

AN ANALYSIS OF FLOUTING MAXIM IN *OPERATION FORTUNE: RUSE DE GUERRE* (2023) FILM

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ABSTRACT

Film dialogue frequently reflects strategic language use in which speakers intentionally flout conversational maxims to convey implicit meanings. This phenomenon is particularly evident in spy-action films, where high-risk situations and covert interactions often require indirect and context-dependent communication. Accordingly, this study aims to identify the types of conversational maxims flouted by the characters in *Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre* (2023) and examine the conversational implicatures generated through these instances of maxim flouting. This study employs a qualitative descriptive method with a pragmatic approach. The data consist of the characters' utterances containing instances of conversational maxim flouting, which are analyzed using Grice's Cooperative Principle, encompassing the maxims of quantity, quality, relation, and manner. The findings reveal nineteen instances of maxim flouting across all four conversational maxims. Among these, the maxim of relation is the most frequently flouted, accounting for twelve instances that generate implicatures related to situational control and coded communication. The maxim of manner follows with three instances, through which speakers establish boundaries, employ sarcasm, and communicate indirectly. The maxims of quantity and quality each occur twice; the former is used to persuade the hearer and assert authority through indirect threats, while the latter enables speakers to express emotions and preserve their self-image. These findings demonstrate that conversational maxim flouting functions as a strategic pragmatic device, allowing characters to communicate implicitly while maintaining secrecy, managing interpersonal relationships, and achieving operational objectives in high-stakes contexts.

Keywords: flouting maxims, pragmatics, implicature, film

ABSTRAK

Dialog dalam film sering kali mencerminkan penggunaan bahasa yang strategis, di mana penutur secara sengaja melanggar maksim percakapan untuk menyampaikan makna tersirat. Fenomena ini sangat terlihat dalam film laga bertema spionase, yang situasi berisiko tinggi dan interaksi terselubungnya kerap menuntut komunikasi tidak langsung serta bergantung pada konteks. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi jenis-jenis maksim percakapan yang dilanggar oleh para karakter dalam film *Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre* (2023) serta menganalisis implikatur percakapan yang muncul akibat pelanggaran maksim tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan pendekatan pragmatik. Data penelitian terdiri atas tuturan karakter yang memuat pelanggaran maksim percakapan, yang dianalisis menggunakan Prinsip Kerja Sama Grice, mencakup maksim kuantitas, kualitas, relevansi, dan cara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya sembilan belas kejadian pelanggaran yang tersebar pada keempat maksim percakapan tersebut. Di antaranya, maksim relevansi adalah yang paling sering dilanggar—sebanyak dua belas kejadian—yang menghasilkan implikatur terkait pengendalian situasi dan komunikasi bersandi. Maksim cara menempati urutan berikutnya dengan tiga kejadian; melalui maksim ini, penutur menetapkan batasan, menggunakan sarkasme, dan berkomunikasi secara tidak langsung. Maksim kuantitas dan kualitas masing-masing muncul dua kali; maksim kuantitas digunakan untuk membujuk lawan bicara dan menegaskan otoritas melalui ancaman terselubung, sedangkan maksim kualitas memungkinkan penutur untuk mengungkapkan emosi dan menjaga citra diri. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa pelanggaran maksim percakapan berfungsi sebagai sarana pragmatik strategis yang memungkinkan karakter berkomunikasi secara tersirat sembari menjaga kerahasiaan, mengelola hubungan antarpribadi, dan mencapai tujuan operasional dalam situasi yang penuh risiko tinggi.

Kata kunci: pelanggaran maksim, pragmatik, implikatur, film

A. INTRODUCTION

Human communication often relies not only on what is explicitly stated but also on meanings inferred from context. Consequently, speakers may intentionally depart from conversational norms to convey implicit messages while still expecting listeners to understand their intended meaning. These rules guide how individuals adjust their utterances based on social relationships, context, and relative status, allowing communication to be more effective and meaningful (Florentina & Ambalegin, 2022). In line with this, the cooperative principle proposed by Grice (1989) emphasizes that speakers are expected to contribute appropriately to the ongoing conversation to achieve mutual understanding. However, in communication, speakers do not always fully follow these principles. In some cases, speakers intentionally do not observe conversational maxims to convey implied meanings. Although communication may still continue, such implied meanings can sometimes lead to misunderstanding because not all listeners are able to interpret the intended message correctly. This shows that human communication is not always straightforward and often involves indirect meanings beyond literal expressions. Nevertheless, the speaker still hopes the listener can understand their intention even if the cooperative principle has been flouted. One form of non-observance of conversational maxims is flouting. Flouting a maxim occurs when a speaker deliberately fails to observe a maxim with the intention of generating an implied meaning that the listener is expected to interpret (Grice, 1989). Unlike other forms of non-observance such as violating or opting out, flouting does not aim to deceive but rather encourages the hearer to understand the hidden meaning behind the utterance (Thomas, 2013).

The use of flouting maxims can be observed in various forms of discourse, including literary works such as films. The dialogues in films often represent natural interactions between individuals in various social contexts, including how conversational principles are followed or flouted. One of the films that presents such communication phenomena is *Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre* (2023), a spy action film directed by Guy Ritchie. The film follows Orson Fortune and his team in a mission to stop the sale of dangerous weapons technology. To complete their mission, they also involve a Hollywood actor as part of their operation. This film is chosen because it presents interactions among characters in high-risk and mission-oriented situations, where communication plays a crucial role. In such contexts, characters deliberately flout conversational maxims to convey hidden meanings. Therefore, analyzing these utterances can provide deeper insight into how implied meanings are constructed in real communicative events represented in films.

Previous studies have examined flouting maxims in various contexts such as movies and talk shows. Rabecca H. Lubis and Nasution (2021) investigated flouting maxims in *The Edge of Seventeen* Movie and found that the main character frequently flouted the maxim of quantity, producing various perlocutionary effects on other characters. Marlisa and Hidayat (2020) analyzed flouting maxims in *Good Morning America (GMA) Talk Show* and found that Jackie Chan often flouted maxims due to expressiveness and conversational engagement. Firdaus and Simatupang (2024) examined flouting maxims in *Inside Out* (2015) Film and focused on the

functions of flouting, such as competitive and collaborative purposes. Although these studies provide valuable insights, they mainly focus on types, reasons, and functions of flouting maxims, there is still limited discussion on the implied or hidden meanings generated from flouting maxims, particularly in the context of action spy films where characters frequently communicate indirectly to achieve operational objectives. Unlike everyday conversations, interactions in espionage contexts often involve secrecy, deception, negotiation, and covert coordination, making speakers more likely to flout conversational maxims to generate implicatures rather than express their intentions explicitly. One of the films that present the espionage context is *Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre* (2023). The film features interactions among intelligence agents, criminals, and intermediaries whose differing roles, objectives, and relationships create diverse communicative situations that require context-dependent interpretation. Accordingly, this study seeks to address the existing research gap by investigating how conversational maxims are flouted and how these instances give rise to conversational implicatures in the context of action spy films.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Film

Film is a work of art that describes a story, mood, or feeling through sound and moving images (Hornby, 2006). Film serves as a form of entertainment that provides amusement and a break from everyday life by presenting stories, emotions, and situations through visual and audio elements. Furthermore, Klarer (2004) states that film has become a semi-textual medium, meaning that it combines written dialogue or narration with visual and audio elements that are essential for understanding the work. Film can also be considered a literary work because it shares characteristics with written texts. Therefore, films and literary works can be analyzed using similar approaches, as both are narrative forms that aim to tell stories.

2. Pragmatics

Pragmatics deals with the study of what meaning the speaker intends to the listener based on context and how that context affects meaning. Yule (1996) states that the main focus of pragmatics is on interpreting the intent behind utterances, not the literal meaning of spoken words. Pragmatics deals with the study of what meaning the speaker intends to the listener based on context and how that context affects meaning, where meaning is determined by the context of the language used by the speaker (Leech, 1983). Pragmatics studies how people use language in specific contexts focusing on the interaction between speakers and what meaning they create through the use of language.

3. Cooperative Principle

Grice's Cooperative Principle emphasizes that contributions in conversation should be relevant and meaningful to the purpose of the interaction, ensuring that each utterance supports mutual understanding and advances the goals of communication (Grice, 1989). It explains how speakers are expected to provide appropriate information by following certain rules so that communication can run effectively and be clearly understood by all participants. Grice proposes four maxims of effective communication, namely Maxim of Quantity, Maxim of Quality, Maxim of Relation, and Maxim of Manner.

a. Maxim of Quantity

Maxim of Quantity is a rule where the speaker must provide enough information, no less and no more than required by the listener.

b. Maxim of Quality

Maxim of Quality is the principle that obligates a speaker to share information that is authentic, verifiable, and based on truth.

c. Maxim of Relation

Maxim of Relation requires speakers to make their contributions relevant to the ongoing conversation, ensuring that communication focuses on information that is directly related to the topic being discussed.

d. Maxim of Manner

Maxim of Manner is a principle that states that speakers should convey information in a straightforward, precise, and organized way, without causing confusion or misinterpretation.

4. Flouting Maxim

Flouting of maxims occurs when speakers deliberately and overtly fail to observe the Cooperative Principle, not to deceive but to encourage listeners to infer implied meanings beyond the literal utterance (Grice, 1975). Cutting and Fordyce (2021) further state that speakers may intentionally breach conversational principles while expecting listeners to understand the intended meaning. The flouting of maxims is divided into four categories, which include Flouting of Maxim of Quantity, Flouting of Maxim of Quality, Flouting of Maxim of Relation, and Flouting of Maxim of Manner.

a. Flouting Maxim of Quantity

Flouting Maxim of Quantity is when the speaker provides more or less the required information.

b. Flouting Maxim of Quality

Flouting Maxim of Quality occurs when the speaker gives information that is not true, does not match the facts, or does not have evidence.

c. Flouting Maxim of Relation

Flouting Maxim of Relation happens when the speaker gives a response or comment that is clearly not related to the topic of conversation.

d. Flouting Maxim of Manner

Flouting Maxim of Manner occurs when the speaker says something unclear, ambiguous, or out of order to make the listener feel confused to understand the speech of the speaker.

C. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method with a pragmatic approach. Qualitative research is a type of empirical study that relies on descriptive rather than quantitative data (Punch, 1998). A pragmatic approach was applied because this study focuses on how meaning is conveyed and interpreted in context, particularly through the flouting of conversational maxims and the implied meanings behind the characters' utterances. The data consisted of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences containing flouting maxims. The data were obtained from *Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre*, a spy action film directed by Guy Ritchie, released in 2023, with a duration of 1 hour and 53 minutes, which was watched on CatchPlay+.

The researcher served as the primary research instrument in collecting and analyzing the data. Data were collected through observation by watching the film repeatedly, identifying utterances containing flouting maxims, taking notes, and classifying the data according to Grice's four conversational maxims. The data were then analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction stage, the researcher selected utterances containing flouting maxims. In the data display stage, the selected utterances were organized and presented narratively based on the types of flouting maxims and the implied meanings they conveyed. Finally, in the conclusion drawing stage, the researcher summarized the findings to answer the research question regarding the types of flouting maxims and the implied meanings conveyed by the characters in the film.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of flouting maxims in *Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre* (2023). The findings identify the types of flouting maxims in the characters' utterances and the implicatures they produce, while the discussion provides interpretation and explanation of the analyzed data.

1. Findings

The analysis shows that the characters in *Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre* (2023) flout all four Gricean maxims, namely Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. The data are presented with the conversational context, followed by dialogue excerpts in which the utterances indicating flouting are highlighted in bold, and an analysis of how the flouting of the maxim produces implicatures.

a. Flouting Maxim of Quantity

The interaction happens when Mr. Knighton wants to know the members of the team assigned to carry out the mission. Nathan introduces Sarah as the replacement for John, the team's former communication expert. John has left the team and joined Mike's team, which is their rival. Remembering that Sarah had previously worked with Mike, Mr. Knighton questions Nathan about her background.

NATHAN	: I have a rather fabulous replacement for Comms John. An American, much more versatile and creative. Sarah Fidel.
MR. KNIGHTON	: Didn't she work with Mike?
NATHAN	: Mike, consistent with his character, abandoned her in Beirut, which is where I picked her up.
MR. KNIGHTON	: Any other footmen?
NATHAN	: Yes, this young man, JJ Davies.

(Ritchie, 2023, 00:07:22)

Nathan flouts the Maxim of Quantity by providing more information than required. Instead of simply confirming that Sarah had previously worked with Mike, he adds that Mike, consistent with his character, abandoned her in Beirut. This statement shows that the action is not

something new, but rather something that has happened repeatedly. Nathan also explains that he found Sarah in that condition. Since this information is not required to answer Mr. Knighton's question, Nathan provides more information than necessary and therefore flouts the Maxim of Quantity.

The implicature of Nathan's utterance is that Sarah is a credible and competent candidate for the position of communication expert despite her previous association with Mike. At the same time, Nathan undermines Mike by highlighting his tendency to abandon his team members. By emphasizing Sarah's ability to survive and continue working after being abandoned, Nathan portrays her as experienced and reliable. Through this utterance, Nathan seeks to convince Mr. Knighton that Sarah is a trustworthy and capable addition to the team.

b. Flouting Maxim of Quality

This scene occurs during the chaotic aftermath of a transaction involving The Handle, when Orson is forced to impersonate Ben Harris after accidentally killing him earlier in the mission. During the mission, Orson's identity is eventually revealed, triggering a violent confrontation. As chaos erupts, Mike arrives by chopper in an attempt to seize The Handle and disrupt the mission once again. With JJ providing support by shooting enemies from a distance, Orson escapes by car while carrying The Handle. On the way, he is surrounded by Mike's men, and he gets out of the car, takes one of their radios, and directly asks whether Mike is up there in the chopper. Mike responds that Orson sounds upset, to which Orson replies, "Don't you worry about me, Mike. I'm having a lovely time."

ORSON : Are you up there in the chopper, Mike?

MIKE : Orson, you sound upset.

ORSON : Don't you worry about me, Mike. **I'm having a lovely time.**

(Ritchie, 2023, 01:20:45)

Orson's utterance in this dialogue flouts the Maxim of Quality when responding to Mike. The statement "I'm having a lovely time" clearly contradicts the actual situation, which is chaotic and dangerous, so the utterance is not truthful. Therefore, Orson flouts the Maxim of Quality because he intentionally says something untrue to express sarcasm toward Mike.

The implicature of Orson's utterance is that he is actually angry and frustrated with Mike for interfering with and ruining his mission. Although Orson literally states that he is having a lovely time, the context clearly indicates the opposite meaning. Through this sarcastic response, Orson implicitly conveys that he is not enjoying the situation and is highly annoyed by Mike's actions.

c. Flouting Maxim of Relation

The dialogue occurs when Orson and JJ are monitoring Qasim Amari's movements while waiting for further developments in the operation. During the surveillance, Qasim Amari is observed leaving his office building, purchasing a coffee, and briefly placing a document on top of a trash can lid before leaving the location. The situation becomes more suspicious when one of Ben Harris's men arrives and retrieves the document that was left on top of a trash can lid,

indicating its potential importance in the ongoing operation. At this moment, JJ asks whether they should proceed with their next move.

ORSON : Oh, hello. We've seen him before.
JJ : Shall we?
ORSON : **I get the ice creams, you get the wheel.**

(Ritchie, 2023, 01:01:57)

JJ expects a straightforward yes or no answer, or at least a direct confirmation of their next move. Instead, Orson gives an irrelevant response by stating that he will get the ice cream while instructing JJ to get behind the wheel. Thus, Orson flouts the Maxim of Relation because his utterance does not provide a relevant response to JJ's question.

The implicature of Orson's utterance is that he will follow Ben Harris's man on foot while JJ will pursue the target by car. The phrase "get the ice cream" functions as a coded expression for moving discreetly on foot, while "get the wheel" signals JJ to drive the vehicle. Although the utterance appears irrelevant on the surface, JJ is able to interpret it correctly due to their shared operational context, in which such expressions function as coordinated instructions during the pursuit.

d. Flouting Maxim of Manner

The following conversation takes place when the team is on a plane heading to Los Angeles to meet Danny Francesco, Greg Simmonds's favorite movie star, as part of their plan to continue the mission in Cannes, France, where they will attend a charity fundraising event organized by Greg on a yacht. They need Danny to ensure that the mission can proceed smoothly. After hearing the plan, Nathan asks how Danny can help them.

ORSON : Greg Simmonds's favorite movie star, Danny Francesco.
NATHAN : And how does that get us in?
ORSON : **You can't catch this fish with conventional rules. Greg wants what everyone wants. What they can't have.**

(Ritchie, 2023, 00:18:40)

In response to Nathan's question, Orson does not provide a clear and straightforward explanation. Instead, he states that Greg cannot be approached using conventional methods and that Greg desires something that not everyone can have. Thus, Orson flouts the Maxim of Manner because his utterance is not expressed in a clear and direct way.

The implicature of Orson's utterance suggests that Danny will be used as a means to gain access to the yacht without raising suspicion. In addition, Danny's presence as Greg's favorite actor is expected to divert Greg's attention, allowing the team to move more freely.

2. Discussion

Based on the findings presented in the previous section, it can be observed that the characters in the film *Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre* (2023) deliberately flout Grice's conversational

maxims to convey implied meanings that go beyond the literal interpretation of their utterances. This supports Grice's (1989) view that flouting a maxim leads the hearer to infer implicatures rather than interpret utterances literally. The results of this research show that all four conversational maxims are flouted by the characters, with the Maxim of Relation being the most frequently flouted, occurring in twelve instances. This predominance reflects the communicative demands of the spy-action genre, where characters frequently operate in situations involving secrecy, surveillance, deception, and high-risk decision-making. These responses are not random, but serve specific communicative purposes, particularly to control the situation. In several interactions, characters deliberately provide irrelevant answers because direct responses may escalate tension or complicate the situation. Instead, they shift the topic to reduce tension or redirect attention. As Anjani et al. (2021) explain, speakers who appear uncooperative may still have underlying intentions, showing that flouting the Maxim of Relation is a strategic communicative choice rather than a failure.

Furthermore, the Maxim of Relation is also flouted as a form of coded communication to maintain operational security. Utterances that appear irrelevant on the surface function as instructions understood only by interlocutors sharing the same situational context. This allows communication to remain efficient while protecting sensitive information, since the intended meaning is accessible only to those with relevant background knowledge (Noviantika et al., 2026).

Following the dominant flouting of the Maxim of Relation, the Maxim of Manner is flouted in three instances in the film. This occurs when characters produce utterances that are unclear, ambiguous, or not straightforward. However, the characters do not fail to express meaning, instead, they intentionally make their utterances less direct to generate implicatures with specific functions. This finding aligns with Astini et al. (2023), who state that conversational utterances often carry specific functions. In the film, the implicatures produced through flouting of the Maxim of Manner serve functions such as establishing professional boundaries, showing sarcasm, and conveying ideas in an indirect way.

The flouting of the Maxim of Quantity is identified in two instances in the film, where characters provide more information than necessary. This excessive information functions to convince the hearer and assert power through an indirect threat. As Long et al. (2020) argue, providing excessive information does not always indicate inefficiency, but can facilitate communication depending on the context. In this case, additional details are used to guide interpretation and strengthen intended meanings.

Similarly, the Maxim of Quality is flouted in two instances when characters intentionally produce untrue statements that do not match the actual situation or their real feelings. The speakers give responses that contradict reality, not to deceive, but to generate implicatures such as expressing emotions indirectly and maintaining self-image in dangerous situations. This supports Luthfiyah and Rosalinah (2025), who state that flouting the Maxim of Quality occurs when speakers say something contrary to their intended meaning to convey implied messages.

The dominance of the Maxim of Relation is also supported by Marlisa and Hidayat (2020), who found similar results in their study of the *Good Morning America (GMA) Talk Show*. However, while their study highlights spontaneous and humorous interaction, the present research shows that flouting the Maxim of Relation in the film *Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre* (2023) serves more strategic purposes, such as controlling situations and delivering coded meanings in high-

stakes contexts. This indicates that the same type of flouting can produce different communicative functions depending on context and speaker intention.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that flouting of Grice's conversational maxims enables characters to generate implicatures that function to control situations, deliver coded meanings, establish boundaries, show sarcasm, convince the hearer, assert power indirectly, and maintain self-image. In the context of a spy-action film where interactions take place under pressure and danger, characters rely on indirect strategies, including flouting of maxims, to achieve operational goals while minimizing risk. Thus, this research contributes to pragmatics by providing insight into flouting of maxims as a strategic form of communication in high-stakes professional contexts.

E. CONCLUSION

This research analyzes the flouting of Grice's conversational maxims in the film *Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre* (2023). The findings show that all four maxims are flouted by the characters, with a total of nineteen instances. The Maxim of Relation is the most frequently flouted with twelve instances, followed by the Maxim of Manner with three instances, while the Maxim of Quantity and Maxim of Quality each occur in two instances. The analysis indicates that maxim flouting is not a communicative failure, but a deliberate strategy that generates conversational implicatures which function to control situations, deliver coded meanings, establish boundaries, show sarcasm, convince the hearer, assert power indirectly, express emotions, and maintain self-image.

In the context of a spy-action film where interactions occur under high pressure and risk, flouting of maxims portrayed as a deliberate form of indirect communication that allows characters to convey intended meanings while supporting both interaction and narrative development in high-risk situations.

This study focuses exclusively on scripted dialogue from a single film; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all forms of institutional or everyday communication. Future studies may compare spy-action films with other genres to examine how genre influences patterns of conversational maxim flouting.

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