGeneres and Sofia Vergara are about to play a game called *Burning Questions*. Sofia expresses her confidence in winning the game, to which Ellen responds that there is no winning and that it's just a game.

In this part of the conversation, Sofia's statement, "*I'm gonna win,*" violates the Maxim of Relevance. This maxim states that one should be relevant and say things that are pertinent to the discussion. Since the game they are about to play, *Burning Questions*, does not have a winner, Sofia's statement is not relevant to the conversation.

Ellen's response, "*It is time to play-- there's no winning. It's just a game. It's time to play Burning Questions,*" clarifies that the game does not have a winner and attempts to redirect the conversation back to the topic at hand.

### **Contextual Effect**

In this dialogue, the assumptions expressed by Ellen and Sofia connect with the context of their conversation about playing a game. Sofia's assumption that she will win the game has a contextual effect in that it leads to further discussion about the nature of the game. Similarly, Ellen's assumption that there is no winning and that it's just a game also has a contextual effect in that it clarifies the rules of the game for Sofia.

### **Dialog 6.3**

- Ellen DeGeneres : What is one thing that you've tried, that you'll never do again.
- Sofia Vergara : **An alligator.**
- Ellen DeGeneres : What does that mean, alligators?
- Sofia Vergara : I ate an alligator.
- Ellen DeGeneres : Oh, you ate one?
- Sofia Vergara : Yes, what did you say? What was the question?
- Ellen DeGeneres : What did you do, that you've tried– I thought you meant tried like, it could have been wrestling with an alligator. I don't know. I didn't know.
- Sofia Vergara : I thought you said like something that I ate.

In this dialogue, Ellen DeGeneres asks Sofia Vergara a question about something she has tried and will never do again. However, Sofia misunderstands the question and responds with “an alligator,” which Ellen initially interprets as Sofia having tried wrestling with an alligator. It is only after Sofia clarifies that she ate an alligator that Ellen understands the intended meaning of Sofia’s response.

In this part of the conversation, there is a misunderstanding between Ellen and Sofia. Ellen’s initial question, “*What is one thing that you’ve tried, that you’ll never do again,*” is not clear to Sofia, who responds with “*An alligator.*” This response violates the Maxim of Relevance as it is not directly related to Ellen’s question.

Ellen’s follow-up question, “*What does that mean, alligators?*” attempts to clarify Sofia’s response. Sofia then explains that she ate an alligator, which provides some context for her initial response.

Ellen’s next statement, “*Oh, you ate one?*” confirms her understanding of Sofia’s response. However, Sofia then asks for clarification on the initial question, indicating that she did not fully understand it. Ellen attempts to rephrase the question and explains her own confusion by stating, “*I thought you meant tried like, it could have been wrestling with an alligator. I don’t know. I didn’t know.*”

Sofia’s final statement, “*I thought you said like something that I ate,*” indicates that she misunderstood the initial question and thought it was asking about something she had eaten rather than something she had tried.

### **Contextual Effect**

According to the theory of relevance, Ellen's initial question is relevant because it has contextual effects in the conversation. However, Sofia's response about the alligator initially lacks contextual effects because it does not connect with the information present in the context of Ellen's question. It is only after Sofia clarifies her response that it gains contextual effects and becomes relevant in the context of the conversation.

This misunderstanding between Ellen and Sofia can be attributed to a difference in their assumptions and expectations about the context of the conversation. Ellen's question was intended to elicit a response about an activity or experience that Sofia has tried, while Sofia interpreted the question as being about something she has eaten. This difference in their assumptions led to a temporary breakdown in communication until they were able to clarify their intended meanings and establish a shared context for the conversation.

#### **4. Maxim Manner**

##### **Dialog 3.4**

Ellen DeGeneres : **We're back with Sofia Vergara, and now--**

Sofia Vergara : Why didn't you tell me we were back? And I was fooling around.

Ellen DeGeneres : That's all right. You can fool around. This is not a serious Show.

In this dialogue, Ellen DeGeneres attempts to start a segment of her show with Sofia Vergara, but Sofia is not ready and expresses surprise that they are back

on air. Ellen reassures Sofia that it's okay to fool around and that the show is not serious.

In this part of the conversation, there is a violation of the Maxim of Manner. This maxim states that one should be clear, brief, and orderly in their communication. Ellen's failure to inform Sofia that they were back on the air violates this maxim as it causes confusion and disorder in the conversation.

Sofia's response, "*Why didn't you tell me we were back? And I was fooling around,*" indicates that she was not aware that they were back on the air and was caught off guard. Ellen's response, "*That's all right. You can fool around. This is not a serious show,*" attempts to remedy the situation by downplaying the importance of the mistake and reassuring Sofia that it is okay to be informal on the show.

### **Contextual Effect**

According to the theory of relevance, Ellen's initial statement about being back on air with Sofia has contextual effects in the conversation because it provides new information and establishes the context for the upcoming segment. However, Sofia's response indicates that she was not aware that they were back on air and was not prepared to start the segment. Ellen's reassurance that it's okay to fool around helps to establish a shared understanding of the expectations for the show and allows the conversation to continue.

### **Dialog 17.4**

Sofia Vergara : **Your tricep, your quadricep, and your sauce.**

Ellen DeGeneres : Sauce?

Sofia Vergara : The sauce is a muscle that is very understated. People

don't really think about it when they have back pain. But it goes from down here, and it--

Ellen DeGeneres : Sciatic.

Sofia Vergara : No, it's called the sauce. The sciatic is a nerve.

In this dialogue, Sofia Vergara is asked to name three muscles on the body. She correctly identifies the tricep and quadricep, but her third answer, “*sauce*,” causes confusion. Ellen DeGeneres initially interprets Sofia’s response as referring to the sciatic nerve, but Sofia clarifies that she is talking about a muscle called the “*sauce*.”

In the dialogue above, there is a violation of the Maxim of Manner. This maxim states that one should be clear, brief, and orderly in their communication. Sofia’s initial response, “*Your tricep, your quadricep, and your sauce*,” violates this maxim as her use of the word “*sauce*” to refer to a muscle is unclear and causes confusion.

Ellen’s follow-up question, “*Sauce?*” and Sofia’s subsequent explanation attempts to clarify the situation, but the misunderstanding persists until Sofia eventually corrects Ellen’s misunderstanding by stating that she is referring to a muscle called the “*sauce*.” Sofia may have misspoken or mispronounced the name of the muscle she was trying to refer to, which could have contributed to the confusion and lack of clarity in the conversation.

### **Contextual Effect**

According to the theory of relevance, Sofia’s initial response about the “*sauce*” muscle lacks contextual effects because it does not connect with the information present in the context of the conversation. Ellen’s confusion and



subsequent attempts to clarify Sofia's intended meaning indicate that she is not familiar with a muscle called the "*sauce*." It is only after Sofia provides additional information and explanation that her response gains contextual effects and becomes relevant in the context of the conversation.

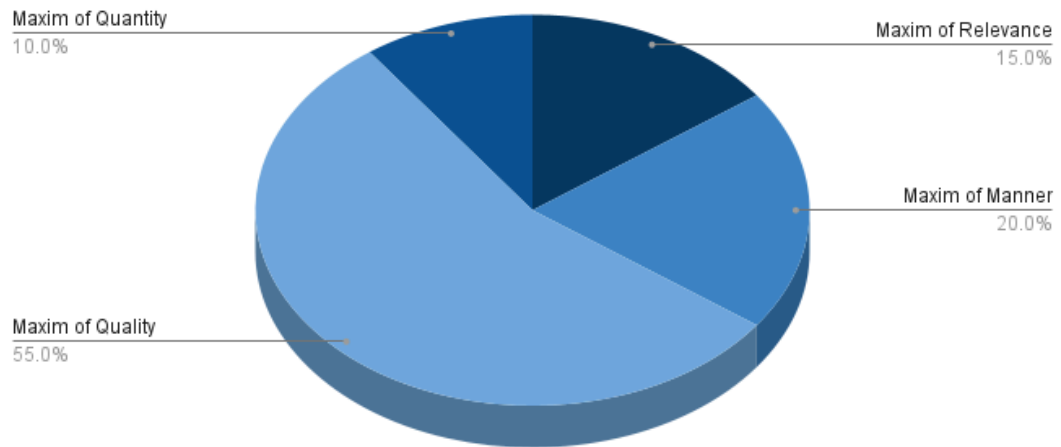
This exchange can be seen as an example of how misunderstandings can arise in communication due to differences in knowledge or assumptions. In this case, Sofia's use of an unfamiliar term caused confusion, but through further explanation and clarification, she was able to establish a shared understanding with Ellen and provide new information about a muscle that is often overlooked. It is possible that what Sofia meant was the "*PSOAS*" muscle, which sounds similar to "*sauce*".

In the introduction, the researcher established the context of the study by drawing on the insights from Alfina (2016), Akmal and Yana (2020), and Al-Zubeiry (2020) in the exploration of conversational maxim violations in different settings, such as the Mata Najwa talk show and the Arabic comedy series *Madraset Al-Mushaghbeen*. The focus of this study is on analyzing violations of Grice's maxims in *The Ellen Show*, applying Grice's theory of flouting maxim and Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory.

In comparison to the previous studies, this research expands the scope to a different cultural and communicative context. While Alfina (2016) explored the motivations behind conversational maxim violations on a talk show, Akmal and Yana (2020) categorized implicatures and flouting maxims in a movie screenplay, and Al-Zubeiry (2020) examined humorous implicatures in an Arabic comedy series, the researcher contributes by analyzing violations in a popular American

talk show, The Ellen Show, enriching the understanding of maxims across diverse contexts. Comparing the results with the findings of Alfina (2016), Akmal and Yana (2020), and Al-Zubeiry (2020), there are both similarities and differences. While each study has its unique context and focus, the variations in violation frequencies and patterns underscore the dynamic nature of conversational maxims in different communicative settings.

The research contributes to the broader field of communication studies by offering insights into the violations of Grice's maxims within the context of an American talk show. The detailed analysis of violations, their classification, and interpretation contribute to the ongoing discussion on the universality and cultural specificity of conversational maxims. It's essential to acknowledge the limitations of the study, such as the specific focus on one talk show and the potential influence of cultural nuances. Future research could explore a broader range of talk shows or incorporate cross-cultural analyses to provide a more comprehensive understanding of conversational maxim violations.



**Chart 1.** Percentage of Grice Maxims Violation found in the interview

The provided chart illustrates that there are a total of twenty instances where violations of Grice's maxims occurred within the show. The maxim of quality exhibits the highest frequency of violations, resulting in a total of eleven instances, which equates to 55.0% of the total violations. This is followed by maxims of manner and relevance, 14 (20.0%) and 13 (15.0%). The maxim of quantity is revealed as having two instances of violation, accounting for a proportion of 10.0%.

The chart representation illuminates a notable pattern in the violations of Grice's maxims within The Ellen Show, with the maxim of quality standing out as the most frequently breached principle. The data reveals an intriguing trend, with eleven instances of violations in this specific maxim, constituting a significant 55.0% of the total breaches. This prominence aligns with Grice's assertion that the maxim of quality underscores the importance of providing truthful and accurate

information in communication. The prevalence of violations in this particular maxim suggests a departure from the conventional expectation of informativeness, emphasizing the nuanced dynamics of communication within the show. By highlighting the connection between the chart's results and Grice's theory, it becomes evident that the analysis not only identifies violations but also contextualizes them within established theoretical frameworks, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the communication dynamics in The Ellen Show.

## **CONCLUSION**

The primary objective of this study is to explore the violations of Grice's maxims in The Ellen Show, as well as identify and interpret the contextual factors within the violations. There are a total of twenty instances where violations of Grice's maxims occurred within the show. The maxim of quality exhibits the highest frequency of violations, resulting in a total of 11 instances, which equates to 55.0% of the total violations. This is followed by maxims of manner and relevance, 14 (20.0%) and 13 (15.0%). The maxim of quantity is revealed as having two instances of violation, accounting for a proportion of 10.0%.

The dialogues between Ellen DeGeneres and Sofia Vergara exhibit a notable presence of assumptions, which are closely tied to the specific context of their discussions and exert contextual effects that propel the conversation forward. The relevance of these assumptions is determined upon their capacity to establish connections with the surrounding context and generate contextual effects, such as implications, contradictions, or strengthenings. Throughout their conversations, Ellen and Sofia articulate a diverse array of assumptions that are indicative of

their cognitive processes, emotional states, and personal backgrounds. These assumptions frequently give rise to subsequent discourse, elucidation, and amusement as they are assimilated by the interlocutor. In general, their conversations illustrate the significance of contextual effects in establishing the significance of assumptions and influencing the course of a dialogue.

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