

# Analysis of Maxim Breaches in the Cooperative Principle of Serial Drama "Ryosangata Riko: Saigo No Puramo Joshi No Jinsei Kumitateki"

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe breaches of the Cooperative Principle and how these violations are realized through specific categories. The data source of this study is the Japanese drama *Ryousangata Riko: Saigo no Puramo Joshi no Jinsei Kumitateki*, consisting of ten episodes. The subjects of the study are two characters, Riko and Yajima. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method, with data collected through observation and note-taking techniques. The analysis is based on Grice's Cooperative Principle theory (1975). The findings reveal a total of 63 instances of maxim breaches. Breaches of the Maxim of Quantity occur most frequently, with 28 data, followed by the Maxim of Manner with 26 data, the Maxim of Relation with 5 data, and the Maxim of Quality with 4 data. Regarding the categories of breaches, the most dominant category is *Flouting a Maxim* with 56 data, followed by *Clash* with 3 data, *Violate a Maxim* with 2 data, and *Opt Out* with 2 data. The results illustrate how indirectness and strategic maxim violations are employed in Japanese communication as represented in the drama.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is one of the important activities carried out in daily life by humans living in society. Good communication with others is highly necessary to achieve certain goals. Communication is a social process. Communication is responsible for the perspective we hold while interacting with others, and for how far we learn to understand our position in society (West & Turner, 2010). Communication has a primary function in transmitting messages to others and can also demonstrate closeness between one person and another (Wulandari, 2017). Good communication can be seen from the correct use of language and a person's attitude while communicating.

One of the distinctive characteristics of humans that differentiates them from other creatures is language, which has a social function as a tool for communication (Adnyani, 2014). Language is used as a form of communication, either orally or in writing, to convey specific intentions to the interlocutor. The use of language in communication varies from one region to another. Word choice, pronunciation,

and gestures are all parts of language use. Language is a system of sounds that, when combined according to certain rules, produce meanings that can be understood by all speakers of that language (Sobur, 2014). Good language use is practiced to avoid misunderstandings and miscommunication among the parties involved in the interaction. The use of language in communication between individuals is part of conversation.

Conversation is used in everyday life as one form of communication. A good conversation occurs when all parties participating in the conversation use good speech, deliver information clearly and straightforwardly, and behave politely. The parties involved in the conversation are called the Speaker and the Hearer. The term "Speaker" refers to the person who produces the utterance, while "Hearer" refers to the person who listens to or receives the utterance delivered by the speaker. There is a principle that must be upheld in conversational communication, namely the principle of cooperation. Indirect communication carries the potential to cause misunderstandings when the hearer does not grasp the speaker's actual intended meaning (Dewi, 2025).

The cooperative principle is one of the important factors in the field of pragmatics. The cooperative principle is established so that a person can communicate effectively in context of social situations. According to Christiansen and Dahl (as cited in Nouraldean, 2015), context refers to the segment of the real world in which particular events or discourses take place, and it is frequently associated with—or even conflated with—other meanings. The meaning of a sentence is both influenced by and influences the context in which it occurs. In linguistic studies, the context of an utterance encompasses all relevant physical aspects or social settings surrounding the speech event (Wijana & Rohmadi, 2011).

This principle emphasizes the importance of cooperation between the speaker and the hearer in a conversation to achieve the intended purpose and successfully convey something without any communication errors. Within the cooperative principle, there are four maxims that must be observed, consisting of the maxim of quantity, the maxim of quality, the maxim of relation, and the maxim of manner. Based on certain factors and ways, Grice (1975) proposed four categories of breaches of the cooperative principle, which consist of: Violate a Maxim (breaching a maxim covertly), Flout a Maxim (breaching a maxim openly), Opt Out (refusing to observe a maxim), and Clash (conflict between maxims).

Each language and region has certain characteristics related to how its people communicate. Japanese society is known as a society that lives closely with collectivist culture, a culture that prioritizes group interests. The majority of them have personalities that emphasize behavior which is acceptable within general society in order to maintain interpersonal relationships. This behavior is reflected in a cultural aspect of communication in Japan, known by the terms *Tatemaie* (建前) and *Honne* (本音) (Doi, 1986). The speaker utters a response that does not align with their actual inner feelings. Just as in Indonesian politeness culture, the concepts of *Honne* and *Tatemaie* serve to maintain harmony and social cohesion in interpersonal relationships (Widiastuti, 2019). This culture is related to how a person responds when communicating with others. *Tatemaie* is a behavior in which a person's utterance consists of a carefully considered series of words, spoken with the aim of maintaining harmony and good relations with the interlocutor. Japan serves as an example of a country with a high-context culture, where communication occurs with information conveyed by considering the context, indirectly, and implicitly in the utterances (Hall, 1976).

There are previous studies related to the cooperative principle. First, by Trinaldi (2020), who in his research aimed to determine the application and violation of the cooperative principle in discussions by students of class VIII E at SMPN 22 Kota Jambi in the context of Indonesian language learning on exposition text material. The next study is the research by Rahmawati (2021), who examined the television program "Mata Najwa." The purpose of her research was to analyze and identify breaches of the cooperative principle and breaches of the politeness principle in the context of formal discussions. Next is Kuku (2022), examined the cooperative principle in the anime *Moriarty The Patriot*. The study analyzed breaches of the cooperative principle and identified the implicatures that arise as a result of those breaches of the cooperative principle. Hutagalung (2025) discusses breaches of the cooperative

principle in the humor used in the film *Agak Laen*. Hasby (2025), who examined the cooperative principle and the functions of those utterances in the humor found in the segment “*Namanya Juga Orang*” on the YouTube channel Vincent and Desta. The research conducted used a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of analyzing breaches of the cooperative principle that occur in humorous utterances in the videos.

This study focuses on analyzing breaches of the cooperative principle using Grice's (1975) cooperative theory. The difference between this study and many previous studies lies in the fact that this research discusses further the four categories of breaches of the cooperative principle proposed by Grice (1975). Studies related to categories of breaches such as Flouting a Maxim, Violating a Maxim, Opt Out, and Clash are still rarely found. In this study, through utterance data containing breaches of the cooperative principle, the aim is to identify and describe the maxims that are breached along with the category of the breach based on certain factors. The data source used comes from the drama series titled *Ryousangata Riko Saigo no Puramo Joshi no Jinsei Kumitateki*.

## 2. METHODS

The method used in this study is the Descriptive Qualitative method. This approach was chosen because this research aims to examine the phenomenon of communication in breaches of the cooperative principle. The data to be analyzed in this study are taken from utterances in the drama series *Ryousangata Riko Saigo no Puramo Joshi no Jinsei Kumitateki*. The research data will be collected and analyzed using pragmatic analysis. The results of the analysis will be presented in the form of descriptions. This study presents the data and the results of the data analysis in descriptive form.

The subject of this study is the characters in the drama series *Ryousangata Riko Saigo no Puramo Joshi no Jinsei Kumitateki*. The object of this study is the utterances that contain breaches of the cooperative principle performed by the character Komukai Riko and the character Yajima in the drama series *Ryousangata Riko Saigo no Puramo Joshi no Jinsei Kumitateki*.

In this study, the observation and note-taking method is used. The observation method is a technique employed to obtain data by observing the language use of an individual or several individuals (Mahsun, 2013). Data collection begins with watching the drama series *Ryousangata Riko Saigo no Puramo Joshi no Jinsei Kumitateki*. While watching, the conversations among the characters in the drama are observed. After completing the observation of the interactions among the characters in the series, the process continues with the note-taking technique to collect data related to breaches of the cooperative principle.

In data analysis, there is an activity that is carried out interactively and continuously until completion and data saturation is reached (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). There are four steps that need to be performed to apply the Miles and Huberman data analysis method. Those steps are Data Collection, Data Condensation, Data Display, and finally Conclusion Drawing.

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Finding

The total number of data found in this study amounts to 63 data, encompassing breaches of the four maxims of the cooperative principle and the four categories of breaches of the cooperative principle performed by the characters Komukai Riko and Yajima. The research results indicate that breaches of the Maxim of Quantity and the Maxim of Manner, with 28 utterance data and 26 utterance data respectively, represent the dominant data. In this drama, characters who breach the Maxim of Quantity do not convey something sufficiently but instead exaggerate or reduce beyond what is required. The remaining data quantities are presented in Table 1. In this study, the dominant category of breach found is Flouting a Maxim, with a total of 57 data. Flouting a Maxim is the category of breach in which the speaker deliberately breaches a maxim of the cooperative principle, does so openly, and creates an implicature that can be recognized by the hearer. Breaches of the Maxim of Quantity through Flouting a Maxim total 28 data. These involve contributions that are excessively detailed or

insufficiently informative compared to what is required to convey the implied meaning behind the utterance. Subsequently, breaches of the Maxim of Manner through Flouting a Maxim amount to 24 utterance data. The characters often deliberately produce ambiguous utterances in order to convey an implied message behind their speech.

**Table 1. Data on Combination of Maxim and Categories of Breaches**

No.	Type of Maxim	Categories of Breaches	Frequency	Amount of Data
1.	Maxim of Quantity	<i>Floating a Maxim</i>	26 Data	28 Data
		<i>Opt Out</i>	2 Data	
2.	Maxim of Quality	<i>Violate a Maxim</i>	2 Data	4 Data
		<i>Floating a Maxim</i>	1 Data	
		<i>Clash</i>	1 Data	
3.	Maxim of Relation	<i>Floating a Maxim</i>	5 Data	5 Data
4.	Maxim of Manner	<i>Floating a Maxim</i>	24 Data	26 Data
		<i>Clash</i>	2 Data	
<b>Total</b>				63 Data

### 3.2 Discussion

The following will describe the utterance data that constitute breaches of the cooperative principle, starting with categories of Floating a Maxim, followed by Violate a Maxim, Opt Out, and Clash.

#### 1. Floating a Maxim.

- (1) Yajima : リコ、カスタマイズするか?  
*Riko, kasutamaizu suru ka ?*  
 ' Riko, why don't we customize it ? '
- (2) Riko : そんなことできるんですか?  
*Sonna koto dekiru n desu ka ?*  
 ' Can we really do that ? '
- (3) Yajima : 互換性のあるプラモのパーツを組み合わせることもできる。  
 カスタマイズの組み合わせは自由だ。その自由の先でプラモ  
 への愛着は増すばかりだろう。  
*Gokansei no aru puramo no paatsu wo kumiawaseru koto mo  
 dekiru. Kasutamaizu no kumiawase wa jiyuu da. Sono jiyuu no saki  
 de puramo e no aichaku wa masu bakari darou.*  
 ' You can also mix and match using compatible parts from other plastic models.  
 You're free to customize it however you want. Beyond that freedom,  
 your attachment to plastic models will only increase '
- (4) Ao : やっさん、エモです。  
*Yassan, emo desu.*  
 ' Yassan, that's cool. '

( Episode 3 17:40-17:58 )

**Context :** At Yajima's shop, Riko asks Yajima whether the plamo she is assembling can be customized.

**Analysis :** In the conversation that happened, which occurs when Riko and her mother have finished assembling the plamo, Yajima suggests that Riko customize the plamo she has just built. Riko asks Yajima, “そんなことできるんですか?” (Can we really do that?), expressing surprise or doubt. In response to Riko’s question, Yajima provides a lengthy explanation saying, “互換性のあるプラモのパーツを組み合わせることもできる。カスタマイズの組み合わせは自由だ。その自由の先でプラモへの愛着は増すばかりだろう。” (You can also mix and match using compatible parts from other plastic models. You’re free to customize it however you want. Beyond that freedom, your attachment to plastic models will only increase.). Yajima breaches the cooperative principle of the Maxim of Quantity with the intention of answering Riko’s question while implying that yes, customization of the plamo she has assembled is indeed possible Yajima also trying to look cool in front of Riko and her mom. A breach of the cooperative principle that is performed deliberately to convey an intended meaning behind the utterance (implicature), Yajima in this conversation has engaged in the breach category of Flouting a Maxim.

## 2. Violate a Maxim.

- (1) Shinji : ホラーですね。誰ですか? ソイツ。  
*Horaa desu ne. Dare desu ka ? soitsu.*  
 ‘That’s pretty creepy, huh. Who’s that?’
- (2) Riko : いや、誰でしょうね。  
*Iya, dare deshousu ne.*  
 ‘Hmm, who could it be, I wonder.’
- (3) Shinji : 気をつけてくださいね。  
*Ki o tsukete kudasai ne.*  
 ‘Please be careful.’

( Episode 3 09:24-09:38 )

**Context :** In the supermarket parking lot, Shinji asks Riko about the photo of the mysterious man that was found in Riko's house.

**Analysis :** The conversation occurs when Riko is telling Shinji about the photo of the mysterious man found in her house. Shinji responds to Riko’s story in a frightened tone, saying “ホラーですね。” (That’s pretty creepy, huh.), and curiously asks who the man is, “誰ですか? ソイツ。” (Who is that guy?). Riko, who already knows the identity of the mysterious man, instead answers “いや、誰でしょうね。” (Hmm, who could it be, I wonder.) that she does not know him. Shinji tells Riko to be more careful. Riko has lied because she actually knows that the mysterious man is Shinji himself. When a speaker deliberately breaches the cooperative principle in order to mislead, and does so covertly with behavior that can convince the hearer, this constitutes a breach of the category Violating a Maxim. Riko deliberately commits this breach of the Maxim of Quality with the aim of misleading Shinji, and she succeeds in convincing him, so no implicature arises that can be noticed by Shinji. Riko lies to conceal the fact in order to avoid hurting Shinji’s feelings. If Riko had been honest, Shinji would likely have blamed himself for becoming the source of the conflict that Riko’s family was experiencing at that time.

## 3. Opt Out.

- (1) Yurika : プラモデルっておもちゃじゃないんですか?  
*Puramoderu tte omocha jya nain desu ka ?*  
 ‘Aren’t plastic models a toys?’
- (2) Yajima : あまり深く突っ込まないでくれ。  
*Amari fukaku tsukkomanide kure.*  
 ‘No further questions please.’

( Episode 3 11:27-11:34 )

**Context :** Yurika asks Yajima whether Plamodel (plastic models) are toys or not when visiting and seeing Yajima's shop.

**Analysis :** One day, Yurika visits Yajima's shop and states that it is her first time coming to a toy store. Upon hearing this, Yajima corrects her and says that his shop is not a toy store but a model shop. Yurika asks Yajima, “プラモデルっておもちゃじゃないんですか?” (Aren't plastic models a toys?), seeking confirmation as to whether toys and plastic models are two different things. Yajima responds with “あまり深く突っ込まないでくれ。” (No further questions please.) indicating that he does not want to answer or discuss the topic any further. Yajima says this because he feels offended by Yurika's earlier statement referring to his model shop as a toy store. If Yajima were to answer Yurika's question and explain the difference between toys and plamo, the explanation would become lengthy due to his high enthusiasm and tendency to explain things in excessive detail. Opt Out occurs when the speaker chooses to withdraw or refuses to engage further in the ongoing speech event. In this category of breach, the speaker is either unable or unwilling to observe the maxims of the cooperative principle as required. Yajima, who openly and deliberately refuses due to his personal feelings, can be categorized as committing a breach of the cooperative principle in the form of Opt Out. Yajima has opted out of the Maxim of Quantity.

#### 4. Clash.

(1) Yumi : じゃあさあ、いつもスマホ見てニヤニヤしてるの何?

*Jyaa saa, itsumo sumaho mite niyaniya shiteru no nani ?*

' So, What's making Dad keep smiling while looking at his phone?'

(2) Riko : あっ、あれねわかったよ。たぶん家族の写真見てるんだと思う。

*Ah, are ne wakatta yo. Tabun kazoku no shashin miteru n da to omou.*

' Ah, about that, I think he's looking at family photos'

(3) Yumi : おっ? そんなことかい。

*Ooh ? Sonna koto kai.*

' Oh, so that's it.'

( Episode 4 21:41-21:50 )

**Context :** While in the dining room, Yumi asks Riko what their dad keeps looking at on his phone with a smile on his face.

**Analysis:** The conversation takes place while Riko and her sister are preparing dinner. Yumi notices their father behaving cheerfully in the yard and asks, “いつもスマホ見てニヤニヤしてるの何?” (What's making Dad keep smiling while looking at his phone?). Riko confidently replies, “たぶん家族の写真見てるんだと思う。” (I think he's probably looking at family photos.). Riko has observed the Maxim of Quantity. Riko attempts to provide Yumi with as much information as possible. Yumi is satisfied with Riko's answer and accepts it by saying, “そんなことかい。” (Oh, so that's it.). However, although Riko's utterance is as informative as required by Yumi, it remains purely assumptive without any supporting evidence breaching the Maxim of Quality, as indicated by the word “たぶん” (probably / I think). The category of breach known as Clash occurs when there is a conflict between the maxims of the cooperative principle. When a speaker is in a situation where breaching one maxim of cooperation is necessary in order to observe another maxim of cooperation, this falls under the breach category of Clash. In the data above, Riko's assumptive answer has breached the cooperative principle of the Maxim of Quality. Riko's utterance, which breaches the Maxim of Quality in order to provide the

information required by Yumi and thereby observe the Maxim of Quantity, is categorized as a Clash breach category.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The combination of breaches against the Maxim of Quantity and the Maxim of Manner performed through the category of Flouting a Maxim, amounting to 26 data and 24 data respectively, constitutes the dominant combination of breaches. This finding further strengthens the notion that Japanese society communicates with indirectness, as stated by Edward T. Hall in his book titled *Beyond Culture*. Contributions that overinformative or underinformative intended to convey the speaker's meaning and implicature. Breaches of the cooperative principle are also frequently employed to convey hidden intentions through confusing and ambiguous utterances, such as in the form commonly seen when characters give certain advice to their interlocutors using metaphors or hyperbole. This study is limited to specific aspects in order to remain more focused and directed. One of the limitations in this research is that the theory used is based solely on Grice's (1975) cooperative principle theory. Future researchers can analyze breaches of the cooperative principle based on the breach categories proposed by Thomas (1995), which consist of two categories: Infringing the Maxim and Suspending the Maxim.

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