

Flouting Maxims on WhatsApp Group Chat and Its Pedagogical Implication in Language Teaching

Hieronimus Canggung Darong^[1], Thi Loan Lam^[2]

^[1]daronghieronimus@gmail.com

^[1] Universitas Katolik Indonesia Santu Paulus, Manggarai, Indonesia

^[2] University of Khanh Hoa, Nha Trang, Vietnam

First Received: 04/04/2026; Final Proof Received: 07/05/2026; Accepted: 04/06/2026

Abstract

This study investigates the types and frequency of flouting maxims in WhatsApp group communication and examines their pedagogical implications for language teaching. Employing a qualitative discourse analysis approach, the study analyzed selected utterances produced by 27 members of a WhatsApp group over a six-month period. The data were categorized using Grice's Cooperative Principle, particularly the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relevance, and Manner. In addition to identifying instances of maxim flouting, the study also explored the communicative purposes behind such linguistic behavior and how participants interpreted implied meanings within their interactions. The findings show that all four types of maxim flouting occurred in the interaction. Flouting the Maxim of Quantity appeared most frequently, accounting for 45% of the data, followed by flouting the Maxim of Manner at 35%, flouting the Maxim of Relevance at 15%, and flouting the Maxim of Quality at 5%. These results indicate that participants often used excessive information, indirectness, ambiguity, exaggeration, and topic shifts to generate implicatures, express humor, maintain solidarity, and negotiate interpersonal relationships in digital communication. Furthermore, the analysis reveals that such pragmatic strategies are influenced by contextual factors such as group familiarity, shared knowledge, and the informal nature of online communication platforms. The study also highlights that participants rely heavily on implicit cues, emojis, and shared cultural references to convey meanings that go beyond literal interpretations, demonstrating the dynamic nature of digital discourse. Additionally, the findings suggest that the asynchronous nature of WhatsApp communication allows users more flexibility in crafting responses, which may contribute to the frequent occurrence of maxim flouting as a deliberate communicative choice. The study concludes that flouting maxims in WhatsApp group chats should not merely be viewed as communication failure, but as a pragmatic strategy shaped by context and social interaction. Pedagogically, the findings suggest that authentic digital conversations can be used as instructional materials to develop learners' pragmatic awareness, discourse competence, and context-sensitive communication skills. Incorporating real-life examples of digital discourse into classroom activities may help learners better understand implied meanings, interpret indirect language, and respond appropriately in various communicative situations, thereby enhancing their overall communicative competence in both online and offline contexts. Furthermore, integrating such materials into language instruction can encourage learners to critically analyze communication patterns, recognize pragmatic nuances, and apply these insights in their own interactions, ultimately fostering more effective and meaningful communication skills in diverse social settings.

Keywords: flouting maxims; WhatsApp group chat; Gricean maxims; pragmatic awareness; language teaching

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, digital communication platforms, such as WhatsApp, have become dominant media for everyday interaction, yet they also pose significant challenges to clarity, interpretation, and pragmatic understanding. Unlike face-to-face communication, WhatsApp group conversations are often fragmented, asynchronous, and highly context-dependent, increasing the potential for ambiguity, misunderstanding, and implicit meaning. These conditions make pragmatic phenomena, particularly the flouting of maxims, more frequent and more complex to interpret. Despite its widespread use, the pragmatic dynamics of WhatsApp communication remain underexplored, particularly regarding how interlocutors intentionally generate implied meanings by flouting maxims.

Language is a fundamental aspect of human existence; it is crucial for maintaining social relationships and enabling interaction. The significance lies not only in how individuals connect and communicate, but also in the substance of their discourse and the motivations underlying their conversations. Communication entails the transmission of information between individuals and requires that the message be comprehensible to the recipient. Furthermore, communication functions as a conduit between a source and a recipient, facilitating the transfer and interpretation of meaning (Pearson et al., 2011). Thus, communication is an intentional process in which individuals use shared symbols to convey and interpret messages, including information, emotions, ideas, and intentions.

For communication to be effective, listeners must understand the speaker's intended meaning. However, misunderstanding frequently occurs, particularly when meaning is implied rather than explicitly stated. To account for this, the concept of the Cooperative Principle was introduced, which includes four maxims: Quantity, Quality, Relevance, and Manner (Herawati, 2013; Nurhidayah et al., 2021; Simons, 2016). These maxims guide participants to produce contributions that are truthful, informative, relevant, and clear. Igwedibia (2017) argues that successful discourse depends on adherence to these maxims. These studies predominantly focus on structured or semi-structured contexts, leaving informal digital communication—particularly WhatsApp group interaction—relatively underexplored. It indicates a clear research gap in understanding how flouting maxims operates in spontaneous, multi-participant, and text-based communication environments.

Meanwhile, other studies have examined flouting maxims in various contexts, such as films, classroom interaction, and political discourse (Kurniawan & Ardi, 2019; Marlisa & Hidayat, 2020; Wahyuni et al., 2019). These studies demonstrate that flouting is often used for humor, politeness strategies, indirect criticism, or rhetorical purposes. However, in actual communication, speakers do not always strictly observe these maxims. Instead, they may deliberately flout them in order to convey implied meanings or implicatures. It is important to distinguish flouting from violation: flouting is intentional, observable, and designed to generate implicature, whereas violation is typically covert and may mislead the interlocutor.

This study specifically focuses on the flouting of maxims, not their violation, to maintain theoretical clarity. When speakers flout maxims, they rely on the listener's ability to infer meaning beyond the literal interpretation (Arbain et al., 2023; Kurniawan & Ardi, 2019; Marlisa & Hidayat, 2020). Therefore, flouting maxims plays a crucial role in understanding how meaning is constructed implicitly in communication. Furthermore, Brown and Levinson (1978) explain that when speakers fail to adhere to conversational norms, it is not necessarily intended to deceive; rather, it can serve strategic communicative purposes. This phenomenon is closely related to implicature, which refers to meaning that is implied rather than explicitly stated (Aisya & Fitrawati, 2019; Ulfah & Afrilia, 2018). Radfar et al. (2020) further note that conversational implicatures arise when speakers are assumed to be cooperative, even when they appear to disregard the maxims. Thus, flouting maxims becomes a key mechanism through which speakers create indirect, nuanced, and context-dependent meanings.

In WhatsApp group communication, the absence of vocal tone, facial expressions, and immediate feedback often requires participants to rely more heavily on pragmatic inference. As a result, flouting maxims may function not only as a communicative strategy, but also as a potential source of ambiguity or misunderstanding. Despite this, there is limited empirical evidence examining how frequently flouting occurs in such settings, what types are most dominant, and how they

function within the interaction. This lack of empirical investigation weakens the broader understanding of pragmatic competence in digital discourse. Along these lines, flouting maxims occurs when the Cooperative Principle is deliberately violated, resulting in the emergence of implicatures (Shardimgaliev, 2019; Zappettini & Rezazadah, 2023). Fitriana and Pratama (2023) confirm that flouting is intentional and requires the listener to interpret the implied meaning. Therefore, examining flouting maxims in WhatsApp communication is important not only for theoretical development in pragmatics but also for understanding real-life communication practices in digital contexts. Based on the gap identified above, this study aims to analyze the types and frequency of flouting maxims in WhatsApp group communication using a discourse analysis approach. More specifically, this study seeks to identify which maxims are most frequently flouted and to explain how such flouting contributes to meaning-making in interaction. By doing so, this study positions itself as an empirical contribution to the study of pragmatics in digital communication.

This study offers both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it enhances understanding of the Cooperative Principle and how flouting maxims functions in real communication. It also contributes to the study of conversational implicature within digital discourse. Practically, the findings are expected to be beneficial for teachers and learners, particularly in developing pragmatic awareness in language learning. Communication is not only about mastering units of language, but also about understanding context, intention, and cultural nuances. By recognizing how flouting maxims operates, learners can develop more effective, context-sensitive, and meaningful communication skills.

Pragmatics offers a framework for comprehending how individuals utilize language in specific contexts to facilitate effective communication. It extends beyond the literal meanings of words to examine how utterances are shaped by context, speaker intentions, and relationships between interlocutors (Darong, 2020; Mey, 1993). Furthermore, pragmatics is closely associated with the social and cognitive dimensions of communication, emphasizing shared knowledge and assumptions among participants (Jie, 2010). Grice's Cooperative Principle, a central concept in pragmatics, highlights the importance of cooperation in communication. Grice's four maxims, i.e., quantity, quality, relation, and manner, serve as guidelines to ensure that communication is informative, truthful, relevant, and clear, thereby facilitating mutual understanding (Igwedibia, 2017).

The cooperative principle guides speakers' behavior in interaction. Grice posited that human communication operates under shared assumptions that enable participants to interpret meaning effectively. These assumptions allow interlocutors to move beyond literal interpretation and infer intended meaning, even when utterances are not explicitly clear (Raharja & Rosyidha, 2019; Yulianti et al., 2021). In this sense, conversational maxims function as a framework for maintaining coherence and interpretability in discourse (Tajabadi et al., 2014). However, communication does not always strictly adhere to these maxims.

In many cases, speakers deliberately flout maxims to convey implicit meanings or achieve specific communicative purposes. It is important to emphasize that this study focuses exclusively on *flouting maxims*, which is intentional, observable, and generates implicature, rather than *violation*, which is typically covert and potentially misleading. Brown and Levinson (1987) explain that flouting maxims involves deliberately and overtly failing to adhere to a maxim to communicate indirectly. Similarly, Kurniati and Hanidar (2018) state that flouting occurs when an utterance conveys additional meaning beyond its literal interpretation, requiring the listener to infer implicature. This process highlights the active role of the listener in interpreting meaning.

Flouting a maxim occurs when a speaker intentionally produces an utterance that appears to disregard a maxim but actually invites interpretation. The speaker does not intend to deceive; instead, they assume that the listener can infer the intended meaning (Arofah & Mubarok, 2021). For instance, flouting the maxim of quantity occurs when speakers provide more or less information than required, often to create emphasis, irony, or humor. Flouting the maxim of quality occurs when speakers say something that is clearly untrue or exaggerated to signal a different meaning. Flouting the maxim of relevance occurs when a speaker uses an apparently unrelated response to imply a hidden connection. Finally, flouting the maxim of manner occurs when speakers use ambiguity, indirectness, or lack of clarity to convey implicit meaning (Tajabadi et al., 2014).

Several previous studies have examined flouting maxims across different contexts. Research in films and media discourse shows that flouting is frequently used for humor, sarcasm, and characterization (e.g., Marlisa & Hidayat, 2020). In classroom interaction, flouting maxims has been found to function as a pedagogical strategy, allowing teachers and students to negotiate meaning and manage interaction (Kurniawan & Ardi, 2019). Other studies in public or conversational discourse demonstrate that flouting can serve rhetorical and interpersonal purposes, such as politeness, criticism, or emphasis (Oktaviabri & Degaf, 2023). These studies collectively indicate that flouting maxims is a flexible communicative strategy shaped by context and interactional goals. However, despite these contributions, most previous studies focus on structured or semi-structured communication settings, such as scripted dialogues, classroom environments, or formal discourse. There is still limited research on how flouting maxims operates in digital communication, particularly on informal, multi-participant platforms such as WhatsApp group chats. It suggests a gap in the literature, as digital communication presents unique pragmatic challenges that differ significantly from face-to-face interaction.

From a theoretical perspective, digital communication introduces distinctive characteristics that influence pragmatic interpretation. WhatsApp communication, for example, is often asynchronous, text-based, and multimodal, incorporating emojis, abbreviations, images, and other semiotic resources. It is also highly informal and frequently involves group interaction, where multiple participants contribute to a shared conversational thread. These features can increase ambiguity, reduce contextual cues, and require participants to rely more heavily on pragmatic inference to interpret meaning. As a result, flouting maxims in WhatsApp communication may function differently compared to traditional spoken interaction.

Nonetheless, communication does not always conform to the maxims, leading to the emergence of implicature, in which speakers convey meanings beyond what is explicitly stated (R. Sari et al., 2020). These pragmatic phenomena demonstrate how language users creatively manipulate conversational norms to achieve communicative goals. In digital contexts, such deviations may not only serve expressive or strategic purposes but also contribute to misunderstanding due to the absence of immediate feedback and contextual support. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by examining how flouting maxims occurs in WhatsApp group communication. Unlike previous studies that focus on scripted or institutional discourse, this study investigates naturally occurring interaction in a digital group setting. By doing so, it aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how pragmatic principles operate in contemporary communication environments, particularly in informal and technology-mediated discourse.

METHOD

This qualitative study analyzes and describes the types and the flouting of maxims, which encompass the principles of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. This study focuses on utterances produced by members of a WhatsApp group chat. The participants of this study consisted of 27 group members, currently studying in the English Language Education program. All participants were familiar with one another and had been active in the group for approximately 6 months, which may have influenced their use of informal language and pragmatic strategies, such as flouting maxims.

The authors conducted observations and documentation to collect data, which were subsequently analyzed using Grice's Cooperative Principle and its maxims. The data were collected over a period of six months, resulting in a total of 27 messages. The utterances were selected as the primary data based on specific criteria, namely: (1) the utterances clearly demonstrate the flouting of maxims, and (2) the utterances contain sufficient contextual information to allow pragmatic interpretation. All conversations were originally conducted in Bahasa Indonesia and were translated into English for analysis and reporting purposes. The translation process prioritized meaning equivalence to preserve the intended implicatures.

The researchers systematically observed discussions within the selected WhatsApp group throughout the designated timeframe. This technique allowed for the collection of naturally occurring interactions without interfering with participants' communication. Each observed conversation was documented with a date and group identifier to ensure traceability during analysis.

Then, selected samples were picked up from the recorded conversations that clearly demonstrated the types and flouting of Grice’s conversational maxims. The flouting encompassed the maxims of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. Selected samples were identified, categorized, and analyzed following Grice’s framework.

To minimize researcher bias, the data were independently coded by two researchers. The coding results were then compared, and any discrepancies were resolved through discussion to reach an agreement. Furthermore, the authors carefully addressed ethical considerations in this study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any time. All personal information, including names and identifiable details, was anonymized to protect participants’ privacy. The data were securely stored and used solely for research purposes.

ANALYSIS

Findings

To avoid ambiguity, this study distinguishes between identifying maxim use and analyzing maxim flouting. Table 1 shows the distribution of the Gricean maxims in the WhatsApp group conversation, which serves as the general communicative framework that participants use. This table functions as a baseline to demonstrate how the cooperative principles were realized in the interaction before examining how and why group members intentionally flout certain maxims. Meanwhile, Table 2 specifically focuses on instances of flouting maxims, which constitute the primary focus of this study. In Gricean pragmatics, flouting occurs when speakers intentionally and overtly fail to observe a maxim in order to generate implicature.

In contrast, violation refers to covert non-observance that may mislead interlocutors. Therefore, the present study consistently uses the term *flouting maxim* throughout the analysis. The table below shows the frequency with which participants in the WhatsApp conversation group employ maxims. The Gricean cooperative principles are utilized to classify the types of maxims identified in the interaction.

Table 1. Maxim Types

No	Types of Maxims	Frequency	%
1	Maxim of Quantity	3	20%
2	Maxim of Quality	2	13.3%
3	Maxim of Relevance	5	33.3%
4	Maxim of Manner	5	33.3%
	Total	15	100%

The data provide valuable insights into communication patterns within the examined context. Table 1 illustrates how participants generally adhered to the cooperative principles to maintain effective communication during the conversation. The findings indicated four distinct types of maxims: the Maxim of Quantity, the Maxim of Quality, the Maxim of Relevance, and the Maxim of Manner.

Analysis of the data reveals that the Maxim of Quantity accounted for 20% of the documented occurrences. It indicates that several messages attempted to provide sufficient information without excessive elaboration or omission of important details. Conversely, the Maxim of Quality accounted for only 13.3% of instances, suggesting that explicit emphasis on truthfulness and evidential support occurred less frequently than other communicative considerations.

The Maxim of Relevance and the Maxim of Manner were the predominant categories, each constituting 33.3% of the total data. These findings indicate that participants in the WhatsApp group prioritized relevance and clarity in delivering messages (Samsidar, 2025). In other words, the participants tended to maintain contextually connected communication expressed in a comprehensible manner. Thus, Table 1 provides an overview of the participants’ general adherence to cooperative principles, which becomes an important foundation for understanding the occurrence of maxim flouting discussed in Table 2.

While Table 1 demonstrates the participants' general adherence to the cooperative principles, Table 2 presents the instances of maxim flouting. The analysis of flouting maxims is essential because intentionally flouted maxims may generate implicatures that reflect particular communicative intentions, social relationships, humor, sarcasm, or indirect criticism in WhatsApp group interactions.

Table 2. Flouting maxim

No	Types of Maxims	Frequency	%
1	Flouting Maxim of Quantity	9	45%
2	Flouting Maxim of Quality	1	5%
3	Flouting Maxim of Relevance	3	15%
4	Flouting Maxim of Manner	7	35%
Total		20	100%

The data in Table 2 offer valuable insights into the communication strategies employed in the examined setting, where participants intentionally flouted certain maxims to achieve specific communicative purposes. These findings contribute to our understanding of how individuals use pragmatic strategies and implied meanings in digital communication contexts. Furthermore, the data illustrate the frequency and proportion of flouting maxims in the WhatsApp group conversation. Four flouting categories were identified: flouting the Maxim of Quantity, flouting the Maxim of Quality, flouting the Maxim of Relevance, and flouting the Maxim of Manner. These findings indicate that flouting the Maxim of Relevance accounted for 15% of the examined instances, suggesting that such responses are relatively infrequent (Kurniawan & Indriani, 2023). Meanwhile, flouting the Maxim of Quality appeared in only 5% of the data, indicating that deliberately untruthful or exaggerated utterances were uncommon in the interaction.

The most dominant categories were flouting the Maxim of Quantity and flouting the Maxim of Manner, accounting for 45% and 35% of the occurrences, respectively. It indicates that participants frequently conveyed excessive, insufficient, ambiguous, or indirect information to imply meanings beyond the literal interpretation of their utterances. Such flouting often generated conversational implicatures that conveyed humor, emphasis, social bonding, or indirect responses within group interactions.

Discussion

This study examines the flouting of maxims in WhatsApp group conversations. The findings demonstrate that the most dominant forms of maxims used in this case were the Maxim of Relevance and the Maxim of Manner. In contrast, the most frequent forms of maxim flouting involved the Maxim of Quantity and the Maxim of Manner. These findings suggest that although participants generally attempted to maintain relevance and clarity in communication, they also frequently manipulated the amount and manner of information to achieve particular interpersonal and pragmatic purposes.

Referring to the data, in such speech events, the frequent use of the Maxim of Relevance and the Maxim of Manner is essential. As such, the findings indicate a common inclination across speakers to prioritize the importance and clarity of their messages. It reflects Grice's Cooperative Principle, highlighting the essence of the Maxim of Relevance and the Maxim of Manner with relevant, clear, and pertinent information (M. Sari et al., 2019). Its relevance deals with the context or ongoing discourse, ensuring that contributions significantly influence the conversation, enhance coherence, and facilitate comprehension for all participants. Therefore, in communication, speakers are expected to convey messages clearly without confusing the listeners. This corroborates the findings of Kurniawan and Indriani (2023), who highlight the critical importance of relevance in directing communication exchanges across many contexts.

Likewise, the Maxim of Manner emphasizes clarity and logical coherence in communication. This finding aligns with previous studies emphasizing the need to maintain clarity and coherence in communication to enhance engagement and understanding (Kurniati & Hanidar, 2018). Therefore, speakers endeavor to articulate their thoughts clearly, succinctly, and systematically, conforming to conversational conventions that enhance effective message transmission. Moving further to the

Maxim of Quantity and the Maxim of Quality, the data indicate that both appeared less frequently. This intricate comprehension illustrates the complexity of communication, as numerous factors influence the formulation and interpretation of messages. However, their occurrence did not appear to be as dominant as that of the Maxim of Relevance and the Maxim of Manner. Taken together, these findings indicate that relevance and clarity remain central to maintaining effective interpersonal communication in WhatsApp group interactions. More importantly, the dominance of flouting the Maxim of Quantity and the Maxim of Manner may be closely related to the informal and socially dynamic nature of WhatsApp communication. In digital group conversations, participants frequently employ exaggeration, incomplete information, indirect responses, humor, and ambiguity to maintain social relationships, create solidarity, reduce tension, or express emotions indirectly. Thus, the frequent flouting of these maxims does not necessarily indicate communication failure; rather, it reflects participants' pragmatic competence in managing interpersonal interaction in online environments.

This finding is consistent with studies suggesting that digital communication often prioritizes relational goals over strict informational efficiency. In WhatsApp conversations, users may intentionally provide excessive information, vague responses, or humorous exaggerations to sustain engagement and intimacy among group members. Therefore, flouting becomes a communicative strategy rather than merely a deviation from conversational norms. Moving forward, Table 2 presents instances in which maxims are deliberately disregarded, indicating a conscious deviation from conventional communication practices. In this study, the term *flouting* is consistently used because the non-observance of maxims occurred intentionally and generated implied meanings or conversational implicatures. The Flouting of the Maxim of Quantity and the Flouting of the Maxim of Manner constitute the two predominant instances, accounting for 45% and 35% of all occurrences, respectively.

Extract 1

Ketrin: Etris, what time does the concert start tonight?

Etris: At 07.00, Ket. I have two tickets. The price is 25 thousand rupiahs.

Ketrin: Give me a ticket, please.

Etris: Yes, I will.

This dialogue exemplifies flouting the Maxim of Quantity, which asserts that responses should provide sufficient information without excessive elaboration. Ketrin asks about the concert schedule, and Etris also informs her about ticket availability and prices. The additional information is not required to answer the question directly; however, it implies that Etris intends to offer or promote the tickets to Ketrin. Therefore, the excessive information serves a social and practical purpose rather than merely disrupting the conversation. This extract illustrates how flouting the Maxim of Quantity in WhatsApp communication can serve as an indirect promotional strategy or an invitation while maintaining conversational friendliness. The flouting also reflects the tendency of digital communication to combine informational and interpersonal purposes simultaneously.

Extract 2

Etris: I am tired. I'm still working on this article.

Ceni: What article is this?

Etris: Mr. Hiro's article. It is a difficult task.

Ceni: Go on. I want to cook.

Yohana: Our water is not running smoothly.

Unlike the previous extract, Etris's response, "Mr. Hiro's article. It is a difficult task," is relatively clear and relevant to Ceni's question. Therefore, this utterance cannot be strongly categorized as flouting the Maxim of Manner. Instead, the potential flouting appears in Yohana's sudden shift of topic, "Our water is not running smoothly," which is not directly connected to the ongoing discussion about the article. Accordingly, Yohana's utterance may be interpreted as flouting the Maxim of Relevance because it abruptly changes the topic without an explicit contextual link. However, in casual WhatsApp interactions, such topic shifts are common due to the spontaneous,

multi-threaded nature of digital group conversations. The implicature may indicate that Yohana intended to express personal frustration or seek empathy from other group members despite the unrelated ongoing topic. This finding suggests that topic shifts in WhatsApp conversations are not always interpreted as communication breakdowns, but may function as attempts to maintain social presence and interpersonal engagement within the group.

Extract 3

Ketrin: Today's exam was very difficult.

Ceni: We were scolded by Mr. Stanis.

Etris: By the way, where is Ma'am Hedy's room?

Yohana: At GUB 5th floor.

This extract contains multiple topic shifts; therefore, the analysis must focus on specific utterances rather than the conversation as a whole. The utterance that potentially flouts the Maxim of Relevance is Etris's question, "By the way, where is Ma'am Hedy's room?" because it suddenly shifts the topic from discussing examinations and being scolded to asking about a room's location. According to Putri and Winarta (2021), flouting the Maxim of Relevance occurs when speakers intentionally produce responses that appear unrelated while expecting listeners to infer implicit connections. In this context, Etris's utterance may imply urgency or a more immediate personal concern that overrides the previous topic. The abrupt topic shift also reflects the fragmented, fast-moving interactional style commonly found in WhatsApp group communication. Therefore, the flouting does not necessarily create misunderstanding, but instead demonstrates how digital conversations frequently accommodate overlapping topics and simultaneous communicative goals.

Extract 4

Ceni: Etris, hello, where are you? Choir practice starts at 03.00 p.m.

Etris: Wait on the way of going there. It's raining.

Yohana: It's still raining here. I'm afraid of becoming a mermaid.

Ceni: Well, I'll be waiting for you in Rosmalen room.

In this context, Yohana's assertion is an exaggerated expression of her discomfort with the weather, rather than a source of factual information. Her statement about becoming a mermaid due to the incessant rain is clearly hyperbolic and should not be interpreted literally. The extract illustrates that Yohana flouts the Maxim of Quality by intentionally saying something untrue to generate humorous implicature. Rahmi et al. (2018) assert that the Maxim of Quality may be flouted through humor or exaggeration. In this context, the pragmatic function of the utterance is not to deceive other participants but to create humor, reduce tension, and strengthen solidarity among group members. This finding demonstrates that flouting in WhatsApp communication frequently serves relational purposes rather than informational ones.

The data in Table 2 illustrate the complexity of communication and the various strategies individuals employ to achieve their communicative objectives (Kießling & Fabry, 2021). This intricate understanding deepens our grasp of pragmatic competence and communicative tactics, emphasizing the dynamic interplay between adherence to and flouting of communication principles across various settings. Compared with previous studies, the present findings support earlier research showing that relevance, humor, exaggeration, and indirectness frequently emerge in online communication contexts (Aisya & Fitrawati, 2019; Arofah & Mubarok, 2021; Radfar et al., 2020). However, this study extends prior research by demonstrating that flouting maxims in WhatsApp groups is closely associated with interpersonal functions, such as solidarity-building, emotional expression, and informal social interaction. The group members frequently employ exaggerated vocabulary, which may be humorous, sarcastic, or informal. Data from WhatsApp group chats indicate that flouting conversational maxims is prevalent in digital communication. Certain instances of flouting may enhance the overall atmosphere of the conversation, whereas others may result in uncertainty or misunderstanding due to insufficient clarity and directness in communication (Radfar et al., 2020).

Theoretically, this study contributes to pragmatic research by demonstrating that Gricean maxims remain relevant to the analysis of digital communication. However, their realization in online interaction is often more flexible and socially oriented. Methodologically, the study also demonstrates the usefulness of WhatsApp conversations as authentic discourse data for examining pragmatic phenomena in naturally occurring communication. Practically, the findings may be beneficial for teachers and students in understanding how implicatures, humor, indirectness, and social meanings operate in digital interaction contexts. Overall, the findings indicate that flouting maxims in WhatsApp group conversations should not merely be interpreted as failures to observe conversational rules. Instead, they function as pragmatic strategies that help speakers negotiate interpersonal relationships, maintain solidarity, express emotions, and manage interactional dynamics in digital communication environments.

Pedagogical Implication

Teaching students to understand texts and communication practices is essential in the learning process. This is because students encounter linguistic units and aspects as they interact with others. Therefore, they must have good text comprehension. Aside from being essential for students, this study might also be beneficial for teachers, as it provides insights into instructing language learners in meaningful interactions. In this regard, teachers can assist language learners in understanding language norms as an essential part of communication. Having good linguistic competence alone is insufficient, as communication can still be awkward and lead to misunderstandings. As such, understanding pragmatic norms is essential for maintaining good interpersonal relationships with interlocutors. Thus, this study provides valuable insights for target language teaching.

More importantly, a notable pedagogical implication is the integration of pragmatic awareness into language instruction. Pragmatic awareness refers to learners' understanding of how language is used in specific contexts to achieve communicative objectives (Darong, 2020; Sadeghi et al., 2012; Saleh et al., 2023). The findings of this study specifically demonstrate that WhatsApp group conversations contain numerous instances of flouting maxims, particularly the Maxim of Quantity and the Maxim of Manner, which generate conversational implicatures such as humor, indirectness, exaggeration, and social bonding. Therefore, teachers may use WhatsApp conversation transcripts as authentic instructional materials to help students identify implied meanings beyond literal expressions. For example, teachers can ask students to analyze excerpts from WhatsApp conversations and identify which maxim is being flouted, why the speaker intentionally flouts it, and what implicature is produced by the utterance. In Extract 4, for instance, Yohana's statement "I'm afraid of becoming a mermaid" can be used to teach students how hyperbole functions as flouting the Maxim of Quality to express discomfort humorously rather than literally. Such activities help learners understand how meaning in communication is often implied rather than directly stated.

Another pedagogical implication concerns intercultural competence. Teachers can teach students how to communicate with individuals from different cultural backgrounds because linguistic expressions frequently reflect speakers' cultural values and social norms. This competence may help learners engage with socio-cultural norms and linguistic aspects, enabling them to interact appropriately and successfully (Martínez-flor, 2013; Tanduk, 2023; Wedell & Malderez, 2013). In this respect, studying pragmatics, particularly flouting maxims, has the potential to develop learners' intercultural communicative competence. The findings from WhatsApp group communication also indicate that digital interaction often prioritizes relational goals, such as humor, solidarity, and indirectness. Consequently, teachers can encourage students to compare literal meanings and implied meanings in online communication contexts. Through such comparisons, students may become more sensitive to politeness strategies, indirect responses, emotional expressions, and culturally specific communication patterns commonly found in digital discourse.

In addition, by learning pragmatics, language learners may develop critical thinking and metalinguistic awareness. Metalinguistic awareness concerns learners' capacity to critically analyze language usage while considering the social and contextual influences on communication (Kuo et al., 2020). Therefore, when teachers integrate pragmatic norms into instructional practices, learners can improve their understanding of communicative practices, norms, and expectations inherent in

various contexts. Context-based interaction fosters learners' systematic communication abilities and sharpens their schematic understanding of spoken and written discourse analysis. Taken together, examining communication norms such as flouting maxims in language instruction can enhance language learners' abilities in effective communication, critical thinking, cultural comprehension, and the application of diverse communication strategies. Communication strategies refer to learners' ability to modify their language use to achieve their communicative goals successfully (Algiovan, 2022). Instructing students about communication norms and pragmatic principles may enhance their communication and negotiation skills.

To make these pedagogical applications more concrete, teachers may design classroom activities based on authentic WhatsApp interactions. Students can perform role-plays of digital conversations, discuss the implicatures generated by flouted maxims, compare direct and indirect responses, and reflect on how humor or exaggeration influences interpersonal relationships in online communication. Such activities allow learners to connect theoretical pragmatic concepts with real-life communication practices. Moving further ahead, instructional materials are essential for providing learners with a framework for learning pragmatics. Teachers should therefore consider authentic resources that represent real-life contexts when teaching the target language. Studying flouting maxims in speech events, such as those examined in this study, helps understand communication norms. The speech events in question can be strengthened through practical activities, enabling learners to experience real-life learning situations and refine their interactional competence.

Form and meaning are integrated aspects of communication, enabling learners to acquire the target language more effectively. To concretize form and meaning, teachers can employ various activities, such as role-playing, collaborative learning, and the analysis of authentic communication scenarios, which subsequently help learners achieve communicative goals. These activities reinforce theoretical concepts and facilitate the acquisition of practical skills necessary for effective communication in the target language (Cantone, 2022; Darong & Guna, 2023; Qassrawi et al., 2023). Thus, authentic instructional design holds significant promise for developing engaging and effective learning experiences.

Instructional materials should also be structured to provide a framework for learners' comprehension, beginning with fundamental principles and then progressing toward more complex applications. For example, students may first learn basic principles, such as the Maxim of Quantity, before analyzing more complex instances of communication involving multiple flouted maxims simultaneously. This methodical approach enables learners to develop knowledge and skills systematically. Furthermore, reflective activities may be integrated into learning instruction. After analyzing WhatsApp conversations, students can discuss why speakers intentionally flout certain maxims and how these utterances affect interpersonal relationships, politeness, humor, or emotional expression. Such reflective discussion can strengthen learners' pragmatic sensitivity in both online and offline communication contexts.

Students can identify areas for improvement and develop effective strategies to enhance their communication skills through self-assessment, peer feedback, and teacher evaluation (Astuty et al., 2022; Fagerholm et al., 2024; Power & Tanner, 2023). To strengthen this instructional approach, lesson design must integrate opportunities for reflection and feedback. It is crucial to provide students with opportunities to reflect on communication strategies and receive feedback regarding their effectiveness. Regardless of authenticity, scaffolded learning remains an important component of instructional design in teaching communication norms. Moreover, instructional materials should include a range of cultural examples of communication norms to enhance learners' understanding of cultural differences in communication strategies and conventions. It is therefore crucial to consider intercultural perspectives when developing lesson plans. By examining communication conventions across different cultural and linguistic communities, students can acquire the competencies necessary for effective intercultural interaction.

The present study also demonstrates that digital communication platforms such as WhatsApp can function as valuable pedagogical resources, because they provide authentic examples of naturally occurring pragmatic interaction. Teachers may integrate digital simulations, online discussion forums, and social media-based tasks to expose students to real-world communication

practices involving implicatures, humor, indirectness, and flouting maxims. Incorporating technology into classroom instruction enhances lesson planning by facilitating interactive and multimedia-rich learning experiences. By utilizing technology, educators can create engaging, dynamic learning environments that enhance students' proficiency in the target language (Ifinedo & Kankaanranta, 2021; Rintaningrum, 2023). Therefore, the findings of this study suggest that authentic WhatsApp interactions serve not only as research data but also as practical pedagogical tools for teaching pragmatics, discourse analysis, and digital communication competence.

CONCLUSION

This study provides important insights into how communication is constructed and negotiated in WhatsApp group conversations through the use and flouting of conversational maxims. The findings reveal that the Maxim of Relevance and the Maxim of Manner were the most dominant forms of maxim use, indicating that participants generally prioritized relevance and clarity in interaction. However, the most frequent forms of flouting involved the Maxim of Quantity and the Maxim of Manner, showing that participants often used excessive information, ambiguity, exaggeration, and indirectness to maintain interpersonal relationships, create humor, express emotions, and strengthen group solidarity. Therefore, flouting maxims in WhatsApp conversations should not merely be interpreted as failures to observe conversational principles, but rather as pragmatic strategies that generate conversational implicatures and support relational goals in digital communication. The study also highlights the importance of contextual understanding in interpreting meaning, as communication in WhatsApp interactions is frequently conveyed implicitly through humor, shared knowledge, and indirect expressions. Theoretically, this study extends Gricean Cooperative Principle analysis to digital communication contexts. At the same time, pedagogically, it demonstrates that authentic WhatsApp conversations can serve as instructional materials for teaching pragmatics, conversational implicature, digital discourse, and communication strategies.

However, this study has several limitations. The research focused only on a single WhatsApp group conversation with a limited number of participants and employed a qualitative descriptive approach, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the data were collected within a limited interactional setting and time frame, meaning that the findings may not fully represent broader digital communication practices. Despite these limitations, the study contributes to understanding pragmatic interaction in online communication. Future research may involve more diverse participants, compare different social media platforms such as Telegram, Instagram, or Discord, and employ mixed-methods or quantitative approaches to provide broader evidence on the functions of flouting maxims in digital interaction. Further studies may also explore how implicature, humor, politeness, and indirectness influence interpersonal relationships and language learning in digital communication contexts.

REFERENCES

- Aisya, N., & Fitrawati, F. (2019). An analysis of flouting of maxim performed by politician guests in Mata Najwa talk show in the episode of adu lantang jelang penentuan and babak akhir pilpres. *E-Journal of English Language & Literature*, 8(4), 41–55. <https://doi.org/10.24036/ell.v8i4.106348>
- Algiovan, N. (2022). Politeness strategies used by lecturers and students in thesis guidance through virtual communications. *The Journal of English Literacy Education: The Teaching and Learning of English as a Foreign Language*, 9(1), 101–114. <https://doi.org/10.36706/jele.v9i1.17437>
- Arbain, A., Geroda, G. B., & Mulyono, E. A. (2023). Maxim violations and their reasons in an animated movie: a Gricean approach to communication. *Leksika: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra Dan Pengajarannya*, 17(2), 117–126. <https://doi.org/10.30595/lks.v17i2.17519>
- Arofah, S., & Mubarak, H. (2021). An analysis of violation and flouting maxim on teacher-students interaction in English teaching and learning process. *language circle: journal of language and literature*, 15(2), 249–256. <https://doi.org/10.15294/lc.v15i2.28148>

- Astuty, Farikah, & Ekawati, M. (2022). Probing questions and feedback for learners with down syndrome in an inclusive classroom. *KEMBARA: Jurnal Keilmuan Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Pengajarannya*, 8(2), 417–424. <https://doi.org/10.22219//kembara.v8i2.22242>
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1978). Universals in language use: Politeness phenomena. In E. N. Goody (Ed.), *Questions and politeness: Strategies in social interaction* (pp. 56-310). Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. University Press.
- Cantone, K. F. (2022). Language exposure in early bilingual and trilingual acquisition. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 19(3), 402–417. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2019.1703995>
- Darong, H. C. (2020). Pragmatic strategy of Indonesian English teachers in questioning. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 5(2), 145. <https://doi.org/10.21462/jeltl.v5i2.398>
- Darong, H. C., & Guna, S. (2023). Corrective feedback: Pragmatic exposures in EFL classroom interactions. *International Journal of Education and Learning*, 5(1), 14–22. <http://dx.doi.org/10.31763/ijele.v5i1.820>
- Fagerholm, N., Lotsari, E., Nylén, T., Käyhkö, N., Nikander, J., Arki, V., & Kalliola, R. (2024). Self-assessment in student's learning and developing teaching in geoinformatics – case of Geoportti self-assessment tool. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 48(3), 414–444. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03098265.2023.2251021>
- Fitriana, S. A., & Pratama, H. (2023). The violation of Leech's politeness maxims and interlocutor's responses in Enola Holmes 2020 movie. *English Education Journal*, 13(2), 191–208. <https://doi.org/10.15294/eej.v13i2.71435>
- Herawati, A. (2013). The cooperative principle: is Grice's theory suitable to Indonesian language culture? *Lingua Cultura*, 7(1), 43–48. <https://doi.org/10.21512/lc.v7i1.417>
- Ifinedo, E., & Kankaanranta, M. (2021). Understanding the influence of context in technology integration from teacher educators' perspective. *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, 30(2), 201–215. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1475939X.2020.1867231>
- Igwedibia, A. (2017). Grice's conversational implicature: a pragmatics analysis of selected poems of Audre Lorde. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 7(1), 120–129. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.7n.1p.120>
- Jie, F. (2010). A study on pragmatic failure in cross-cultural communication. *Sino-US English Teaching*, 7(12), 42–46.
- Kiessling, C., & Fabry, G. (2021). What is communicative competence, and how can it be acquired? *GMS Journal for Medical Education*, 38(3), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.3205/zma001445>
- Kuo, L. J., Ku, Y. M., Chen, Z., & Gezer, M. Ü. (2020). The relationship between input and literacy and metalinguistic development: A study with Chinese–English bilinguals. *International Journal of Bilingualism* 24(1). 26–45. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367006918768312>
- Kurniati, M., & Hanidar, S. (2018). The flouting of the Gricean maxims in the movies *Insidious* and *Insidious 2*. *Lexicon*, 5(1), 65–76. <https://doi.org/10.22146/lexicon.v5i1.41282>
- Kurniawan, A. B. & Indriani, L. (2023). Flouting relevance maxim: benefits of Hillary Clinton's presidential candidate debate in 2016. *Journal of Pragmatics Research*, 5(2), 135–152. <https://doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v5i2.135-152>
- Kurniawan, M., & Ardi, H. (2019). A Comparison of violation phenomena of cooperative principle in traditional market pasar raya and traditional market Lubuk Alung. *English Language and Literature*, 8(3). <https://doi.org/10.24036/ell.v8i3.105783>
- Marlisa, R., & Hidayat, D. N. (2020). The analysis of flouting maxim in good morning America (GMA) talkshow. *Englisia: Journal of Language, Education, and Humanities*, 7(2), 132–142. <https://doi.org/10.22373/ej.v7i2.6630>
- Martínez-flor, A. (2013). Classroom research on pragmatics. *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*, 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal0133>

- Mey, J. L. (1993). Pragmatics as deconstruction. *Social Semiotics*, 3(2), 219–230. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10350339309384418>
- Nurhidayah, Yassi, A. H., & Sukmawaty. (2021). The Types of Conversational Implicature in “Gifted” movie. *ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 4(4), 445–451. <https://doi.org/10.34050/elsjish.v4i4.18369>
- Oktaviabri, R., & Degaf, A. (2023). Cooperative principles at work: unveiling efl classroom interaction in AKM university through a sociopragmatic lens. *Journal of Pragmatics Research*, 05(02), 190–219. <http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v5i2.190-219>
- Pearson, J. C., Nelson, P. E., Titsworth, S., & Harter, L. (2011). *Human communication* (4th ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Power, J. R., & Tanner, D. (2023). Peer assessment, self-assessment, and resultant feedback: an examination of feasibility and reliability. *European Journal of Engineering Education*, 48(4), 615–628. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03043797.2023.2185769>
- Putri, I. G. A. V. W., & Winarta, I. B. G. N. (2021). The violation maxim of students in the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Mahasaraswati Denpasar University. *Language and Education Journal Undiksha*, 4(1), 50–58. <https://ejournal.undiksha.ac.id/index.php/JJPBI%0ATHE>
- Qassrawi, R., Abuhussein, H. F., Rafidi, T. J., & Yousef, R. (2023). Language-intensive exposure in EFL curriculum: attitudes towards the unlock textbook series at birzeit university as a case study. *Cogent Education*, 10(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2166626>
- Radfar, Z. H., Sudana, D., & Gunawan, W. (2020). Gricean maxim violation(s) in the murder case of Jamal Khashoggi: a forensic linguistic perspective. *NOBEL: Journal of Literature and Language Teaching*, 11(2), 162–177. <https://doi.org/10.15642/nobel.2020.11.2.162-177>
- Raharja, A. U., & Rosyidha, A. (2019). Maxim of cooperative principle violation by Dodit Mulyanto in stand-up comedy Indonesia season 4. *Journal of Pragmatics Research*, 1(1), 62–77. <https://doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v1i1.62-77>
- Rahmi, S. S., Refnaldi, & Wahyuni, D. (2018). The Violation of conversational maxims in political conversation on the Rosi talkshow. *E-Journal of English Language and Literature*, 7(1), 177–183. <http://ejournal.unp.ac.id/index.php/jell>
- Rintaningrum, R. (2023). Technology integration in English language teaching and learning: Benefits and challenges. *Cogent Education*, 10(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2022.2164690>
- Sadeghi, S., Ketabi, S., Tavakoli, M., & Sadeghi, M. (2012). Application of critical classroom discourse analysis (CCDA) in analyzing classroom interaction. *English Language Teaching*, 5(1), 166–173. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n1p166>
- Saleh, F., Yulfiana, R., Unga Waru, D. S., Yusuf, R., Nasrullah, I., & Yusmah, Y. (2023). Principles analysis of grice's cooperation in events speech in traditional markets: a pragmatic study. *La Ogi : English Language Journal*, 9(2), 131–140. <https://doi.org/10.55678/loj.v9i2.1029>
- Samsidar, S. (2025). Analysis of conversations in gen z whatsapp groups: language style, emojis, and pragmatic meaning. *Journal of Linguistica*, 2(3), 27–36. <https://doi.org/10.62872/jol.v2i3.107>
- Sari, M., Susilo, & Limbong, E. (2019). Grice's maxim in humor conversation of Yoo Bro meme. *E3L: Journal of English Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature*, 2(2), 65–70. <https://doi.org/10.30872/e3l.v2i2.1995>
- Sari, R., Chairunnisa, S., Gultom, K., & Sitio, E. S. (2020). Principle of cooperation in human conversation: insight into grice's prominent theory. *JELITA: Journal of English Language Teaching and Literature*, 1(1), 27–34. <https://jurnal.stkipmb.ac.id/index.php/jelita/article/view/38/30>
- Shardimgaliev, M. (2019). Implicatures in judicial opinions. *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law*, 32(2), 391–415. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-018-09601-4>
- Simons, M. (2016). Local pragmatics in a Gricean framework. *Inquiry (United Kingdom)*, 60(5), 466–492. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0020174X.2016.1246865>
- Tajabadi, A., Dowlatabadi, H., & Mehri, E. (2014). Grice's cooperative maxims in oral arguments: the case of

- dispute settlement councils in Iran. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 98, 1859–1865. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.616>
- Tanduk, R. (2023). Pragmatic aspects of speech acts: a cross-linguistic perspective. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 11(3), 881–890. <https://doi.org/10.25134/erjee.v11i3.8762>
- Ulfah, R. A. A., & Afrilia, R. (2018). An analysis of flouting maxim in “the b.f.g” movie. *PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)*, 1(5), 687–695. <https://doi.org/10.22460/project.v1i5.p687-695>
- Wedell, M., & Malderez, A. (2013). *Understanding Language Classroom Contexts. Chapter 4*, 103–105.
- Wahyuni, M., Arifin, M. B., & Lubis, I. S. (2019). An analysis of flouting maxims in the La La Land movie. *Ilmu Budaya: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, dan Budaya*, 3(3), 384–392. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30872/jbssb.v3i3.2212>
- Yulianti, S., Machmoed, H. A., & Arafah, B. (2021). Grice's cooperative principle on Saturday Night Live Talk Show. *Jurnal Ilmu Budaya*, 9(2), 155–160. <https://doi.org/10.34050/jib.v9i2.14028>
- Zappettini, F., & Rezazadah, M. (2023). Communication strategies on twitter: a critical discourse analysis of the us withdrawal from Afghanistan. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 18(2), 115–131. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2023.2280555>