

OBSERVANCE AND NON-OBSERVANCE OF GRICEAN MAXIMS IN FAMILY DIALOGUE IN EUGENE O'NEILL'S *LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT*

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Abstract

Family communication in literary works often reflects hidden emotional conflict, denial, and psychological tension expressed through indirect language and implied meaning. Within literary pragmatics, discussions of Grice's cooperative principle have mostly focused on films, advertisements, and educational discourse, while emotionally conflicted family dialogue in drama remains less explored, particularly in relation to both observance and non-observance of conversational maxims. This article examines how the characters in Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night* employ conversational strategies to maintain relationships, avoid confrontation, and express emotional suffering. The study is based on qualitative data collected from 21 selected dialogues in the drama script and analyzed interpretively using Grice's cooperative principle as the main theoretical foundation. Cutting's framework was used to elaborate the observance of Gricean maxims, while Nemesi's classification was used to examine the forms of Gricean maxim non-observance. The findings reveal that the characters simultaneously observe and fail to observe conversational maxims in emotionally tense interactions. Observance of maxims is mainly used to maintain conversational continuity and emotional connection, while non-observance, particularly violation and exploitation, functions as a strategy for denial, sarcasm, emotional defense, and concealment of painful realities. These findings demonstrate that pragmatic strategies in dramatic dialogue closely reflect fractured family relationships and unresolved psychological trauma.

Keywords: *cooperative principle; Gricean maxims; literary pragmatics; Long Day's Journey into Night; non-observance of maxims*

INTRODUCTION

Communication is an essential part of human life because people use language to share information, express feelings, and build relationships with others (Degaf et al., 2026). In linguistics, communication is studied through pragmatics, which focuses on how meaning is understood in a particular context. Yule (1996) states that pragmatics studies

the relationship between speakers and listeners in interpreting meaning during interaction. Similarly, Chapman (2002) explains that linguistics aims to analyze how language functions in different communicative situations. In communication, speakers and listeners are expected to cooperate with each other so that conversations can run effectively. This idea is known as the cooperative principle proposed by Grice (1989) and discussed by Ephratt (2012). According to Grice (1989), communication is guided by four conversational maxims: quantity, quality, relation, and manner. Huang (2018) explains that people unconsciously follow these maxims in daily conversation. However, in real communication, people do not always observe the maxims. Sometimes speakers intentionally or unintentionally fail to observe them, which can create implied meaning or implicature. Thomas (1995) and Nemesi (2015) call this phenomenon non-observance of maxims. To maintain terminological consistency, this study uses “non-observance of maxims” as the primary term, while “violation” is treated as only one specific type of non-observance rather than a general label for all forms of maxim breaking. These forms include violation, infringement, opting out, clash, and exploitation (Degaf, 2020; Nemesi, 2015).

Pragmatic theory is also relevant to literary analysis because literary meaning is not produced only through the literal content of words, but also through context, intention, inference, and interaction between characters. In literary pragmatics, dialogue can be read as a communicative event through which characterization, conflict, power relations, and emotional tension are constructed (Mey, 2006; Tevdoradze, 2023). Dramatic texts are particularly suitable for pragmatic analysis because drama depends heavily on spoken interaction; therefore, what characters say, avoid saying, imply, or conceal becomes central to the development of meaning. Recent studies also show that pragmatic approaches to literary texts can deepen readers’ understanding of implicit meaning, intention, and communicative function in literary discourse (Munir & Yavuz, 2024).

The phenomenon of observance and non-observance of maxims can be found in literary works, especially in drama. One literary work that strongly reflects this phenomenon is Eugene O’Neill’s *Long Day’s Journey into Night*. The play is widely regarded as one of O’Neill’s most important dramatic works and occupies a significant position in modern American drama because of its intense portrayal of family conflict, psychological suffering, and contradictory human emotions (Manheim, 1998). The play tells the story of the Tyrone family, whose relationships are filled with conflict, disappointment, illness, addiction, and emotional suffering. Because of these complicated conditions, the characters often communicate indirectly, avoid certain topics, or hide their true feelings. Their conversations contain many implied meanings, making the play suitable for pragmatic analysis. Through the dialogues, the readers can see how language is used not only to communicate information but also to express anger, sadness, denial, and emotional tension within the family.

Many previous studies have discussed the cooperative principle and conversational implicature in different contexts. In film discourse, non-observance of maxims has

generally been shown to create implied meaning, emotional effect, and character development. Akmal and Yana (2020) analyzed implicature and non-observance in *Kingdom of Heaven* and found that the maxim of quantity was frequently flouted, while Simaremare et al. (2021) examined *Mulan* and discovered that many utterances contained maxim flouting. Sheikh (2022) also explored implicature in the Pakistani film *Bol*, and Mane (2012) found that generalized and particularized implicatures were commonly used to express emotions and complex ideas. Similarly, Ye (2022) showed that maxim violations in *Green Book* contributed to character development and entertainment value. Beyond film discourse, studies in advertising and commercial discourse have shown that maxim non-observance often functions persuasively by attracting attention, producing humor, or creating suggestive meanings, as seen in Susanti and Setiawan's (2019) analysis of maxim violations in the Djarum 76 Jin Version advertisement and in the studies by Prastio et al. (2020) and Wedananta (2020) on conversational implicature in commercial interactions and slogans. In educational discourse, Gricean theory has also been used to understand classroom interaction, pragmatic competence, and learners' ability to interpret implied meanings, as demonstrated by Martini (2018), Mohammadzadeh et al. (2019), Li (2021), and Munir and Yavuz (2024). The existing literature collectively demonstrates the broad applicability of Gricean theory across different communicative settings; however, most previous research has emphasized maxim flouting, violation, or implicature in non-literary or screen-based contexts rather than the simultaneous operation of maxim observance and non-observance in dramatic family dialogue.

A large number of studies have examined the cooperative principle, but most of them focus on movies, advertisements, and educational communication. Research on literary works, particularly dramas that portray family conflict, remains limited. Some scholars have investigated pragmatic aspects in drama. Mouelhi (2019) found that communication breakdown in *Long Day's Journey into Night* is caused by denial and avoidance, which lead to emotional disconnection. Jafari (2013), Khan and Bughio (2012), and Bobin (2011) also showed that violations of Gricean maxims in dramatic works such as *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Hamlet* create hidden meanings and reflect psychological conditions. In addition, Aliwie (2025) explained that silence in Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party* can function as a pragmatic strategy related to power and avoidance. However, these studies mainly focus on maxim violation, silence, or implicature. The specific relationship between observance and non-observance of maxims in family-centered dramatic discourse has not been sufficiently explored. More specifically, limited attention has been given to how characters in emotionally conflicted family drama may observe certain maxims to maintain conversational continuity while failing to observe other maxims to conceal pain, deny reality, or express psychological tension.

This study addresses the identified gap by examining the observance and non-observance of Grice's conversational maxims in Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*. The cooperative principle used in this study is originally derived from Grice's theory, while Cutting's framework is employed as an elaboration of Gricean maxim

observance and Nemesi's classification is used as an extension of Gricean non-observance. It focuses on identifying the types of maxims observed in the characters' dialogues using Cutting's framework and analyzing the types of non-observance based on Nemesi's classification. In this sense, Cutting and Nemesi are not treated as separate theories detached from Grice, but as later pragmatic developments that make Grice's cooperative principle more operational for analyzing literary dialogue. The study argues that the play's dialogues do not merely represent communication failure; rather, they demonstrate how the characters strategically use language to express emotions, avoid confrontation, hide painful truths, and preserve family relationships. Examining both observance and non-observance provides a more balanced understanding of dramatic communication, showing that the characters' utterances function not only as moments of pragmatic breakdown but also as efforts to maintain fragile emotional bonds within a damaged family structure. This study is expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of pragmatic strategies in literary dialogue, particularly in emotionally complex family interactions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies how meaning is communicated through language in context. Yule (1996) explains that pragmatics focuses on what speakers mean rather than only what words literally mean. This makes pragmatics closely connected to contextual factors such as the relationship between speaker and listener, the situation of the conversation, and shared background knowledge. Leech (1983) distinguishes pragmatics from semantics by stating that semantics studies meaning in isolation, while pragmatics studies meaning based on communicative intention and language use. Brown and Yule (1983) and Thomas (1995) further explain that understanding meaning requires attention to context, speaker intention, and the relationship between participants in communication. This idea can be seen in Queen Victoria's statement, "*We are not amused*," which pragmatically reflects a subtle demand for respect rather than merely expressing emotion. Stilwell Peccei (1999) and Yule (1996) also emphasize that meaning often depends on shared assumptions and implicit understanding between speakers and listeners. In line with this perspective, Huang (2014) defines pragmatics as the systematic study of meaning arising from language use in context. These theories are relevant to this research because they help explain how the characters in Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night* construct meaning through emotionally complex conversations.

One important theory in pragmatics is Grice's cooperative principle. It should be emphasized that the cooperative principle is originally Grice's theory, proposed to explain how speakers and hearers cooperate in conversation to produce interpretable meaning (Grice, 1975, 1989). As cited in Davies (2007), the cooperative principle refers to the idea that participants in conversation usually cooperate in order to maintain effective communication. Lindblom (2006), quoting Grice (1989), explains that communication

works successfully when speakers share the same conversational goal, depend on each other's contributions, and continue the interaction until they decide to end it. In this study, Cutting (2002) is not treated as the originator of the cooperative principle, but as a scholar who reinterprets and elaborates Grice's theory in a more practical way for discourse and pragmatic analysis. Cutting (2002) states that the cooperative principle is realized through four conversational maxims: quantity, quality, relation, and manner. The maxim of quantity requires speakers to provide sufficient information without giving too much or too little detail. For example, when Michael asks, "Is there an event at your house?" and Jackson answers, "There is my birthday party at 7 p.m.," Jackson provides complete and relevant information. The maxim of quality requires speakers to tell the truth and provide reliable information. In the conversation between Saskia and Danny about Dwi's class attendance, Danny's answer fulfills the maxim because it is based on observable evidence. The maxim of relation focuses on relevance, such as when Lopez responds appropriately to Gabriel's request to borrow a motorbike. Meanwhile, the maxim of manner emphasizes clarity and orderliness, as shown when Sarah clearly explains the location of the campus library to Sam. These maxims help explain how conversations become meaningful and understandable in daily interaction as well as in literary dialogue.

In actual communication, however, speakers do not always observe these maxims. Lindblom (2006) notes that people may fail to follow conversational maxims because of intentions to mislead, ethical considerations, or difficulties in fulfilling multiple maxims at once. Following the Gricean tradition, Nemesi (2015) further develops the discussion of maxim non-observance by classifying the ways speakers fail to observe maxims into more specific categories. Thus, Nemesi's framework is used in this study not as a replacement for Grice's cooperative principle, but as an analytical extension that helps identify different forms of non-observance in dialogue. Nemesi (2015) categorizes this phenomenon into five forms of non-observance, namely violation, infringement, opting out, clash, and exploitation. Violation occurs when speakers intentionally provide false information, such as when John falsely claims that he has submitted his assignment. Infringement happens unintentionally because of confusion, nervousness, or limited ability, as illustrated in Sam's irrelevant response about tissue and money. Opting out occurs when speakers deliberately avoid giving information for ethical reasons, such as a doctor refusing to share medical results before receiving complete reports. Clash happens when speakers cannot fulfill two maxims simultaneously, as shown when Ben hides his real feelings to maintain social harmony. Exploitation refers to intentional flouting of maxims to create irony, sarcasm, or humor, such as Sam's sarcastic birthday response. In *Long Day's Journey into Night*, these forms of non-observance appear frequently in emotionally tense conversations between family members, revealing hidden emotions, psychological conflict, and interpersonal tension.

Pragmatics is also closely related to literary studies because meaning in literary texts often depends on context, implied meaning, and interaction between characters. Venediktova (2022), Mey (2006), and Liyuan (2017) explain that literary pragmatics studies

how meaning is created through communication between author, text, and reader. In dramatic works such as *Long Day's Journey into Night*, dialogue becomes the main tool for expressing emotion, conflict, and character relationships. Mey (2006), Tevdoradze (2023), and Romanyshyn (2021) argue that readers interpret hidden meanings in literary dialogue through pragmatic features such as implicature, presupposition, and deixis. Pragmatic theories like Grice's cooperative principle, Cutting's elaboration of maxim observance, Nemesi's classification of non-observance, and relevance theory help explain why characters sometimes follow or break conversational norms. Al-Hindawi and Mohammed (2021), Baikadamova et al. (2023), and Bobin (2011) state that characters may intentionally violate maxims to hide the truth, avoid confrontation, or express emotional tension. Literary pragmatics is interdisciplinary because it combines insights from linguistics, psychology, anthropology, and cognitive science. Sell (2014), Khan and Bughio (2012), and Jafari (2013) explain that silence, vague responses, and emotionally loaded utterances in literary works can reveal deeper psychological and social realities. Pragmatics also contributes to translation studies and education. Valdeón (2017) explains that pragmatic understanding helps translators transfer implied meanings and cultural nuances accurately, while Munir and Yavuz (2024) show that pragmatic analysis in literature improves students' critical thinking and comprehension skills.

Based on these theories, literary texts provide rich material for pragmatic analysis because they contain both explicit and implicit meaning. The theories of pragmatics, Grice's cooperative principle, Cutting's interpretation of maxim observance, and Nemesi's classification of non-observance of maxims help explain how characters use language strategically in emotionally complex interactions. In Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*, the characters frequently use indirect expressions, silence, avoidance, and implied meanings to manage conflict and maintain relationships. Through the analysis of observance and non-observance of conversational maxims, this study seeks to reveal how language reflects emotional struggle, interpersonal tension, and psychological conditions within the Tyrone family. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the field of literary pragmatics and demonstrate the applicability of Grice's cooperative principle, as elaborated by Cutting (2002) and extended through Nemesi's (2015) classification of non-observance, in analyzing dramatic dialogue.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design with an interpretive pragmatic orientation to analyze the use of Grice's cooperative principle in Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*. The study focused on the verbal interactions among the characters in the drama, particularly on how they observe and fail to observe conversational maxims in emotionally charged family conversations. The object of the study was chosen because the play presents complex family relationships filled with conflict, denial, emotional tension, and indirect communication, making it relevant for pragmatic analysis. The cooperative principle applied in this study is originally based on

Grice's theory, while Cutting's framework was used to elaborate the observance of Gricean maxims and Nemesi's classification was used to examine the forms of Gricean maxim non-observance. Through this approach, the study explored how the characters comply with or deviate from conversational maxims to convey implied meanings and manage interpersonal relationships within the play. In this study, Cutting's framework was used to identify utterances that fulfilled the maxims of quantity, quality, relation, and manner, while Nemesi's classification was used to identify utterances that showed violation, infringement, opting out, clash, and exploitation. Therefore, Cutting and Nemesi are positioned as later pragmatic developments that make Grice's cooperative principle more applicable for classifying observance and non-observance in literary dialogue, rather than as theories separated from Grice's original model.

The primary instrument of this research was the writers, who functioned as the main instrument in collecting, selecting, classifying, and interpreting the data. The data consisted of utterances in the form of words, phrases, and sentences spoken by the characters in *Long Day's Journey into Night*. The primary data source was the script of the drama written by Eugene O'Neill and first published in 1956, consisting of 214 pages. From the script, 21 dialogues were selected because they were considered relevant to the observance and non-observance of Gricean maxims. The selection of the 21 dialogues was based on several criteria. First, the dialogues had to involve direct verbal interaction among the characters. Second, the utterances had to contain clear indications of either observance or non-observance of at least one conversational maxim. Third, the dialogues had to occur in a context of family interaction, emotional tension, conflict, denial, or indirect communication. Fourth, the surrounding context of the dialogue had to provide sufficient textual evidence for pragmatic interpretation. Dialogues that were repetitive, purely descriptive, or did not contain identifiable pragmatic indicators were excluded from the data set. These dialogues became the core data analyzed in this research because they reflected how conversational principles were applied or not observed in the context of family interaction.

The data collection process was conducted through several stages. First, the writers carried out a close reading of the drama to understand the storyline, character relationships, and conversational contexts within the play. Second, the writers identified dialogues containing indications of the cooperative principle, including both observance and non-observance of conversational maxims. After identifying the relevant utterances, the data were classified into two major categories based on the frameworks proposed by Cutting (2002) and Nemesi (2015). Dialogues showing compliance with conversational norms were grouped into observance data, while dialogues reflecting deviation from conversational norms were grouped into non-observance data. All identified utterances were then organized systematically into a data set for further analysis. To strengthen analytical consistency, the selected dialogues were first examined by the writers using the same analytical framework. The classification results were then cross-checked and discussed to minimize individual bias. When differences in interpretation occurred, the

writers revisited the dialogue context, the speaker's intention, and the relevant theoretical indicators before deciding the final classification.

The data were analyzed through several systematic steps. First, the writers filtered and selected dialogues that reflected the application of the cooperative principle in the drama. The selected data were then categorized based on whether they showed observance or non-observance of Gricean maxims. In analyzing observance of maxims, the writers applied Cutting's (2002) elaboration of the cooperative principle, focusing on the maxim of quantity, quality, relation, and manner. This analysis was used to identify how the utterances fulfilled the principles of informativeness, honesty, relevance, and clarity according to the conversational context. For example, an utterance was categorized as observing the maxim of quantity when it provided sufficient information, the maxim of quality when it conveyed information believed to be true, the maxim of relation when it was relevant to the ongoing topic, and the maxim of manner when it was clear and unambiguous. To analyze non-observance of maxims, the writers used Nemesi's (2015) classification consisting of violation, infringement, opting out, clash, and exploitation. The writers identified indicators of non-observance such as irony, sarcasm, ambiguity, and avoidance of conflict found in the dialogues. An utterance was categorized as violation when it deliberately conveyed misleading or false information, infringement when the failure to observe a maxim occurred unintentionally due to emotional pressure or confusion, opting out when the speaker refused to provide expected information, clash when two maxims could not be fulfilled simultaneously, and exploitation when a maxim was intentionally not observed to create irony, sarcasm, humor, or implied meaning. After all data were analyzed, the findings were interpreted to explain the pragmatic functions of the conversational patterns and how they reflected emotional tension, interpersonal conflict, and family relationships within the drama. Because this study focused on the written drama script, the analysis was limited to textual verbal interaction. Performance-based or multimodal elements, such as gestures, facial expressions, intonation, stage movement, and actors' interpretation, were not included in the analysis.

FINDINGS

The writers found two main types of cooperative principle in the family dialogues of Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*, namely the observance and non-observance of Gricean maxims. The play presents the conflict of the Tyrone family, whose members often hide secrets, avoid painful truths, and express emotional tension through indirect conversations. The main characters involved in the dialogues are James Tyrone, Mary Cavan Tyrone, Jamie Tyrone, Edmund Tyrone, and Cathleen. Based on the analysis, 11 data show the observance of Gricean maxims, while 10 data show the non-observance of Gricean maxims.

Table 1. Types of Observed Gricean Maxims

No.	Types of Maxims	Quantity
1	Maxim of Quality	3
2	Maxim of Quantity	3
3	Maxim of Manner	1
4	Maxim of Relation	4
Total		11

The table shows that the most dominant observed maxim is the maxim of relation, with four data. The maxim of quality and maxim of quantity appear three times each, while the maxim of manner appears only once. This shows that the characters often try to keep their responses relevant to the topic, even when the conversations are emotionally tense.

The first type of observed maxim is the maxim of quality. According to Cutting (2002), the maxim of quality is observed when speakers provide truthful information and avoid saying something false. In the play, the writers found three data showing the observance of the maxim of quality.

Datum 1

*Mary: "Why are you staring, Jamie? Is my hair coming down? It's hard for me to do it up properly now. My eyes are getting so bad and I never can find my glasses."
Jamie: "Your hair's all right, Mama. I was only thinking how well you look."*

In Datum 1, Jamie observes the maxim of quality because he gives a response that he believes to be true. His statement, "Your hair's all right, Mama. I was only thinking how well you look," is not used to deceive Mary, but to calm her anxiety. Based on Cutting's (2002) explanation, Jamie's utterance fulfills the maxim of quality because it gives honest reassurance based on his own perception. This utterance also shows Jamie's empathy toward Mary's unstable emotional condition.

Datum 2

Edmund: "That didn't sound like glad tidings."

Datum 2 occurs after Tyrone receives a phone call from Doctor Hardy about Edmund's condition. Edmund's statement shows observance of the maxim of quality because he gives an accurate comment based on what he observes from Tyrone's tone and reaction. Although Tyrone tries to hide his worry, Edmund understands that the news is not good. This is in line with Cutting (2002), who states that the maxim of quality requires speakers to say what they believe to be true and supported by evidence.

Datum 3

Edmund: "Ablaze with electricity! One bulb! Hell, everyone keeps a light on in the front hall until they go to bed."

In Datum 3, Edmund observes the maxim of quality because his statement is based on a common fact that keeping one light on at night is normal in many households. He rejects Tyrone's exaggerated complaint about electricity. This utterance shows Edmund's

honest response to his father's stinginess and also reflects emotional protest toward Tyrone's attitude.

The second type is the maxim of quantity. Cutting (2002) explains that the maxim of quantity requires speakers to provide enough information, neither too much nor too little. The writers found three data showing this maxim.

Datum 4

Mary: "So little? I thought I ate a lot."

Tyrone: "You didn't. Not as much as I'd like to see, anyway."

In Datum 4, Tyrone observes the maxim of quantity because he gives enough information about Mary's eating habit. His response is not too long, but it clearly answers Mary's statement. This utterance also shows Tyrone's concern for Mary's health.

Datum 5

Cathleen: "Here's the whiskey. It'll be lunch time soon. Will I call your father and Mister Jamie, or will you?"

Edmund: "You do it."

Edmund's answer in Datum 5 is short, but it is sufficient. He does not add unnecessary information because Cathleen only asks who will call Tyrone and Jamie. Based on Cutting (2002), this utterance observes the maxim of quantity because it gives the needed information in an appropriate amount.

Datum 6

Jamie: "Hardy only charges a dollar. That's what makes you think he's a fine doctor!"

Tyrone: "If you mean I can't afford one of the fine society doctors who prey on the rich summer people"

In Datum 6, Tyrone observes the maxim of quantity because he gives enough explanation to respond to Jamie's accusation. He explains his financial reason without giving unnecessary details. His response shows that he tries to defend himself from Jamie's criticism about his choice of doctor.

The third type is the maxim of manner. Cutting (2002) explains that the maxim of manner is observed when the speaker gives clear and unambiguous information.

Datum 7

Tyrone: "But thank God, I've kept my appetite and I've the digestion of a young man of twenty, if I am sixty-five."

Mary: "You surely have, James. No one could deny that."

Mary's response in Datum 7 observes the maxim of manner because it is clear, direct, and not ambiguous. Her statement validates Tyrone's comment without creating confusion. This utterance also shows Mary's effort to maintain a warm atmosphere with her husband despite the family tension.

The fourth type is the maxim of relation. According to Cutting (2002), the maxim of relation is observed when the speaker gives a relevant response to the ongoing topic. The writers found four data in this category.

Datum 8

Mary: "I really did have good health once, Cathleen. But that was long ago."

Cathleen: "The Master's sure to notice what's gone from the bottle. He has the eye of a hawk for that."

In Datum 8, Cathleen's response is relevant to the situation because she is worried that Tyrone will notice the reduced whiskey. Although Mary talks about her health, the context also involves their drinking together. Cathleen's utterance shows her awareness of Tyrone's controlling character.

Datum 9

Tyrone: "Will you join me in a drink?"

Edmund: "Ah! Now you're talking!"

Edmund's response in Datum 9 observes the maxim of relation because it directly responds to Tyrone's offer. His utterance shifts the conversation from a serious discussion about illness to a lighter moment. This shows Edmund's desire to avoid a painful topic and enjoy a brief closeness with his father.

Datum 10

Jamie: "Sneaking one, eh? Cut out the bluff, Kid. You're a rottener actor than I am."

Datum 10 shows the maxim of relation because Jamie's statement is directly related to Edmund's action of secretly drinking and pretending to read. Jamie understands Edmund's behavior and responds to the actual situation. This utterance also reflects the close relationship between the brothers.

Datum 11

Mary: "I really should have new glasses. My eyes are so bad now."

Tyrone: "Your eyes are beautiful, and well you know it."

In Datum 11, Tyrone observes the maxim of relation because his response is still related to Mary's statement about her eyes. Instead of discussing her poor eyesight directly, he praises her eyes to calm her. This response shows Tyrone's effort to restore Mary's confidence and reduce emotional tension.

The second major finding is the non-observance of Gricean maxims. Nemesi (2015) classifies non-observance, or "breaking the maxims," into violation, infringement, opting out, clash, and exploitation. The writers found 10 data of non-observance in the Tyrone family dialogues.

Table 2. Types of Non-Observance of Gricean Maxims

No.	Types of Breaking the Maxims	Quantity
1	Violation	3
2	Infringement	2
3	Opting Out	0
4	Clash	2
5	Exploitation	3
Total		10

Table 2 shows that violation and exploitation appear most frequently, with three data each. Infringement and clash appear twice each, while opting out is not found in the data. This finding shows that the characters often break maxims because of denial, emotional pressure, sarcasm, and family conflict.

The first type of non-observance is violation. Nemesi (2015) explains that violation occurs when speakers deliberately give false or misleading information. In this study, violation is mostly related to the maxim of quality.

Datum 12

Edmund: *"What I've got is serious, Mama. Doc Hardy knows for sure now."*

Mary: *"That lying old quack! I warned you he'd invent!"*

In Datum 12, Mary violates the maxim of quality because she denies Doctor Hardy's diagnosis without evidence. Her statement is based on emotional rejection rather than fact. This is in line with Nemesi (2015), who explains that violation happens when the speaker gives false information. Mary's utterance reflects her inability to accept Edmund's illness.

Datum 13

Tyrone: *"But you mustn't let it upset you, Mary. Remember, you've got to take care of yourself, too."*

Mary: *"I'm not upset. There's nothing to be upset about. What makes you think I'm upset?"*

Mary's utterance in Datum 13 is a violation of the maxim of quality because she says that she is not upset, even though her emotional condition shows otherwise. She hides her anxiety and pretends to be calm. This violation reflects Mary's denial and emotional instability after hearing about Edmund's condition.

Datum 14

Edmund: *"Yes, on property valued at a quarter of a million."*

Tyrone: *"Lies! It's all mortgaged!"*

In Datum 14, Tyrone violates the maxim of quality because he makes a strong claim without giving evidence. His statement is used defensively to reject Edmund's accusation about his wealth and stinginess. This violation shows Tyrone's need to protect his image as the head of the family.

The second type is infringement. According to Nemesi (2015), infringement happens when speakers unintentionally fail to observe maxims because of factors such as nervousness, confusion, emotional pressure, or limited ability.

Datum 15

Edmund: *"I meant to tell you last night, Papa, and forgot it. Yesterday when I went for a walk I dropped in at the Inn"*

Mary: *"You shouldn't drink now, Edmund."*

Mary's response in Datum 15 shows infringement of the maxim of relation. Edmund is telling a story about Shaughnessy, but Mary suddenly warns him not to drink. Her response is not directly relevant to the story. However, this happens because of Mary's anxiety about Edmund's health. Her emotional worry causes her to unintentionally move away from the topic.

Datum 16

Tyrone: *"It's what you thought. He's got consumption."*

Jamie: *"God damn it!"*

In Datum 16, Jamie's spontaneous reaction shows infringement of the maxim of relation. His utterance does not continue the topic logically, but it expresses shock and frustration. Based on Nemesi (2015), this can be classified as infringement because Jamie's emotional reaction prevents him from giving a relevant response.

The third type is clash. Nemesi (2015) explains that clash occurs when speakers cannot fulfill two maxims at the same time. In this study, clash appears when the characters try to avoid conflict while still keeping the conversation going.

Datum 17

Tyrone: "Never mind the Socialist gabble. I don't care to listen"

Mary: "Go on with your story, Edmund."

Mary's utterance in Datum 17 shows clash because she does not directly express her real intention, which is to stop the argument. This means she does not fully observe the maxim of quality. However, she observes the maxim of relation by returning the conversation to Edmund's story. This clash reflects Mary's effort to maintain family harmony and avoid further conflict.

Datum 18

Mary: "Yes, dear? What is it?"

Tyrone: "Nothing."

In Datum 18, Tyrone's response shows clash. He says "Nothing," but actually he wants to stop Mary from going upstairs because he worries about her morphine addiction. He does not observe the maxim of quality because he hides his real feeling. At the same time, his response is brief and clear, so it observes the maxim of manner. This clash shows Tyrone's helplessness in facing Mary's addiction.

The fourth type is exploitation. Nemesi (2015) states that exploitation occurs when speakers intentionally break a maxim to create sarcasm, irony, humor, or implied meaning.

Datum 19

Tyrone: "Yes, let us in on it, lads. I told your mother I knew damned well it would be one on me, but never mind that, I'm used to it."

Tyrone's utterance in Datum 19 shows exploitation of the maxim of quality because he uses irony. The phrase "I'm used to it" does not simply mean acceptance, but implies emotional pain because he often feels mocked by his sons. This exploitation shows Tyrone's wounded pride as a father.

Datum 20

Tyrone: "Can you think I'd ever forget, Mary?"

Mary: "No. I know you still love me, James, in spite of everything."

Mary's utterance in Datum 20 shows exploitation because it contains irony and emotional pain. She says that she knows Tyrone still loves her, but the phrase "in spite of everything" suggests doubt, sadness, and the damaged condition of their marriage. This utterance breaks the maxim of quality to express implied emotional meaning.

Datum 21

Jamie: "I claim Edwin Booth never saw the day when he could give as good a performance as a trained seal. Seals are intelligent and honest. They don't put up any bluffs about the Art of Acting. They admit they're just hams earning their daily fish."

In Datum 21, Jamie exploits the maxim of quality through sarcasm. He compares acting to trained seals in order to mock Tyrone. The statement is exaggerated and not

literally factual, but it creates a sarcastic meaning. This exploitation reflects Jamie's disappointment and anger toward his father.

Based on the analysis above, the findings show that the Tyrone family's conversations contain both observance and non-observance of Gricean maxims. Based on Cutting's (2002) theory, the observance of maxims appears when the characters attempt to maintain relevance, clarity, truthfulness, and sufficient information during conversations. Meanwhile, according to Nemesi's (2015) classification, the non-observance of maxims appears when the characters experience denial, emotional pressure, sarcasm, irony, or interpersonal conflict. These findings indicate that pragmatic strategies in *Long Day's Journey into Night* are closely connected to the emotional and psychological tensions experienced by the Tyrone family members.

DISCUSSIONS

Based on the findings, the writers found that the dialogues in Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night* contain both observance and non-observance of Gricean maxims. The observance of maxims consists of the maxim of quality, quantity, manner, and relation as classified by Cutting (2002). Among these categories, the maxim of relation appears most frequently in the family conversations. Meanwhile, the non-observance of maxims includes violation, infringement, clash, and exploitation based on Nemesi's (2015) classification, with exploitation and violation appearing as the most dominant forms. These findings indicate that the characters frequently use conversational strategies not only to exchange information, but also to manage emotional tension, hide painful truths, maintain relationships, and express disappointment within the Tyrone family. The coexistence of observance and non-observance suggests that the family's communication is not completely broken; rather, it is unstable, defensive, and emotionally burdened. The characters still try to keep conversations going, but they often do so through denial, sarcasm, avoidance, and indirectness.

The frequent observance of the maxim of relation shows that the characters generally attempt to maintain the continuity of conversation despite the emotionally unstable atmosphere surrounding the family. Even when the dialogues contain conflict, sarcasm, or emotional pressure, the characters still try to respond according to the ongoing topic. This can be seen, for example, in Datum 9, when Edmund responds to Tyrone's offer of a drink with "Ah! Now you're talking!" His response is relevant to Tyrone's offer, but it also shifts the emotional atmosphere from a serious discussion to a temporary moment of closeness. Similarly, in Datum 11, Tyrone responds to Mary's complaint about her poor eyesight by saying "Your eyes are beautiful, and well you know it." Although he does not directly address the practical issue of her needing new glasses, his response remains contextually related and functions as emotional reassurance. This condition occurs because family members remain emotionally connected to one another, although their relationships are filled with disappointment and unresolved conflict. In contrast, the high occurrence of non-observance of maxims, especially violation and exploitation, reflects the

characters' psychological instability and emotional suffering. The characters often deny reality, hide their true feelings, or use sarcasm and irony as indirect ways to express anger and frustration. Mary's repeated violations of the maxim of quality, for example, are closely related to her inability to accept Edmund's illness and her dependence on morphine. In Datum 12, Mary calls Doctor Hardy "*that lying old quack*" even though the diagnosis is presented as medically confirmed. Her utterance is not merely false information; it is a linguistic expression of denial. Likewise, in Datum 13, her statement "*I'm not upset*" contradicts the emotional context of the scene, showing how the violation of quality becomes a defensive strategy. Jamie's exploitations of maxims through sarcasm reveal his disappointment toward Tyrone as a father figure. Datum 21 illustrates this clearly when Jamie compares actors to "*trained seals*." The comparison is not literally true, but it creates a sarcastic implication that mocks Tyrone's theatrical pride and exposes Jamie's resentment. These conversational patterns show that the failure to fully observe conversational maxims is not simply caused by communicative incompetence, but rather by emotional pressure and complex family conflict.

The findings further suggest that language in *Long Day's Journey into Night* functions as a psychological and emotional mechanism rather than merely as a tool for delivering information. The observance and non-observance of maxims symbolically represent the fragile relationships within the Tyrone family. The frequent use of irony, denial, vague responses, and indirect expressions can be interpreted as signs of emotional disconnection among family members. Although the characters live together and continue communicating, they often fail to express their real feelings honestly. As a result, the conversations become emotionally loaded and psychologically defensive. In this context, the non-observance of maxims reflects deeper emotional realities, such as fear, guilt, helplessness, disappointment, and loneliness. Mary's denials, Tyrone's defensive statements, and Jamie's sarcasm illustrate how each family member struggles emotionally while attempting to protect themselves from painful truths. Therefore, the pragmatic patterns found in the drama can be interpreted as representations of fractured family communication and unresolved psychological trauma.

From the perspective of literary pragmatics, these conversational patterns are significant because dramatic dialogue does not only represent ordinary communication between fictional characters; it also constructs characterization, conflict, and the reader's interpretation of hidden meaning. Mey (2006) and Sell (2014) explain that literary pragmatics pays attention to how meaning emerges from the interaction between text, context, speaker intention, and reader interpretation. In this study, the Tyrone family's utterances function both as intra-textual communication among characters and as literary devices that allow readers to infer emotional wounds that are not directly stated. Tevdoradze (2023) also emphasizes that literary communication has its own pragmatic distinctiveness because readers interpret not only what is said, but also why it is said in a particular way within the literary context. Thus, Mary's denial, Tyrone's evasive responses, and Jamie's sarcasm are not only examples of maxim non-observance; they also

serve as dramatic strategies that reveal psychological conflict and intensify the tragic atmosphere of the play.

The findings also reveal several limitations of the cooperative principle proposed by Grice and elaborated by Cutting (2002). The first limitation concerns the fact that conversational maxims are not always expressed and interpreted in the same way across cultures, communities, and communicative situations. Cutting and Fordyce (2020) argues that what counts as sufficient, truthful, relevant, or clear information may vary depending on cultural conventions and social expectations. Therefore, the cooperative principle cannot be applied mechanically to every utterance without considering its context. In the context of *Long Day's Journey into Night*, the problem is not cross-cultural difference in a broad anthropological sense, but the specific emotional culture of the Tyrone family. The family members have developed their own communicative habits: they avoid painful topics, soften direct statements, use sarcasm to express resentment, and replace emotional honesty with indirectness. For example, Tyrone's praise of Mary's eyes in Datum 11 may seem to avoid the literal issue of her poor eyesight, yet within the intimate and wounded context of their marriage, the utterance functions as a relevant attempt to comfort her. Similarly, Mary's denial in "*I'm not upset*" cannot be understood only as a simple violation of quality; it must also be read as part of the family's repeated pattern of avoiding painful realities. This shows that observance and non-observance of maxims are strongly shaped by emotional and relational context.

The second limitation concerns the overlap among the four maxims. Cutting and Fordyce (2020) explains that it is often difficult to decide which maxim is operating because two or more maxims may work at the same time. This limitation is clearly reflected in the analyzed data. For example, when Tyrone says "*Nothing*" in Datum 18, his response is brief and clear, so it appears to observe the maxim of manner. However, the same utterance also hides his actual anxiety about Mary's movement upstairs and her possible return to morphine, so it fails to observe the maxim of quality. In another case, when Mary says "*Go on with your story, Edmund,*" she keeps the conversation relevant by redirecting the topic, but she also avoids confronting the conflict directly. The utterance therefore involves both observance and non-observance at the same time. These examples show that the Gricean maxims do not always function as separate categories in dramatic dialogue. In emotionally charged conversations, one utterance may be relevant, unclear, insufficient, and emotionally evasive at once.

This overlap can also be discussed through Sperber and Wilson's (1995) relevance theory. Sperber and Wilson argue that communication is guided by relevance rather than by a set of separate conversational maxims. From this perspective, quantity, quality, and manner can be understood in relation to relevance: speakers are expected to provide the right amount of relevant information, sincere relevant information, and clear relevant information. This perspective helps explain why many utterances in *Long Day's Journey into Night* still make sense even when they appear to violate or exploit certain maxims. Jamie's sarcasm about "*trained seals,*" for instance, is not literally true and therefore does

not observe the maxim of quality. However, it remains highly relevant because it draws on the family's shared background knowledge about Tyrone's acting career, Jamie's resentment, and the long history of father-son conflict. Likewise, Mary's denial of Edmund's illness contradicts factual reality, but it is relevant to her psychological need to reject unbearable truth. In relevance-theoretical terms, the characters' utterances produce contextual effects because they strengthen, contradict, or expose existing assumptions about family guilt, illness, addiction, disappointment, and emotional dependency.

At the same time, relevance theory also has limitations when applied to this drama. Although it explains how readers and interlocutors infer meaning by selecting relevant contextual information, it does not fully account for the social and emotional power relations that shape the Tyrone family's interactions. The characters do not only seek relevance; they also protect themselves, attack one another indirectly, avoid guilt, and maintain fragile emotional bonds. Therefore, the cooperative principle and relevance theory are best understood as complementary in this study. Grice's cooperative principle helps classify how the characters observe or fail to observe conversational maxims, while Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory helps explain why even indirect, sarcastic, or evasive utterances remain interpretable and meaningful within the dramatic context. Together, these perspectives show that the Tyrone family's communication is not random or meaningless, but pragmatically structured by relevance, emotional pressure, and unresolved psychological conflict.

These findings are closely related to several previous studies discussing Gricean maxims and literary pragmatics. The findings support Mouelhi's (2019) study, which explains that communication breakdown in *Long Day's Journey into Night* is caused by denial and avoidance that create emotional disconnection among the characters. Similarly, the findings also confirm Jafari (2013), Khan and Bughio (2012), and Bobin (2011), who found that violations of Gricean maxims in dramatic works often produce hidden meanings and reveal psychological tension. The exploitation data in this research also support Aliwie's (2025) argument that indirect communication strategies, including sarcasm and implied meaning, can function as expressions of authority, emotional resistance, and interpersonal conflict. However, this study contributes a broader perspective compared to previous studies because it does not only focus on maxim violation or implicature, but also analyzes the observance and non-observance of maxims simultaneously. This distinction is important because earlier studies generally emphasize how characters break conversational maxims to produce hidden meanings, whereas the present study shows that characters also observe certain maxims to keep interaction alive within a damaged family relationship. In other words, the emotional meaning of the drama emerges not only from pragmatic failure, but also from the tension between cooperation and non-cooperation. This study shows that observance of maxims is equally important in maintaining emotional interaction and conversational continuity within family conflict. Therefore, the present study extends previous pragmatic studies by

demonstrating that both observance and non-observance of conversational maxims work together in shaping emotional and relational meaning in dramatic dialogue.

The findings of this study offer three main contributions to literary pragmatics. Theoretically, the study strengthens the applicability of Cutting's (2002) theory of maxim observance and Nemesi's (2015) classification of non-observance in analyzing dramatic dialogue, while also showing that conversational maxims often overlap in emotionally complex discourse. The discussion of Sperber and Wilson's (1995) relevance theory further demonstrates that even utterances categorized as non-observance may remain meaningful because they are contextually relevant to the characters' shared emotional history. Methodologically, the study demonstrates that close pragmatic reading can reveal how utterances function not only as linguistic data but also as dramatic signs of denial, conflict, and psychological suffering. Practically, the study emphasizes the importance of emotionally open communication in family relationships, since denial, sarcasm, and indirectness in the Tyrone family repeatedly intensify misunderstanding and emotional distance. These findings also open opportunities for further research in literary pragmatics, particularly studies examining conversational strategies, psychological trauma, and emotional conflict in other dramatic or literary works.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyze the observance and non-observance of Gricean maxims in Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*, particularly in relation to how family dialogue represents emotional conflict, denial, and psychological tension. The findings of this study reveal that the conversations in Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night* are not merely ordinary family dialogues, but emotionally complex interactions filled with hidden meanings, denial, sarcasm, and psychological tension. The analysis of both observed and non-observed maxims shows that the Tyrone family's communication is shaped by two interrelated tendencies: the need to maintain interaction and the tendency to avoid painful truths. The characters do not only break Grice's conversational maxims in moments of conflict, but they also continue to observe certain maxims in order to maintain communication and emotional connection within the family. This indicates that observance and non-observance of Gricean maxims occur simultaneously in emotionally unstable situations. The study also reveals that non-observance of maxims, especially violation and exploitation, is closely related to emotional suffering, fear, disappointment, and unresolved trauma experienced by the Tyrone family members. In other words, the characters' indirect expressions, irony, and denials are not simply communicative failures, but strategies used to protect themselves from painful realities and fragile family relationships.

This study contributes to the field of literary pragmatics by providing a broader understanding of how Grice's cooperative principle operates in dramatic dialogue. More specifically, the study demonstrates that Grice's cooperative principle, as elaborated by Cutting and extended through Nemesi's classification of non-observance, can explain not

only pragmatic failure but also the emotional and relational functions of dialogue in literary texts. Previous studies mostly focused only on maxim violation or conversational implicature, while this research demonstrates that observance and non-observance of maxims work together in constructing emotional meaning and interpersonal tension. This finding has broader implications for the analysis of literary discourse because it suggests that characters' utterances should not be interpreted only in terms of whether they follow or break conversational rules, but also in terms of how those utterances create characterization, reveal psychological conflict, and shape the emotional structure of a literary work. Furthermore, this study shows that Grice's cooperative principle cannot always be interpreted rigidly because conversational maxims frequently overlap and are strongly influenced by emotional and contextual conditions. As a result, this research offers a broader perspective in understanding pragmatic strategies in literary communication.

Although the study offers these contributions, it also has several limitations that should be acknowledged. This study is limited to the analysis of dialogues found in Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night* and focuses only on the observance and non-observance of Grice's conversational maxims in one dramatic work. The study also uses a qualitative descriptive approach, meaning that the findings cannot be generalized to all literary texts or other communicative contexts. In addition, the analysis mainly emphasizes verbal interaction and does not deeply explore non-verbal aspects such as gestures, facial expressions, intonation, stage movement, or performance interpretation that may strengthen pragmatic meaning in drama. The study is also limited in its theoretical scope because it mainly applies Grice's cooperative principle as elaborated through maxim observance and non-observance. Therefore, future research may further develop the analysis by engaging more deeply with Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory, particularly to examine how readers infer meaning from indirect, sarcastic, or emotionally defensive utterances through contextual relevance. Future studies may also apply neo-Gricean pragmatics to explore how implied meanings are generated through inference, speaker intention, and contextual assumptions in literary dialogue. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to extend this line of inquiry through comparative pragmatic analyses across different dramatic works, literary genres, authors, periods, or cultural contexts. Future researchers may also combine Gricean pragmatics with psychological, discourse, relevance-theoretical, neo-Gricean, or performance-based approaches to examine how verbal and non-verbal elements jointly construct emotional conflict, trauma, and interpersonal tension in literary texts.

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