
MAXIM VIOLATIONS MADE BY HIGH-SCORING AND LOW-SCORING TEST
TAKERS IN ROSS IELTS ACADEMY YOUTUBE CHANNEL

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Abstrak: Studi ini terutama difokuskan pada analisis pelanggaran maksim yang dilakukan oleh peserta tes dengan skor rendah dan tinggi dalam Video Tes Latihan Berbicara IELTS dari saluran YouTube Ross IELTS Academy. Studi ini menerapkan metode kualitatif deskriptif dan analisis konten untuk memeriksa ucapan yang ditranskripsi dari empat peserta tes; dua dengan skor rendah (Band 5.0 dan 5.5) dan dua dengan skor tinggi (Band 8.0 dan 9.0), dengan menggunakan Prinsip Kooperatif Grice (1975) sebagai kerangka teoritis. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi jenis maksim yang dilanggar dan menentukan maksim mana yang sering dilanggar. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa pelanggaran keempat maksim tersebut ada. Pelanggaran yang paling sering terjadi adalah Maksim Cara, yang mencapai 52,5% dari semua pelanggaran. Ini diikuti oleh Maksim Kuantitas (22,5%), Maksim Relevansi (17,5%), dan Maksim Kualitas (7,5%). Pelanggaran-pelanggaran ini, terutama pelanggaran Manner, ditemukan sering terjadi dan umum di antara kandidat dengan skor rendah, yang berkorelasi langsung dengan skor band mereka yang lebih rendah. Sebaliknya, kandidat dengan skor tinggi menunjukkan pelanggaran yang sangat sedikit dan ringan, yang menegaskan peran penting kompetensi pragmatik dalam mencapai skor IELTS yang tinggi.

Kata Kunci: Pragmatik, Prinsip Kooperatif, Pelanggaran Maksim, IELTS, Peserta Tes, Kemampuan Berbicara, Skor Rendah, Skor Tinggi.

Abstract: This study is primarily focused on analyzing maxim violations made by low-scoring and high-scoring test takers in IELTS Speaking Practice Test Videos from the Ross IELTS Academy YouTube channel. This study applied a descriptive qualitative method and content analysis to examine the transcribed utterances of four test takers; two low-scoring (Band 5.0 and 5.5) and two high-scoring (Band 8.0 and 9.0), using Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle as the theoretical framework. The study aimed to identify the types of maxims violated and determine which maxims were frequently violated. The findings showed that violations of all four maxims were present. The most frequent violation was the Maxim of Manner, which accounted for 52.5% of all violations. This was followed by the Maxim of Quantity (22.5%), the Maxim of Relevance (17.5%), and the Maxim of Quality (7.5%). These violations, particularly those of Manner, were found to be frequent and common among low-scoring candidates, directly correlating with their lower band scores. In contrast, high-scoring candidates exhibited very few and minor violations, affirming the critical role of pragmatic competence in achieving a high IELTS score.

Keywords: *Pragmatics, Cooperative Principle, Maxim Violation, IELTS, Test Takers, Speaking Performance, Low-Scoring, High-Scoring.*

INTRODUCTION

When it comes to social interaction between two participants or a group of people, communication is a significant key. It is undeniably the most important part of a conversation, which has a lot of purposes. Once people engage in a conversation, their utterances, whether they be in a form of questions or answers, feedback, statements, refusals, or suggestions, always carry a purpose. Such utterances often hold a deeper meaning, including several implicit intentions that may not be immediately clear to the listener. In certain situations, these unspoken meanings are not intended to be heard by the listeners for multiple reasons.

As it happens, language has a significantly important role that help humans as the tool utilized to communicate and connect with one another. By way of communication, many things can be achieved. People are able to share their thoughts, ideas, desires, emotions, needs, suggest, or exchange information to develop social connections. Without a doubt, it can be said to be one of the most crucial means of communicating both with society and individuals.

During a conversation, the participants: speakers and listeners, are required to respond with the expected information and reactions, that typically provide benefits to one of them, or even both. To conduct effective communication, both participants must engage to guarantee the conversation runs smoothly and accomplishes its aimed goal. Even so, conversations may not have flowed as swiftly as intended, people are unaware as there are often unintentional flouting, clashing, occasional violating rules of conversation, that most people never knew existed. Grice (1975) emphasized the importance of cooperation between the speaker and listener, outlining several conversational rules, which are categorized into four maxims.

A conversation is generally viewed successful when participants show cooperation during the communication process. Violations of conversational principles are not limited to daily interactions, however, they may also be observed through other various forms of communication, such as the characters in drama performances, dialogues in movies, novel narratives, interviews, in a debate, and other different types of social interaction done for diverse purposes. These violations often occur for several reasons and provide various objectives, which are determined by context where the interaction takes place.

Additionally, the effect of such violations may potentially, or may not be grasped by the listener, since speakers often intend to deliver implicit meanings through what they say.

Speakers are prone to intentionally violate the maxim in the first place because they aim to communicate an implied message. Khosarvizadeh and Sadehvandi (2011:122-123) state that speakers may deliberately violate maxims to create specific misunderstandings that align with their goals. It is a well-known challenge to strictly follow conversational maxims caused by particular circumstances, like unanticipated interactions or unpleasant situations.

These violations often occur during the speaking session of an IELTS speaking practice test, which is driven by several factors. Test-takers may, every so often, provide too much information when asked a question, deliver unclear responses, or even unintentionally stray from the main topic of conversation. Violations like these, may be cored from factors such as the feeling of nervousness, the wanting to impress the examiner, or a misinterpretation of the question. The factors behind these unintentional behaviors are worth looking at closely

RESEARCH METHODS

Polit et al (2001:465) stated that research methodology refers to the techniques used to structure a study, gather and analyze the data in the course of the research investigation. It consists of a set of orderly disciplined procedures, steps and strategies to acquire and analyze information.

According to Brown (2001), “Research is an exploration of experience of one kind or another, sometimes formal and technical, but not necessary”. He also stated that “a good way of understanding the nature of research is to first experience it by doing it, initially in a simple and elementary way.” There are two categories of research, those are primary research and secondary research. Primary research includes any research based on primary or original data and is further divided into qualitative research, survey research, and statistical research. Secondary research includes any research based on secondary sources, especially other researches’ books and articles. Secondary research is further divided into library research and literature reviews.

Research method itself means a systematic method used to determine a certain object in accordance with the research to be done. This study applied qualitative method. Which means that the data is described using words or sentences based on the original data, and both library research and literature reviews were conducted.

Four stages or steps are carried out in the research method. They are Data Source, Method and Technique of Collecting Data, and Method and Technique of Analyzing Data and Technique of Presenting Analysis.

Data Source

Data source is the source of data that is collected and analyzed to support the validity of the study. The data analyzed in this study is considered as primary data. Based on Booth, et al (2003) “primary sources are the materials that you directly write about the raw data”. It means that the data that is analyzed in this study is directly taken from the dialogue script and considered as a primary source. The data is displayed in the form of dialogues between the test takers and the examiners.

This research utilizes Ross IELTS Academy's YouTube channel, specifically their "IELTS Speaking Mock Test" playlist, as its primary data source due to its specialized focus on IELTS speaking preparation, ensuring the relevance and authenticity of the speaking test videos (each ranging 15-30 minutes long) for analyzing maxim violations within the specific IELTS context. The academy's experienced instructors, many certified and drawn from diverse English-speaking backgrounds, and its established reputation, evidenced by over 1800 successful students and a substantial subscriber base of 1 million on YouTube, combined with their provision of speaking mock tests and feedback, offer credible and contextually rich data. This study analyzed a total of four videos: two from low-scoring test takers (band scores of 5.0 and 5.5) and two from high-scoring test takers (band scores of 8.0 and 9.0). The online accessibility of these materials, particularly within the designated playlist, coupled with the targeted selection of diverse performance levels, provides a substantial corpus of data necessary for a focused comparative analysis between high-scoring and low-scoring individuals, which is the core focus of this study. Therefore, Ross IELTS Academy's YouTube channel, and its "IELTS Speaking Mock Test" playlist in particular, offers a targeted, credible, and accessible source of IELTS speaking test data ideal for investigating the relationship between maxim violations and IELTS speaking performance.

Method and Technique of Collecting Data

In order to get the necessary data and information as the main topic of discussion, the method was the documentation method. The data was taken from the video by using note-taking technique. The test takers' answers were firstly transcribed or written down and followed by the selection of the sentences/utterances containing the maxim violations. Practically, there were four steps or process of collecting data as seen in the following:

1. The videos were watched attentively several times to figure out the targeted data/sentences from the utterances.

2. The dialogue of the videos were downloaded from the search engine internet.
3. The transcription of the dialogues were selected followed by the selection and classification.
4. Fourth, the presentation of the data were carried out.

Method and Technique of Analyzing Data

The collected data were written down along with their classification. The next step was presenting the qualitative and descriptive method of the data based on the theory of classification of maxim violations proposed by Grice (1975) The technique of analyzing data was conducted as follows: (1) organize and classify the data by the test takers' answers while considering the possible reasons of the violations, (2) codify all of the sorted data that have been classified, (3) arrange the obtained data systematically, (4) main analysis, (5) make an interpretation in a qualitative way.

In brief, the stages to analyze the data can be presented as follows:

1. The answers of the test takers in the videos were thoroughly read.
2. The answers that indicate to maxim violations were be jotted down
3. The classified data were analyzed following Grice's Perspective.

Method and Technique of Presenting Analysis

In presenting the data, both the informal and formal method were used in this research. The formal method was used to show a table of the result of the analysis, showing the detailed percentage and amount of each maxim violated in the analysis. The rest of the analysis used informal method, where findings are explained through detailed sentences and paragraphs. First, the frequency of violations for each of the four Gricean maxims was presented in a table, providing a clear overview of the data. Second, the selected conversational data, including dialogues and utterances, were transcribed and displayed. The final step involved providing the main analysis and interpretation of this data descriptively, in the form of detailed text placed directly beneath each selected data

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Presented Data Example:

Data [3-1] (Mariam Shakbon, 00:47-01:05)

Examiner: "how much time do you spend with your family?"

Mariam Shakbon: "honestly speaking if I had [uh] more time I [um] would [uh] spend

[uh] time with my family more [uh] because now I have [uh] a full job and I [uh] have to work [uh] eight or nine hours a day"

This response demonstrates a violation of the **Maxim of Quantity**, specifically under-informativeness. The examiner's question, "how much time," is a direct inquiry seeking a quantifiable measure of current family time. While Mariam offers a reason for not spending more time (her job), she conspicuously avoids providing any information about the actual amount of time she does spend.

1. Findings

This section presents the detailed findings from the analysis of maxim violations, split into two main groups of test takers: low-scoring and high-scoring. This close look aims to show how well people follow conversation rules at different skill levels.

2. The Analysis of Maxim Violations in Ross IELTS Academy

This analysis of selected IELTS speaking performances reveals a total of 40 instances of maxim violations from Grice's Cooperative Principle across all four test takers. The findings, presented below, highlight a sharp contrast in maxim differences between low-scoring and high-scoring candidates, underscoring the direct relationship between pragmatic competence and overall band score.

Test Taker 1: Mariam Shakbon (Table 1)

Mariam's The Analysis of Maxim Violations in Ross IELTS Academy

This analysis of selected IELTS speaking performances revealed a total of 40 instances of deviation from Grice's Cooperative Principle, a framework encompassing the Maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relevance, and Manner. The findings, presented below, highlight a stark contrast in maxim adherence between low-scoring and high-scoring candidates, underscoring the direct relationship between pragmatic competence and overall band score.

Maxim Violations by Mariam Shakbon (Band Score: 5.5)

Mariam's performance had problems that were spread out across almost all the rules of conversation, which shows a general difficulty in communicating effectively. She violated the Maxim of Quantity in 5 instances, often by giving too little or too much information. She also broke the rule of the Maxim of Quality 3 times, mainly by making statements that were not completely accurate or were unrealistic. The Maxim of Relevance was violated 3 times when

she misunderstood questions and went off-topic. Her most common mistakes, however, were with the Maxim of Manner, with 5 instances of grammar errors, broken sentences, and using a lot of filler words.

Table 1

Grice's Maxim Violations	Quantity	Percentage
Maxim of Quantity	5	31.3%
Maxim of Quality	3	18.8%
Maxim of Relevance	3	18.8%
Maxim of Manner	5	31.3%
Total	16	100.0%

Test Taker 2: Irvan Hayak (Table 2)

Irvan's performance showed that most of his problems were with one thing. The Maxim of Manner was violated the most, in 13 instances, which was over 80% of all his mistakes. These errors, which included many grammar mistakes, awkward phrasing, and a lack of smooth speech, were the main reason he got a low score. He also violated the Maxim of Quantity in 2 instances and the Maxim of Relevance in 1 instance, but these were much less frequent. It is interesting to note that he did not violate the Maxim of Quality, which means he didn't lie or say things he knew were false.

Table 2

Grice's Maxim Violations	Quantity	Percentage
Maxim of Quantity	2	12,5%
Maxim of Quality	0	0,0%
Maxim of Relevance	1	6,3%
Maxim of Manner	13	81,3%
Total	16	100.0%

Test Taker 3: Catherine Manush (Table 3)

In a big difference from the low-scoring candidates, Catherine followed all the rules almost perfectly. Her only two small mistakes were with the **Maxim of Manner**, making up all of her violations. These were not big communication problems but were just minor grammar slips or using a brief filler word. She did not violate the rules of Quantity, Quality, or Relevance even once, which shows what a top-level speaker does.

Table 3

Grice's Maxim Violations	Quantity	Percentage
Maxim of Quantity	0	0,0%
Maxim of Quality	0	0,0%
Maxim of Relevance	0	0,0%
Maxim of Manner	2	100.0%
Total	2	100.0%

Test Taker 4: Salma Taher

Salma's performance, while excellent, had a few more mistakes than Catherine's, which is why she didn't get a perfect score. She had two violations of the Maxim of Quantity, either by giving too much detail or being too general. The Maxim of Relevance was the most frequent problem for her, with 3 instances of misunderstanding a question or slightly going off-topic. She also had a single, minor mistake with the Maxim of Manner, which was an unclear word choice. Like Irvan, she did not violate the Maxim of Quality.

Table 4

Grice's Maxim Violations	Quantity	Percentage
Maxim of Quantity	2	33,3%
Maxim of Quality	0	0,0%
Maxim of Relevance	3	50,0%
Maxim of Manner	1	16,7%
Total	40	100.0%

3. Maxim Violations by Low-Scoring Test Taker: Mariam Shakbon (Band 5.5)

The following, presents a detailed analysis of maxim violations observed in the IELTS Speaking Mock Test performance of Mariam Shakbon, who achieved an overall Band Score of 5.5. Her performance frequently exhibited notable deviations from Grice's Cooperative Principle, with violations identified in all 16 of her analyzed responses across the different parts of the test. Specifically, Mariam violated the Maxim of Quantity in 5 instances, either by being under-informative or providing redundant information. She violated the Maxim of Quality in 3 instances, making statements that were factually imprecise or unrealistic within the conversational context. The Maxim of Relation (Relevance) was breached in 3 instances, as her responses occasionally shifted to topics not directly pertinent to the examiner's questions. Most prominently, Mariam violated the Maxim of Manner in 5 instances, characterized by constant grammatical inaccuracies, awkward phrasing, and substantial disfluency (excessive "uh" and "um" fillers and repetition), which collectively impaired the clarity and coherence of her speech. These consistent maxim violations directly contributed to her Band 5.5 score, reflecting limitations in her communicative effectiveness, particularly in terms of fluency, coherence, grammatical range and accuracy, and lexical resource.

[3-1] Data (Mariam Shakbon, 00:47-01:05)

Examiner: "how much time do you spend with your family?"

Mariam Shakbon: "honestly speaking if I had [uh] more time I [um] would [uh] spend [uh] time with my family more [uh] because now I have [uh] a full job and I [uh] have to work [uh] eight or nine hours a day"

This response demonstrates a violation of the Maxim of Quantity, specifically under-informativeness. The examiner's question, "how much time," is a direct inquiry seeking a quantifiable measure of current family time. While Mariam offers a reason for not spending more time (her job), she conspicuously avoids providing any information about the actual amount of time she does spend. This violation likely stems from a combination of factors. Cognitively, Mariam might interpret the question as an invitation to explain her circumstances rather than provide a direct numerical answer. She may not have a precise figure in mind or might find it challenging to quantify something as fluid as "family time." Pragmatically, she could be attempting to provide a socially acceptable or relatable excuse (a busy work schedule) rather than admitting to limited family time, which might be perceived negatively. Linguistically, the numerous "[uh]" fillers indicate hesitation and a struggle to formulate a

precise answer, potentially leading her to pivot to an easier, albeit less direct, explanation. Her focus shifts from the descriptive "how much time do you spend" to a hypothetical "if I had more time," suggesting an inability to accurately report her current situation or a deliberate avoidance of direct quantification. The violation of the Maxim of Quantity is the most prominent here. An improved response to this question would have been: "Honestly, I don't get to spend as much time as I'd like, perhaps only a few hours in the evenings or on weekends. This is because I have a full-time job and work eight or nine hours a day."

This suggestion directly addresses the Quantity violation by providing a quantifiable estimate of time spent, making the response adequately informative. It also maintains relevance and clarity.

[3-2] Data (Mariam Shakbon, 01:30-01:40)

Examiner: "and do you get along well with your family?"

Mariam Shakbon: "[um] honestly [uh] [um] I prefer to [uh] go outside or um go uh to cinema or um call a lot with my family"

This response presents a clear violation of the Maxim of Relevance. The examiner's question, "do you get along well with your family," is an inquiry into the quality of her interpersonal relationships and harmony within the family unit. Mariam's answer, however, completely sidesteps this relational aspect and instead lists activities she enjoys doing with her family. This violation primarily points to a lexical misinterpretation of the idiomatic phrase "get along well." Mariam appears to conflate "getting along with" (implying harmony and positive relationships) with "spending time with" or "doing activities with." This misinterpretation leads her to respond to a question she thinks was asked, rather than the one actually posed. Linguistically, the "[um]" and "[uh]" fillers suggest she is searching for an appropriate response, but ultimately retrieves a set of activities rather than a description of her relationships. It's also possible that she found it difficult to articulate the nuances of family relationships in English and thus reverted to a more concrete topic (activities) that she could express. This is a common strategy for lower-level speakers: when faced with a difficult or abstract question, they pivot to a related, but more concrete or easily expressible, topic. The violation of the Maxim of Relevance is the most prominent here.

An improved response to this question would have been: "Yes, absolutely, I get along very well with my family. We have a strong bond and enjoy spending time together, whether it's talking, watching movies, or going out."

This response directly addresses the Maxim of Relevance by answering the core question about the quality of her family relationships, rather than shifting to irrelevant activities. It also provides a clear and natural answer.

[3-3] Data (Mariam Shakbon, 01:08-01:20)

Examiner: "and what do you like to do together as a family?"

Mariam Shakbon: "m [uh] if you ask me [uh] I would like [uh] to [uh] watching TV watching movie or [um] listening to music or have a bash have a party [uh] with my family"

This response generally adheres to the Maxim of Relevance and Quantity by providing a list of activities. However, it does contain a violation of the Maxim of Manner due to grammatical inaccuracies and excessive disfluency. The phrase "I would like to watching TV" is grammatically incorrect, and the frequent "[uh]" fillers disrupt the flow and clarity of her speech. The violation of the Maxim of Manner is primarily linguistic. The incorrect use of the gerund after "to" ("to watching") indicates a limitation in her control over English verb forms and infinitives. The sheer number of "[uh]" fillers suggests a struggle with real-time word retrieval and sentence construction, making her utterance less clear and efficient than it could be. While the content is comprehensible, the manner of delivery is not as smooth or precise as expected for a higher band score.

An improved response to this question would have been: "If you ask me, we enjoy watching TV or movies together, listening to music, or even just having a party or a get-together with my family."

This suggestion corrects the grammatical error ("to watching" to "watching" or "to watch") and removes unnecessary fillers, making the statement clearer, more concise, and grammatically accurate, thus adhering to the Maxim of Manner.

[3-4] Data (Mariam Shakbon, 02:04-02:15)

Examiner: "now let's move on to talk about perfume do you like perfumes?"

Mariam Shakbon: "[umm] Honestly, yes, because I am a woman and [uh] I prefer to wear perfume a lot"

This response is largely relevant and informative. However, it displays a minor violation of the Maxim of Quantity (over-informativeness/redundancy) and a slight violation of the Maxim of Manner through disfluency. While stating she likes perfume because she is a woman

is a personal opinion, it's not strictly necessary as a justification, making the "because I am a woman" somewhat redundant for the direct question "do you like perfumes?". The "[umm]" filler also slightly impacts the flow. The violation of Maxim of Quantity here is subtle. Mariam provides a reason that, while personally true, isn't inherently required to answer a simple "yes/no" preference question. This might stem from a desire to justify her answer or a common conversational habit. The violation of Maxim of Manner is minor, indicated by the initial "[umm]" filler, suggesting a brief moment of thought before responding.

An improved response to this question would have been: "Honestly, yes, I do like perfumes a lot. I enjoy wearing them."

This suggestion makes the response more concise by removing the redundant justification ("because I am a woman"), thereby adhering to the Maxim of Quantity by being only as informative as required. It also improves conciseness (Manner).

4. Maxim Violations in Low-Scoring Test Taker: Isan Hayat (Band Score: 5.0)

The second test taker, Irvan Hayak identified achieved an overall Band Score of 5.5 in the IELTS Speaking Mock Test by Ross IELTS Academy. His performance frequently exhibited notable deviations from Grice's Cooperative Principle, with violations observed in all 16 of his analyzed responses across the different parts of the test. Irvan predominantly violated the Maxim of Manner (identified in 13 instances), characterized by several grammatical inaccuracies (e.g., incorrect verb tenses, noun-plural agreement, prepositional usage), awkward phrasing, and substantial disfluency (excessive "um" and "uh" fillers and repetition), which collectively impaired the clarity and coherence of his speech. Violations of the Maxim of Quantity were also significant (identified in 2 instances), occurring when Irvan provided insufficient detail or neglected to address all parts of multi-faceted questions. Additionally, Irvan demonstrated violations of the Maxim of Relation (identified in 2 instances) by occasionally providing information not directly relevant to the examiner's inquiry, indicating a misinterpretation of question scope. Direct violations of the Maxim of Quality (truthfulness) were not prominently observed; rather, issues related to factual precision or understandability were primarily categorized under Manner. These pervasive maxim violations directly contributed to his Band 5.5 score, as they fundamentally affected the comprehensibility, fluency, grammatical range and accuracy, and lexical resource of his spoken English.

Data [3-17] (Irvan Hayak, 00:29-00:36)

Examiner: "Do you have a job right now?"

Irvan Hayak: "Yes, I'm working as a mechanical engineering now. It's about five years."

This response contains a violation of the Maxim of Manner due to grammatical inaccuracy and lexical imprecision. The candidate uses "*mechanical engineering*" (the field of study) when the context requires the noun for the person, "mechanical engineer" (the profession). While the overall meaning is discernible, the choice of word lacks the exactitude and correctness expected in formal communication, thus hindering the clarity of expression. This violation is primarily linguistic, stemming from a lexical error involving the confusion between a discipline and a job title. This common error for English language learners indicates an incomplete mastery of derived forms of words and their appropriate usage in different grammatical contexts. The lack of grammatical precision impairs the clarity and naturalness of the utterance, thereby violating the Maxim of Manner.

A better response would be: "Yes, I'm working as a mechanical engineer now. I've been doing it for about five years."

This suggestion directly addresses the grammatical error by using the correct noun "engineer," which makes the statement more precise and clear, thereby upholding the Maxim of Manner. It also uses the more natural present perfect continuous tense ("I've been doing it") for an action that started in the past and continues to the present, further improving grammatical accuracy.

5. Maxim Violations in High-Scoring Test Taker: Catherine Manush (Band Score: 9.0)

Catherine Manush attained a perfect 9.0 band score on the IELTS Speaking test, demonstrating remarkable fluency, lexical sophistication, and coherence throughout her performance. Despite her mastery of spoken English, this analysis identifies two very minor and contextually negligible violations of Gricean maxims within her responses. Specifically, both instances touch upon the **Maxim of Manner**: once for a brief grammatical disfluency and once for an arguably unnecessary conversational filler. Importantly, neither of these instances impairs the clarity or relevance of her communication. Catherine's overall linguistic control and ability to engage naturally and intelligently with the questions largely upholds all four maxims: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. Her few infractions appear to be the byproducts of natural spoken discourse rather than deficits in pragmatic competence, and they do not detract from the overall coherence or informativity of her responses.

Data [3-33] (Catherine Manush, 1:30–1:51)

Examiner: "Which one do you think is more important, research or teaching?"

Catherine Manush: "That is a very difficult question but um because I think both is are very important, however, if I had to choose one I would probably say it's teaching because what good is all the research we are doing if we don't teach it to other people, if we don't pass it on to the younger generation, for example."

In this data, Catherine demonstrates clear adherence to the Maxim of Quantity by offering a sufficiently developed answer and to the Maxim of Relevance by addressing the binary choice posed. Her response also adheres to the Maxim of Quality, as she presents a logical, sincere argument. The only observable departure, though extremely minor, is a brief disfluency: "both is are very important." This micro-violation of the Maxim of Manner (specifically clarity and order) does not impede listener comprehension and is immediately self-corrected. In fact, such natural slips are expected in spontaneous speech and do not represent true pragmatic failures.

A suggested response would be: "I think both are very important."

This revision is suggested because it directly corrects the minor grammatical slip ("is are") to the grammatically accurate "are." This improves the Maxim of Manner by enhancing perspicuity and eliminating any momentary disfluency. While such self-corrections are common in natural, spontaneous speech, this revision presents the most grammatically streamlined version.

6. Maxim Violations in High-Scoring Test Taker: Salma Taher (Band Score: 8.0)

Salma Taher achieved a commendable band score of 8.0, reflecting strong lexical control, grammatical accuracy, and coherence in her IELTS Speaking test. However, this analysis uncovers several minor but noteworthy violations of Gricean maxims, particularly the Maxim of Quantity and the Maxim of Relevance. In total, six instances were identified: two involving Quantity, three involving Relevance, and one involving Manner. Her Quantity violations are marked by either over-explaining or offering underdeveloped generalizations. Relevance issues stem from digressions or misinterpretations of the examiner's question. The single Manner violation relates to unclear or awkward lexical choices. While these deviations do not severely disrupt intelligibility, they demonstrate slight inconsistencies in task focus, topical development, and lexical precision, which likely contributed to her not attaining a higher band score.

Data [3-35] (Salma Taher, 0:56–1:09)

Examiner: "And how much time do you spend with your family?"

Salma Taher: "I spend **roughly for five hours** of the weekends with my family to talk about the activities we do when together we sometimes hang out in a restaurant sometimes ask them to come over in order to chit chat or have some fun."

This data reveals a minor violation of the Maxim of Quantity. The examiner's question sought a temporal estimate, which Salma answers early in her response ("roughly for five hours"). However, she proceeds to elaborate on how that time is spent, adding more detail than strictly required by the "how much" question. While the added context is relevant and shows fluency, it goes slightly beyond the immediate demands of the question. This could be a discourse strategy to demonstrate fluency and expand on the topic, but it technically oversupplies information, albeit cooperatively.

Suggested Revision: "I usually spend around five hours on the weekends with my family."

This is suggested because it directly and precisely answers the examiner's question about quantity (how much time). By focusing only on the temporal estimate, it avoids providing extra details about activities that were not specifically asked for. This makes the response more efficient and directly compliant with the Maxim of Quantity, which advises being as informative as required, no more and no less.

CONCLUSION

Based on the comprehensive analysis of IELTS speaking performances, this study confirms that violations of all four maxims within Grice's Cooperative Principle: Quantity, Quality, Relevance, and Manner, occur in both low-scoring and high-scoring test takers. This aligns with the background premise that conversational rules are often unintentionally violated in various forms of communication, including high-stakes test environments. The primary objective of identifying these violations has been achieved by categorizing 40 total instances across all four candidates. Answering the second research problem, the Maxim of Manner was found to be the most frequently violated maxim overall, accounting for 52.5% of all identified infractions. This indicates that test-takers most often struggle with delivering their message with clarity, precision, and orderliness. Violations of the Maxim of Quantity followed at 22.5%, showing a challenge in providing an appropriate amount of information, while violations of the Maxim of Relevance accounted for 17.5%, stemming from difficulties in maintaining topical focus. The Maxim of Quality was the least violated at 7.5%, suggesting candidates generally

aim for truthfulness.

The most significant finding shows a clear contrast in maxim adherence between the two groups, providing a valuable lesson for future test-takers. The in-depth analysis of low-scoring candidates Mariam Shakbon (Band 5.5) and Irvan Hayak (Band 5.0) revealed distinct patterns of violations. Mariam's performance was marked by a balanced distribution of violations across Maxims of Quantity, Relevance, and Manner, while Irvan's was dominated by an overwhelming 81.3% of violations of the Maxim of Manner. In contrast, high-scoring candidates Catherine Manush (Band 9.0) and Salma Taher (Band 8.0) demonstrated strong adherence. Catherine's only two violations were minor and of the Maxim of Manner, while Salma's few violations were concentrated on the Maxims of Quantity and Relevance, explaining why she achieved a high but not perfect score. Therefore, the ability to minimize unintentional maxim violations, particularly those of Manner, such as practicing grammatical accuracy, reducing disfluency, focusing on precise vocabulary, and structuring your response, are key components of communicative competence that directly contributes to achieving a higher band score in the IELTS speaking test. Future test-takers can learn to improve their scores by practicing strategies that focus on delivering information clearly, sufficiently, and relevantly, thereby mastering the principles of cooperative conversation.

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