Analysis of Conversations in an Iranian High School Textbook: Grecian Maxims in Focus

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Abstract

Available online

Keywords:

Manner,
Maxim,
Quantity,
Quality,
Relevance

Conversation which is a major human activity has been the focus of Grice's maxims in his Cooperative Principle. The aim of the present study was to analyze the conversation section in the Iranian high school textbook entitled, *prospect 3*. To achieve this objective, the required data was elicited from 38 English high school teachers through questionnaires and analyzed via SPSS (V.16). The study used descriptive statistics. The statistical analysis of the data revealed that most of the conversations among students followed the Grecian maxims of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. However, in three conversations speakers violated the maxim of quantity and manner-- the maxim of quantity, maxims of quantity and manner, and maxim of quantity were violated in lessons 1, 2, and 3 respectively.

Introduction

One of the most important human activities is conversation. It involves communication and communicators. The ability to master conversation is a part of the communication skill that a person masters (Noermanzah & Friantary, 2019). Syafryadin, et al. (2019) state that conversation is one main part of speaking action.

People communicate with one another in their daily life. They do not think about how they understand each other. They usually say something, but they mean something else. The difference between what is said and what is meant was Austin's coreidea of his theory of pragmatism. But later Grice tried to systemize how a hearer gets the meaning from what is said. Grice's theory of conversational implicature attempts to show how a person obtains the meaning of what is said, from the expressed meaning to the implied meaning (Thomas 1995). Black (2006) introduced the theory of pragmatics. He presented Grice's theory of conversation implicature or Cooperative Principles--the principle which operates in four maxims: quality, quantity, relevance, and manner. Grice believed that people employ conversation to collaborate and their aim is to communicate meaningfully. He (1975) stated that "make your contribution, such as required, at the stage at which occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talked exchange in which you are engaged", that is, people typically use language to explain their ideas, feelings, and social association. If they follow all the mentioned maxims, they create a harmonious conversation, and if they violate one of the maxims, their conversation is not cooperative. So, Grice's (1975) maxims proposed to speakers and interlocutors to make their conversation sound, meaningful and acceptable.

Literature Review

Interaction is not just word transfer; it is the study of the concept that is conveyed through the conversational exchange, and interpreting the concept in a conversational context where people speak is viewed as pragmatic (Griffith, 2006). Wray & Bloomer (2016) believe that pragmatism is related to the message that is a closet in the conversation. Pragmatics is the study of hidden meaning or what it engaged when it is not expressed or written (Yule 2006).

Cooperative Maxims

The cooperative principle is the basic presumption that is contributed to the purpose of conversation, namely cooperative conversational partners (Papke, 2015). This principle with its four maxims was at first described by the philosopher, Herbert Paul Grice and is often referred to as the 'Gricean Maxims' named, *quantity, quality, relevance,* and *manner.*

Maxim of *quantity* is related to the extent of information in a conversation, and it has two premises as follows:

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required.

2. Don't make your contribution more informative than is required.

Providing sufficient information in a conversation is very important, while additional and unnecessary information may be attractive to the speaker or listener but unnecessary data will confuse the hearer.

Maxim of *quality* is the second guideline. It states, ' Try to make your participation one of the right things. Grice (1989) provided two premises for this maxim as follows:

1. Do not say what you think is wrong.

2. Do not say what you don't have the right evidence for it. People rely upon the cooperative nature of truthfulness in most conversations and believe that their interlocutor is truthful.

The maxim of the *relation* says, "Be relevant" (Grice 1989), that is each turn must be related to the previous turn.Both speaker and hearer are relevant until one of them changes the focus.

The fourth and final maxim is the maxim of *manner*, which is different from others. This maxim focuses on what is said, instead of how it is said. The four sub-maxims under *manner* are: avoid vague expression, avoidambiguity, be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity), and be orderly.

If the speaker's talk is ambiguous, the interlocutor is probably requesting transparency, without clarification hearer cannot understand the vague expression, and it is also impossible for the hearer to distinguish truthfulness. The third sub-maxim 'Be brief' is simple and powerful. If all information is adequate, the speaker and hearer understand each other, no more is needed. The fourth sub-maxim under manner is 'Be orderly'.It is clear that the heart of the conversation is organized, so the organization of the speaker should be rational and linked to the objectiveof the conversation.

According to Yule (1996), it is important to notice that the maxims are assumptions and people try to prepare appropriate information. We think that they are truthful, relevant, and also clear as much as possible. So, we can say that Grice suggested standard behavior in conversation. If speakers follow conversation maxims in different conversations such as meetings or discussions, their communication will be effective and expected. It i s important to know that during teaching and learning some of the maxims flout. This leads the learner to ambiguity and confusion.

There is a complex relationship between maxims and CP. Following Grice, the CP must perceive in exchanges of information and conversation. Gricean conversational maxims are

different from other maxims with which the speaker tries to have the most effective information transfer. He maintains that this kind of conversational practice is standard; (Grice 1989). Telegraphic conversation is not an effective exchange of information, because the hearer's background knowledge and need are important.

Many linguistic works related to the CP and the conversational maxim have been embedded in and focused on the wider theory of implicature (Davies, 2007; Chapman, 2005 for a broad and critical review). In this sense, CP and maxims have been qualified as a logical promotion. Hearers create interpretation and understanding of the speaker's predestinate meaning in real communication.

According to Grice, people think that common conversation should follow these maxims and try to elicit the meaning of speech in which the maxims are violated. Through four procedures: quietly and unostentatiously, by opting out of a maxim, coping with a clash between maxims, and flouting a maxim to exploit it, the four maxims can be violated (Mey 2001,76-77) argues that, Grice's maxims can't be universal and different cultures have different maxims.

Thomas (1995) described maxim violation in which the speakers intentionally produced false implications in a discourse by disobeying a conversational maxim. Papke (2015) believes that violation of maxim arises has several causes, A speaker might violet the quality to mislead the listener. Jorfi (2015) maintains that violation of maxims happens when the maxims are manipulated and, as a result, the speaker deceives the hearer. Another form of violation is called signaling a violation (minorviolation). An individual would possibly appear and inform you that he is breaking a maxim and why? The third type of violation is a maxim clash between two or more maxims; for example, a speaker might violate the maxim of quantity to protect the maxim of quality. The last type of violation is "flouting" a maxim (major violation) to produce a conversational implicature. Here, by breaking the maxim, one can indicate something superior to what is said. Therefore, there must be rules for a good conversation between interlocutors. So, the rule of conversation is a maxim. Cooperative rulesrefer to principles that are used by the speaker and hearer during a conversation; therefore, we can call maxim a cooperative principle, Yule (2014). If interlocutors carry out the maxims, the conversation will be great and communicative.

In the present research, conversation discourse in the English textbook, *prospect 3* was analyzed

to examine the cooperative principle of the conversation among interlocutors and its effects on students' perception of discourseinformation.

Method

The current research used a qualitative design. According to Cresweell (2014),one of the research methods that is focused on describing and analyzing data is qualitative design. Here, the needed data was derived from 38 English teachers through questionnaires and analyzed via SPSS (V.16).

Participants

A Total number of 38 Iranian teachers participated in this study.

Instrument

In order to gather data, questionnaires were distributed among the participants. They answered the questionnaires willingly and consciously. The questionnaires included 7 questions for each lesson. The questionnaires consist of sections on a) Quantity b) Quality c) Relevance, and d) Manner.

Model

The conversations under investigation were analyzed based on the Gricean maxim model. The results are as follows:

Maxims	Lesson 1	Explanations
quantity	He is really great he is clever and kind He is always very helpful.	These sentences areinformative, and give as much information as is needed.
quality	And he's always helpful it's always helped me with my lessons.	He is truthful. He gives informationwith evidence.
relevance	Who is your best friend?what's he like? Is he hard working now?First question Second question third question forth question	These questions arerelevant to the topic and answers are relative too. They are pertinent to thediscussion
Manner	Reza He always helps me withmy lessons	They speak as brief asorderly but there is anambiguity. Reza's last name. which lessons?It is not clear.
Maxims	Lesson 3	Explanations

quantity	- I just love the new year's holiday, me too. It's really great. -We normally visit our relatives in Norooz. it's fun.	Their answers are as informative as required. The third sentence has not required information.
quality	Do you get a new year's gift? Sure, we usually get money.	She answered thoroughly and said that (I really likedit).
relevance	-I just love new year -Visit relatives in Norooz - New year's gift -We usually get money -Does your grandmother cook a new year's meal?	This conversation showsthat questions and answers are related and talking about topic Norooz.
Manner	Does your grandmother cookthe New year's meal? Actually, my mother makes it.	There is no ambiguity in this conversation answers and questions are clear. These sentences (we should go to me grandparents' house) should be replaced by (Do you get new year gifts) to follow the order in conversation.
Maxims	**Lesson 6**	**Explanations**
quantity	Do you want to come? I don't think so, I don't like a school trip, last summer <u>I fell and broke my leg.</u> Can you give me some advice?Sure	Maxim of quantity isbroken down Reza didn't ask why hedoesn't like a school trip. There is more information in his answer.
quality	Ehsan: I don't like the school trip, last summer. I fell and broke my leg. Reza: I twisted my uncle last winter I stayed at home for two weeks. Ehsan: That's too bad. I didn't know that.	There is truthfulness in their conversation.
relevance	We plan to go to the lake.I don't like a school trip. I fell and bake my leg. Reza: I twisted my uncle last winter.I stay at home for two weeks. Reza: After that, I participated in Helale Ahmar first aid class.	There is a relation between questions and answers in the conversation and, a relevant maxim can beseen.
Manner	We plan to go to the lake.Do you want to come? I don't think so, I don't like a school	There is no ambiguity inthis conversation. There is no extrainformation. Questions and answersare orderly.

trip, last summer I fell and broke my leg.
It sometimes happens, I twisted my uncle last winter.
I participated in first aid class.
I learn how to take care of myself.
I like that can you give me some advice.

Conversation 1

Lesson 1: Personality

Listen to the conversation between two cousins.Ehsan: Who is your best friend at school?

Parham: Reza.

Ehsan What's he like?

Parham: Oh, he is really great! He's clever and kind.Ehsan: Is he hard-working too?

Parham: Yes! And he's always very helpful.Ehsan: How?

Parham: He always helps me with my lessons.

Maxims of conversation 1

It follows the maxim of quantity because both speakers give enoughinformation as is required.

It follows the maxim of quality both of the speakers say the truth.

It follows the maxim of relevant questions and answers were relevant.

It follows the maxim of manner there is no ambiguity in their speakingand it is an orderly conversation.

Conversation 3

Lesson 3: Festivals and Ceremonies

Listen to the conversation between two friends.Elham: I just love the New Year holidays!

Nasrin: Oh, yes, me too. It's really great.

Elham: We normally visit our relatives in Norooz. It's fun!Nasrin: Do you get New Year gifts too?

Elham: Sure! We usually get money. I really like it. Nasrin: Well..., We always go to my grandparents' houses.

Elham: That's nice! Does your grandmother cook the New Year's meal?Nasrin: Actually, she doesn't. My mother makes it.

Maxims of conversation 3

It follows the maxim of quantity because of enough information in this conversation. It follows the maxim of quality, the speaker answers truly. It follows the maxim of the relevant speech talking about Norooz and their utterances are relevant.

It follows the maxim of manner. There is no ambiguity in this conversation but it doesn't obey the sub-maxim orderly. It is better to replace the sentence, "we go always to my grandparents' house" with "Doyou get new year gifts?" Conversation 6.

Lesson 6: Health and Injuries

Listen to the conversation between two friends. Reza: We plan to go to the lake. Do you want to come?Ehsan: I don't think so. I don't like school trips. Last summer I fell and broke my leg.

Reza: It sometimes happens. I twisted my ankle last winter. I stayed homefor two weeks!

Ehsan: That's too bad! I didn't know that.

Reza: Yeah..., but after that, I participated in Helal-e-Ahmar first aidclasses. I learned how to take care of myself.

Ehsan: I like that. Can you give me some advice?Reza: Sure!

Maxims of conversation 6

It breaks down the maxim of quantity. In this conversation Reza doesn't ask "why he doesn't like school trips?" but Ehsan talked about it.

It follows the maxim of quality because its discourse is honest. They don'ttell lie, they are truthful.

It follows the maxim of relevance; they speak about a single topic and there is a correlation between the question and answer.

Data analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics. As a result, four factors were derived from 7 items for each lesson. The data were collected via questionnaires and analyzed via SPSS (V.16) The study used descriptive statistics. Each question of the questionnaire were analyzed separately.

There are three options for answering the questions, "I agree", "I have no opinions", and "I disagree".
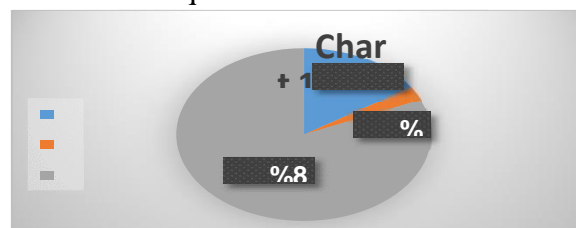
Option 1 for "I agree"

Option 2 for "I have no opinions" Option 3 for "I disagree"

Lesson 1

Quantity

Question 1-Lesson 1: There is enough information in the questions and answers.

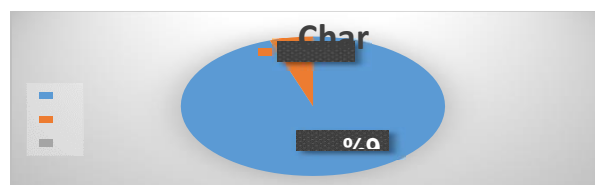|		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	6	15.8
	2	1	2.6
	3	31	81.6
	Total	38	100.0

As can be seen, the third option with 31 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (81.6%) opposed question1.

Quantity

1- Question 2- Lesson 1: The speaker does not provide additional information to the listener.

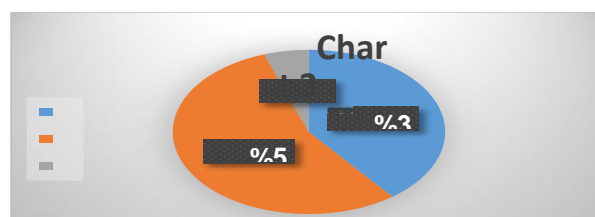|		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	36	94.7
	2	2	5.3
	Total	38	100.0

As can be seen, the first option with 36 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people 94.7% agree with question 2.

Quality

2- Question 3- Lesson 1: There is no false information between the speaker and the listener in

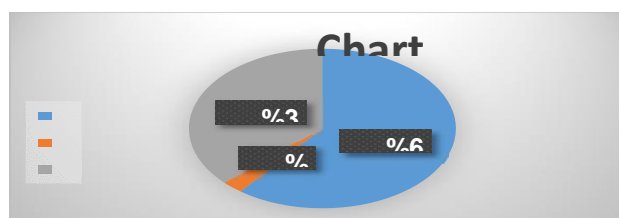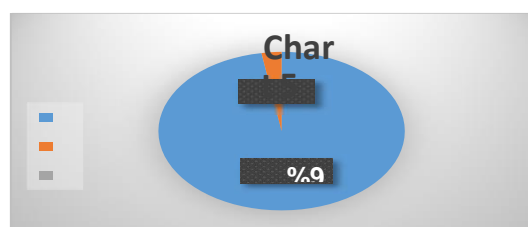|		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	15	39.5
	2	21	55.2
	3	2	5.3
	Total	38	100.0

the conversation.

As can be seen, the second option with 21 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (55.2%) have no opinion about question 3.

Quality

3- Question 4- Lesson 1: The speaker's response to the listener is basedon evidence.

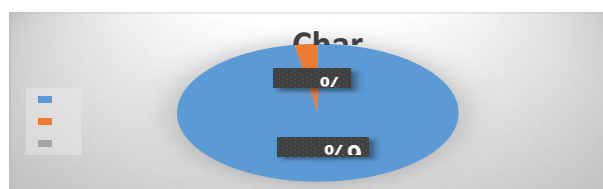|		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	23	60.5
	2	1	2.6
	3	14	36.9
	Total	38	100.0

As can be seen, the first option with 23 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (60.5%) agree with question 4.

Relevance

4- Question 5- Lesson 1: The speaker and listener talk about the sametopic.

|		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	37	97.4
	2	1	2.6
	Total	38	100.0

As can be seen, the first option with 37 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (97.4%) agree with question 5.

Relevance

5- Question 6- Lesson 1: The speaker and listener speak clearly.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	37	97.4
	2	1	2.6
	Total	38	100.0

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As can be seen, the first option with 37 people has the most opinions,which shows that the majority of people 97.4% agree with question 6.
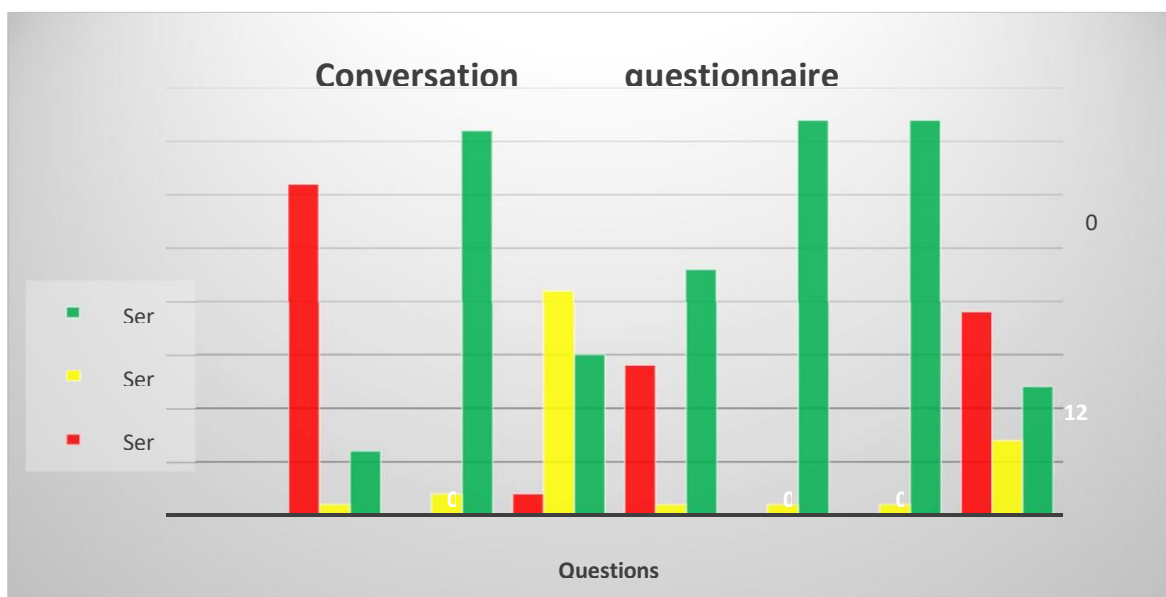
Manner

6- Question 7- Lesson 1: There is no ambiguity in the conversationbetween the listener and the speaker.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	12	31.6
	2	7	18.4
	3	19	50
	Total	38	100.0
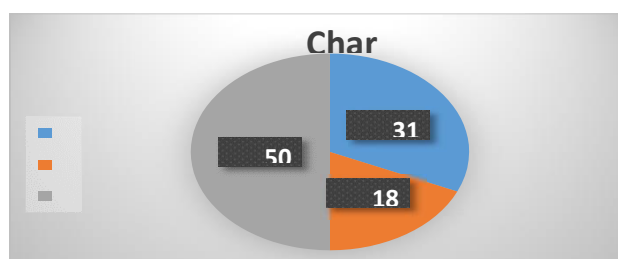
As can be seen, the third option with 19 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (50%) are opposed to question 7.

Graph 1

In the above diagram series1 with green color as "agree", series 2 with yellow color as "no opinions", and series3 with red color as "disagree".

According to the above diagram (Graph 1), about 3.7 of the participants (62.37%) had a positive opinion about the conversation questionnaire lesson 1, about 9.4 of the participants (24.74%) had a negative opinion, and about 4.9 of the participants (12.89%) had no opinions.

Lesson 3

Quantity

7- Question 1-Lesson 3: There is enough information in the questionsand answers.

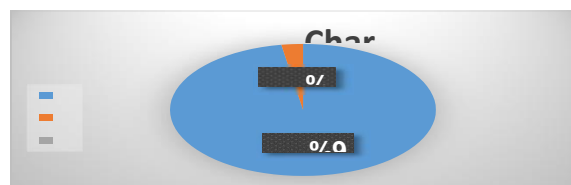|		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	14	36.9
	2	1	2.6
	3	23	60.5
	Total	38	100.0

Char
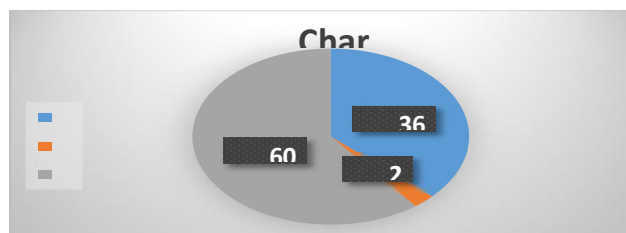
As can be seen, the third option with 23 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (60.5%) are opposed to question 8.

Quantity

8- Question 2- Lesson 3: The speaker does not provide additionalinformation to the listener.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	37	97.4
	2	1	2.6
	Total	38	100.0

Char

As can be seen, the first option with 37 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (97.4%) agree with question 9.

Quality

9- Question 3- Lesson 3: There is no false information between thespeaker and the listener in the conversation.

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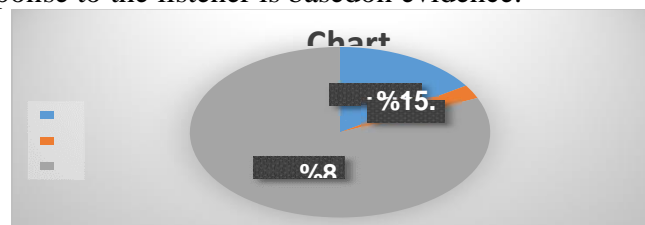|		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	14	36.9
	2	1	2.6
	3	23	60.5
	Total	38	100.0

Chart
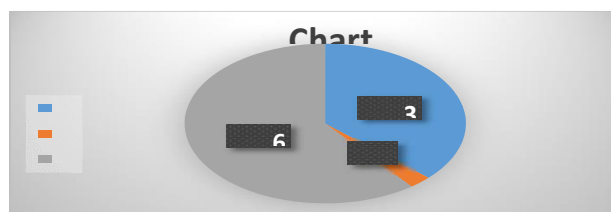
As can be seen, the third option with 23 respondents has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (60.5%) are opposed to question 10.

Quality

10- Question 4- Lesson 3: The speaker's response to the listener is basedon evidence.

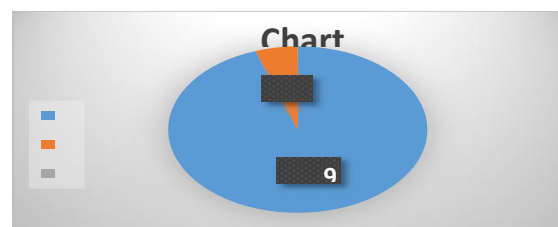|		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	6	15.8
	2	1	2.6
	3	31	81.6
	Total	38	100.0

Chart

As can be seen, the third option with 31 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (81.6%) are opposed to question 11.

Relevance

11- Question 5- Lesson 3: The speaker and listener talk about the sametopic.

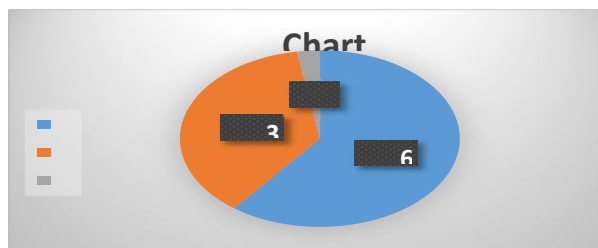|		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	36	94.7
	2	2	5.3
	Total	38	100.0

Chart

As can be seen, the first option with 36 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (94.7%) agree with question 12.

Relevance

12- Question 6- Lesson 3: The speaker and listener speak clearly.

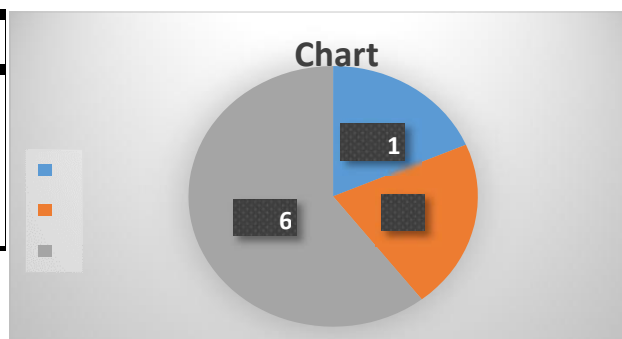|		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	23	60.5
	2	14	36.9
	3	1	2.6
	Total	38	100.0

As can be seen, the first option with 23 people has the most opinions,which shows that the majority of people (60.5%) agree with question 13.
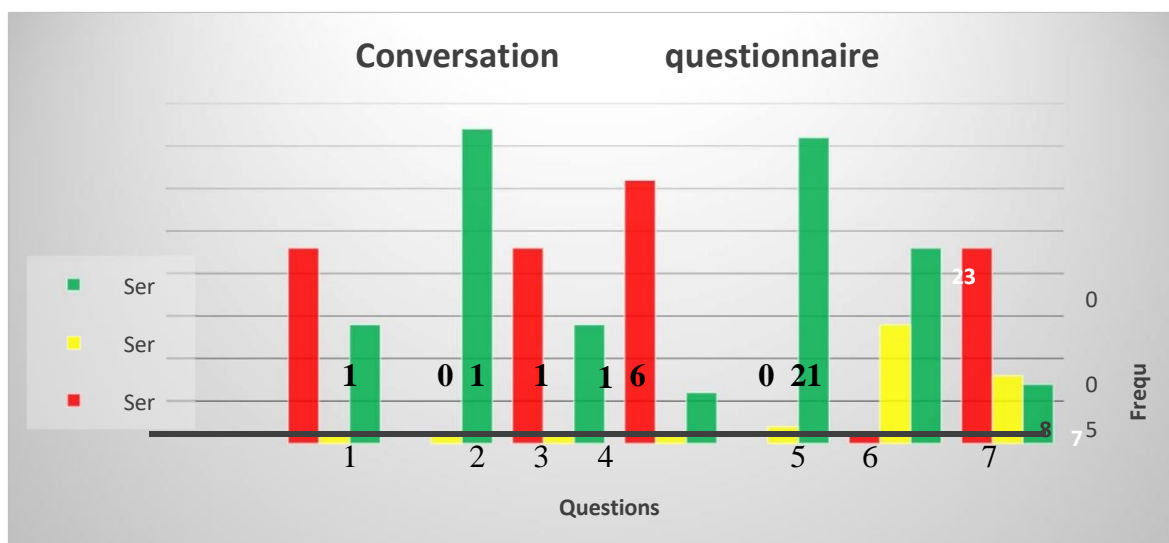
Manner

13- Question 7- Lesson 3: There is no ambiguity in the conversationbetween the listener and the speaker.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	7	18.5
	2	8	21
	3	23	60.5
	Total	38	100.0

As can be seen, the third option with 23 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (60.5%) are opposed to question14.

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In the above diagram series1 with green color as "agree", series 2 with yellow color as "no opinions", and series 3 with red color as "disagree".

According to the above diagram (Graph 2), about 19.6 of the participants (51.58%) had a positive opinion about the conversation questionnaire lesson 3, about 14.4 of the participants (37.89%) had a negative opinion, and about 4.0 of the participants (10.53%) had no opinions.

Lesson 6

Quantity

14- Question 1-Lesson 6: There is enough information in the questionsand answers.

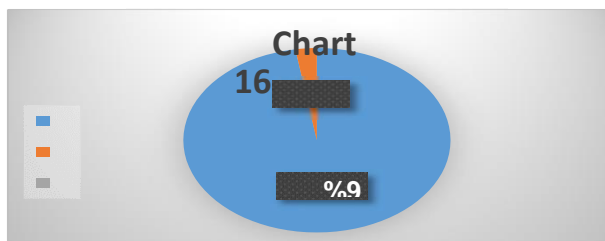|		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	14	36.9
	2	1	2.6
	3	23	60.5
	Total	38	100.0
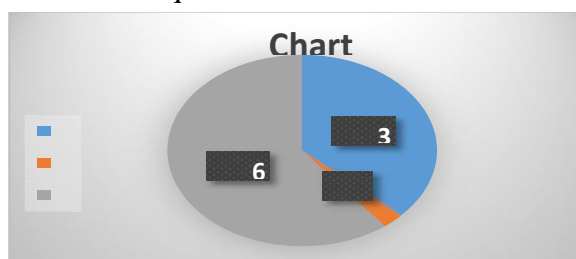
As can be seen, the third option with 23 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (60.5%) are opposed to question 15.

Quantity

15- Question 2- Lesson 6: The speaker does not provide additionalinformation to the listener.

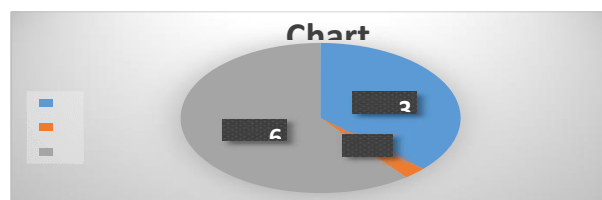|		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	37	97.4
	2	1	2.6
	Total	38	100.0

As can be seen, the first option with 37 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (97.4%) agree with question 16.

Quality

16- Question 3- Lesson 6: There is no false information between thespeaker and the listener in the conversation.

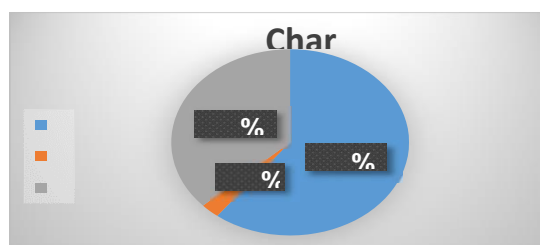|		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	14	36.9
	2	1	2.6
	3	23	60.5
	Total	38	100.0

As can be seen, the third option with 23 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (60.5%) are opposed to question 17.

Quality

17- Question 4- Lesson 6: The speaker's response to the listener is basedon evidence.

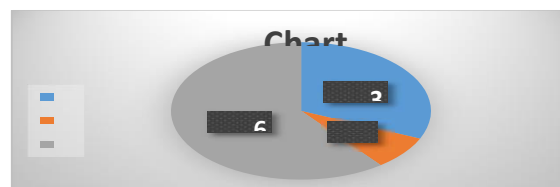|		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	23	60.5
	2	1	2.6
	3	14	36.9
	Total	38	100.0

As can be seen, the first option with 23 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (60.5%) agree with question 18.

Relevance

18- Question 5- Lesson 6: The speaker and listener talk about the sametopic.

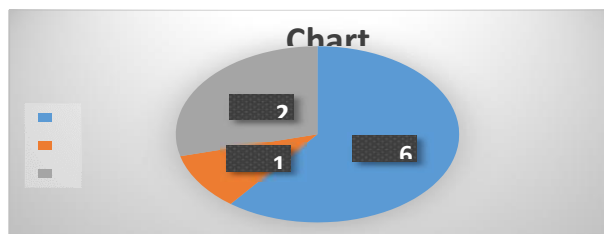|		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	12	31.6
	2	3	7.9
	3	23	60.5
	Total	38	100.0

As can be seen, the third option with 23 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (60.5%) are opposed to question 19.

Relevance

19- Question 6- Lesson 6: The speaker and listener speak clearly.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	23	60.5
	2	4	10.5
	3	11	29
	Total	38	100.0

Chart
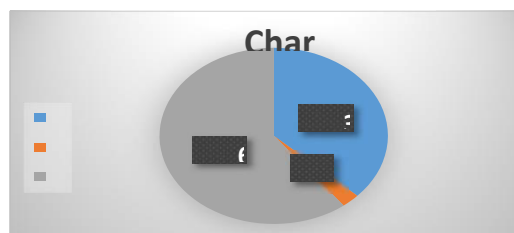
As can be seen, the first option with 23 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (60.5%) agree with question 20.

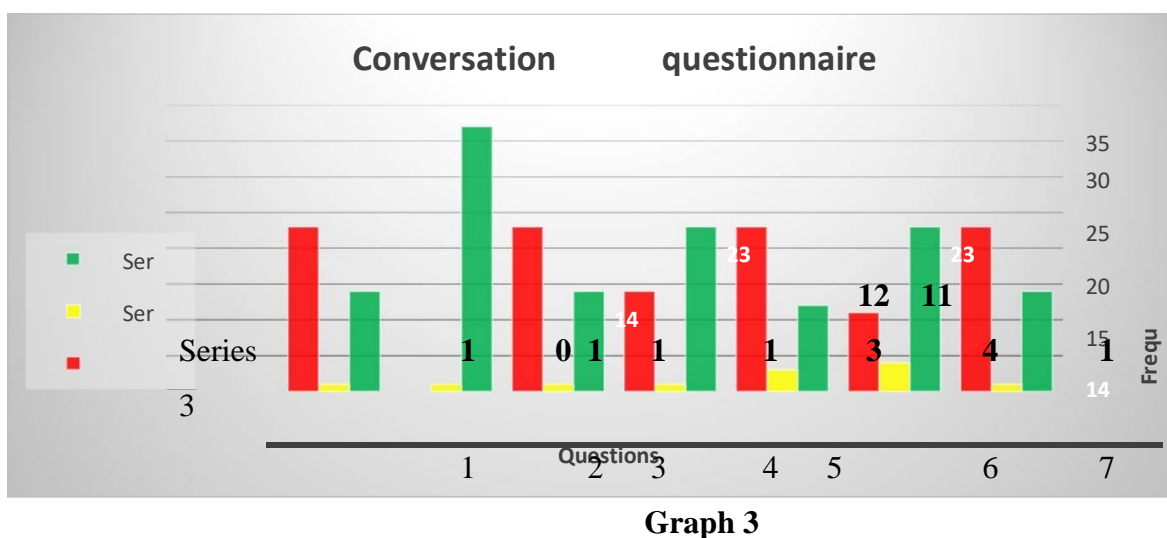**Manner**

20- Question 7- Lesson 6: There is no ambiguity in the conversationbetween the listener and the speaker.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	14	36.9
	2	1	2.6
	3	23	60.5
	Total	38	100.0

Char

As can be seen, the third option with 23 people has the most opinions, which shows that the majority of people (60.5%) are opposed to question 21.

Graph 3

In the above diagram series1 with green color as "agree", series 2 with yellow color as "no opinions", and series3 with red color as "disagree".

According to the above diagram (Graph 3), about 19.6 of the participants (51.58%) had a positive opinion about the conversation questionnaire lesson 6, about 16.7 of the participants (43.95%) had a negative opinion, and about 1.7 of the participants (4.47%) had no opinions

Lessons No. Maxims	L.1	L.3	L.6	Percentageof each Maxim in lessons
Quantity	--	*	*	66.66 %
Quality	--	--	--	0.0 %
Relevant	--	--	--	0.0 %
Manner	*	*	--	66.66 %
Percentage of Maxims in each lesson	25 %	50 %	25 %	

According to the above table, in lesson one 25%, in lesson three 50%, and in lesson six 25% violation of the maxim was found, and the total violation in these three lessons, for the maxim of quantity is 66.66%, and for the maxim of manner is 66.66%.

Discussion and Conclusion

Conversation is one of the skills involved in communication. In conversation, it is important to provide sufficientinformation. extra information is interesting for the speaker and hearer but they do not add to the running goal of the dialogic change. In the current study, the author analyzed the conversation between two students in each lesson of *prospect 3,* based on conversational maxims.

The results showed that in lesson 1 conversation, the maxim of quantity, in lesson 3 conversation the maxims of quantity and manner, and in lesson 6 conversation the maxim of quantity have been violated.

According to Mey (2001) and Yule (2014), a good conversation does not break down any maxims, and as a result, misunderstanding does not come about between the speaker and hearer.

Based on the findings of this study, most of the conversations in the investigated material follow the maxims (quantity - quality - relevance - manner). It means that the speakers' answers to the questions were informative as required and that the interlocutors did not say what was false – they were truthful. Additionally, questions and answers were relevant to the conversation and the interlocutors talked about the subject of the conversation. They avoided ambiguity in their conversation, did not use prolixity, and were brief.

Finally, it is to be noted that the analysis of the conversations in prospects 1 and 2 based on the basis of Gricean maxims would provide a more vivid picture of following or violation of such maxims. Thus, these conversations need to be modified.

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