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Flouting Grice's Conversational Maxims: A Linguistic Study of Authentic Podcast Discourse

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Abstract

The study examines how Grice's Cooperative Principle and conversational maxims operate in authentic spoken discourse, focusing on five educational podcasts published on the platform Spotify between the years 2024 and 2025. Drawing on pragmatic theory – including conversational implicature and Relevance Theory – it is investigated how and why speakers flout the Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Manner maxims in real-life communication. The empirical analysis combines qualitative analysis of communicative function with a quantitative count of flouting instances. A total of thirty-eight instances of maxim flouts are identified, classified, and evaluated. Contrary to the initial hypothesis, flouting of the Maxim of Quantity is not the dominant pattern. The findings indicate that flouting is rarely a communicative failure; rather, it functions as a purposeful strategy that generates implicature, emphasizes emotion, and increases listeners' engagement without undermining mutual understanding. The study concludes that conversational maxims function as flexible, adaptable guidelines rather than fixed rules, and that authentic materials of this kind hold considerable value for developing learners' pragmatic competence in teaching and learning contexts while also informing related fields including translation studies, intercultural communication training, media discourse analysis, and the design of conversational AI systems, highlighting its relevance for both theoretical and applied linguistic research.

Keywords: Grice's cooperative principle, conversational maxims, flouting, conversational implicature, pragmatics, Relevance Theory, podcast discourse, pragmatic competence.

1. Introduction

Natural language is efficient in the sense that a single message can convey different semantic contents in different contexts. Meaning is shaped by the interaction between the linguistic form and the situation in which it is produced, therefore it comes from the combination of words and context (Carston, 2002; Fabian, 2024). Interpretative strategies help listeners understand meanings that are not directly expressed. The ability to deal with vagueness and fill in missing information is a key skill in using language (Rooy, 2001). The process of understanding extra meaning that is not said directly is related to conversational implicature (Levinson, 2000; Elmahady et al., 2022). H.P. Grice (Grice, 1975) explains that speakers often expect listeners to work out additional meaning by using context, general communication rules, and shared knowledge. Because of this, implicature depends strongly on the situation and on what the speaker and listener already know prior to their conversation (Li, 2021). The hidden meanings are gathered based on how they are created, especially depending on how speakers follow or do not follow conversational maxims:

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– observance and direct application of conversational maxims – even when an utterance is clear, relevant, truthful, and informative, listeners may still suppose additional meaning.

– conflict between conversational maxims – one maxim is sacrificed to preserve another one which is more important,

– flouting of conversational maxims – a speaker openly and intentionally breaks a maxim, while expecting the listener to notice this and search for an implied meaning; it is common in irony, sarcasm, or emotional exaggeration,

– deliberate violation of conversational maxims – a maxim is broken without signalling it clearly, often to hide information or prevent understanding (Thomas, 1995).

Relevance Theory (Sperber, Wilson, 1986; Yus, 2006) is a cognitive approach to communication that explains how hearers interpret utterances beyond their literal meaning. Instead of seeing communication mainly as rule-governed cooperation, it is guided by general principles of human cognition. Human beings are naturally inclined to look for information that is worth their attention. When they receive linguistic or non-linguistic stimuli, they automatically try to interpret them in the most meaningful way possible. Relevance Theory agrees with the idea that understanding communication involves recognizing speaker's intention. Understanding an utterance is a matter of inferring what the speaker intended to convey from what she utters (Allott, 2013). According to D. Sperber and D. Wilson (Sperber, Wilson, 2015), there is a continuum of cases between 'meaning that' and 'displaying evidence that'. As B. Clark (Clark, 2013) asserts, cognition includes processes such as remembering, planning, evaluating and can be understood as the process of acquiring, storing, and manipulating information. Communicators shape their messages in ways which make it easier for us to see how they intend their behaviour to be relevant (Clark, 2013). Language comprehension depends on the listener's or reader's ability to construct inferences when building a mental representation of what a text is about (Graesser et.al, 1994). M. Terkourafi (Terkourafi, 2021) notes that meaning which does not come from the words themselves but rather from how they are used is considered pragmatic meaning. M. Stone (Stone, 2003) adds that plans and intentions function as mental structures that connect actions with expected outcomes. According to P. Kendeou et al. (Kendeou et al., 2020), inference making is a fundamental skill that enables the construction of coherent representations during reading comprehension.

Context provides the basis for both implicature and inferential interpretation. It is necessary to any adequate account of meaning and understanding (Carston, 2002). Context in pragmatics can be divided into several types based on what aspects of communication they emphasize: situational, background knowledge, and co-textual contexts (Cutting, 2022). Different communicative contexts establish different priorities among maxims, and successful communicators learn to recognize and adapt to these contextual variations (Fabian, 2026). Meaning is often inferred from multiple sources, such as context, tone of voice, intonation, pauses, emphasis, and shared knowledge between speakers and listeners, by their relationship, the topic of conversation, and the wider communicative situation. From a cognitive-pragmatic perspective, communication is best understood as an inferential process grounded in the speakers' mental states and shared knowledge, extending context well beyond the spoken words themselves to include everything presupposed as common ground among participants (Airenti, Plebe, 2017). Previous research has also shown that emotional aspects of language use influence learners' responses to spoken discourse and their emotional habitual subjective well-being across different language contexts, highlighting the close relationship between language processing and emotional experience (Škorvagová, Beclerová, 2022). The motivating force behind speakers' self-realization is the choice of goals and ways of their essence realization, self-determination and aspiration for self-presentation in a new cultural environment, in particular by the means of speech activity (Handzilevska et al., 2019).

Grice's principle assumes that people cooperate in the process of communication in order to reduce misunderstanding (Finch, 2000). But the real-life communication may not always follow the principle in a simple or predictable way (Davies, 2000). Speakers appear to break cooperative expectations, yet communication still succeeds because listeners look for a deeper meaning. A. Hadi (Hadi, 2013) emphasizes that communication often involves conflicting intentions or strategic behaviour. In authentic discourse, including spoken interactions such as podcasts, speakers are ironic, indirect, or intentionally ambiguous, and listeners must still interpret meaning successfully. For this reason, Grice's model needs to be accompanied by Relevance Theory, which offers a more detailed account of the cognitive processes involved in interpretation.

As part of his Cooperative Principle, Grice proposes a set of conversational maxims that describe how speakers typically cooperate in communication. Rules are either adhered to or broken, whereas the upholding of principles is a cline (Davies, 2000). When people speak or write, they usually aim to express themselves in a way that others can understand. For this reason, interaction involves continuous adjustment between participants, i.e., clarifying, reformulating, or paraphrasing ideas in order to reach mutual understanding. Effective communication also requires a certain level of shared knowledge between participants (Thomas, 1995).

The Maxim of Quality relates directly to truthfulness in communication. It requires speakers to aim to be truthful and only provide information that is accurate and supported by evidence (Thomas, 1995). This expectation is especially important in podcasts. Podcast listeners usually cannot directly verify the information they hear. Therefore, they rely heavily on the assumption that speakers follow the Maxim of Quality. When a podcast host presents statistics, personal experiences, or opinions from experts, the audience interpret them under the belief that the speaker is being honest and has sufficient evidence and research. If this assumption is broken, it may significantly weaken the relationship of trust. Without this basic rule, the goals of communication would become difficult to achieve (Yule, 1996). If participants suspect dishonesty, they may question everything that is said, which disturbs the flow of interaction. Flouting of maxim occurs when speakers deliberately and obviously say something untrue. In podcasts, this type of flouting often appears in a playful or ironic style. Hosts may exaggerate or make obviously false statements to entertain the audience. Listeners are expected to understand that these statements are not meant to be factual but rather pose as stylistic devices.

The Maxim of Quantity concerns the amount of information that is provided in conversation. Speakers should provide all the information which is necessary for the purpose of the current exchange but also leave out any unnecessary details that aren't important (Thomas, 1995). This balance supports clarity of the conversation and helps the listener focus on what is relevant at that moment. Overinformativeness may raise side issues or make listeners think that the extra detail has a special purpose (Grice, 1991). Podcasts are influenced by time limits and their conversation-like style. Hosts add personal opinions, jokes, small talk, and spontaneous reactions along with facts. However, they should be sufficiently informational for the listener to understand the message without confusion or excess (Haniyah et al., 2025).

Maxim of Relation focuses on staying on topic and making sure that each contribution supports shared understanding. Speakers are expected to provide information that helps answer the implicit questions and support coherence and continuity in discourse (Sperber, Wilson, 1995). Podcast interviews often revolve around a central theme, e.g., a guest's professional experience, personal story, or a current social issue. When both host and guest follow the maxim of relevance, the discussion remains focused, and listeners can easily follow the line of thought. Irrelevant departure from the topic may confuse the audience or weaken the impact of the central message. In interviews, a guest may change the topic when asked about personal or controversial issues. These changes are usually not accidental; they are often used to protect oneself or create emotional distance (Haniyah et al., 2025).

Maxim of Manner is described as a guideline encouraging speakers to present information clearly, straightforwardly, and in an organized way, not to confuse the audience (Sperber, Wilson, 1995). In podcasts, listeners cannot easily re-read or review what was said. Therefore, clarity and logical structure are crucial. When speakers talk in a disorganized or ambiguous way, listeners struggle to follow the discussion. In contrast, clear and well-structured speech helps maintain engagement and understanding, which is especially important in audio-based media.

Podcasts have become one of the most popular forms of digital media in recent years. In educational contexts specifically, common genres include the *Chat Show* (conversational, interview-style formats), the *Narrative* (storytelling-driven formats), and the *Quick Burst* (short, information-dense episodes) (Drew, 2017). Educational podcasts feature clear explanations, expert interviews, or discussions that make complex topics easier to understand. They also frequently include speakers sharing their own experiences. Spoken communication involves a range of interactional features – backchannelling, fillers, discourse markers, hedging, clarification, and repair – contributing to the natural flow of conversation and supporting the interpretation of meaning in real-life communication (Pete, 2020). M.R. Arfanda et al. (Arfanda et al., 2022) adds that communication needs to be delivered smoothly to make it understandable. I.P. Wijaya and A. Afriana (Wijaya, Afriana, 2026) highlight how implicatures contribute to the construction of humour through dynamic and pragmatic interaction between the host and his guests. Studying

maxim flouting in podcasts helps us understand how speakers use language to create humour and keep the audience interested (Zelianti et al., 2024). A. Hadi (Hadi, 2023) observes interview podcasts with question-and-answer exchanges where guests may flout maxims to shape their public image or shift topics. They claim that flouting maxims for humour keeps listeners entertained and creates a relaxed atmosphere. Educational podcasts tend to follow the maxims more closely to ensure clarity and understanding, even though flouting can still occur to make explanations more engaging (Arfanda et al., 2022). Across all formats, speakers and hosts use maxim flouting to their advantage – to generate laughter, build rapport, hold attention, or convey certain messages without stating them directly. Understanding when and why speakers flout maxims in educational settings can reveal how hosts make learning enjoyable without sacrificing understanding of the topic. The study focuses on educational podcasts as they combine learning content with natural, real-life communication. Examining maxims in this context helps us understand how speakers explain important ideas while maintaining listeners' attention and connecting with them through appealing examples and experiences.

2. Materials and methods

The main objective of the present research is to analyse how conversational maxims are flouted in educational podcast discourse. More specifically, the study aims to identify instances of flouting of all the maxims, determine which conversational maxim is flouted most frequently and examine the most common reasons for the Maxim of Quality flouting. Based on these objectives, the research questions have been formulated:

RQ1: How are Grice's conversational maxims flouted in educational podcasts?

RQ2: Which conversational maxim is flouted most frequently?

RQ3: What are the most common reasons for flouting the Maxim of Quality?

The research hypotheses are based on the theoretical framework of Grice's Cooperative Principle and previous research on the spoken discourse which suggests that speakers often use non-literal language (e.g., exaggeration, humour, or digression) to achieve communicative goals (Grice, 1975; Krisdwiyani, Hanidar, 2022; Liu, Jiang, 2024).

H1: Flouting of conversational maxims in educational podcasts is expected to occur most commonly through over-explanation (Quantity), exaggeration (Quality), topic shifts (Relation), and disorganized speech (Manner).

H2: The Maxim of Quantity is expected to be flouted most frequently, as speakers in spoken discourse tend to provide extended explanations.

H3: Flouting of the Maxim of Quality is expected to occur mainly through exaggeration, humour, and irony, rather than deliberate falsehood.

The research sample consists of five educational podcasts published between 2024 and 2025, selected based on their relevance to current educational topics and their availability on the Spotify platform which has been recognized as a valuable and varied resource for authentic spoken-language analysis (Yuliana, Wulandari, 2023). Table 1 presents the selected podcasts including titles, shows, release dates and episode lengths. From all the podcasts conducted in English, we selected specific parts of the discussions for analysis, excluding introductions and closing remarks to focus on substantive, topic-driven dialogue. Selected segments were manually transcribed and reviewed for accuracy. Afterwards common patterns of flouting were identified (H1). The frequency of each category was calculated to examine which maxim is flouted most often (H2), while selected examples were analysed to explore the role of exaggeration, humour, and irony (H3). The analysed podcasts focus on the current state of the education system, the role of the teacher, the use of technology in education and educational policy. The topics were chosen as they provide meaningful and content-rich discussions suitable for pragmatic analysis.

Table 1. Podcast research sample

№	Episode	Show	Release date	Length
1	Growth Discourse: A Framework for Discussing Hard Topics with Students	The Cult of Pedagogy	07/12/2025	01:10:07

№	Episode	Show	Release date	Length
2	Keep Calm and Lead on with Patrick Cozier	Mind the Gap: Making Education Work Across the Globe	18/07/2025	58:55
3	The Purpose of Education: In Conversation with Professor Gert Biesta	Talking Teaching	26/03/2025	41:06
4	Our First-Year Teaching Was ROUGH...	Teachers Off Duty	21/07/2024	53:26
5	The Elements of Great Teaching – Dimension 1, Element 1	Evidence Based Education	06/01/2025	57:16

3. Discussion

The empirical findings of the study contribute to ongoing debates in pragmatic theory, media culture, and digital pedagogy regarding how speakers navigate conversational norms in unscripted audio formats. Apart from treating Gricean maxims, our results reinforce a flexible, cognitive-pragmatic framework consistent with Relevance Theory (Sperber, Wilson, 1995) and contemporary media discourse analysis. Modern audio audiences seek platforms that deliver a blend of intellectual value, conversational authenticity, and parasocial intimacy (Chan-Olmsted, Wang, 2022). Digital audio formats negotiate shifting communicative norms and narrative structures to foster active listening and trust (Nee, Santana, 2022). Listeners approach educational media with an implicit expectation of shared interpretive goodwill (Lacey, 2025). However, the presence of deliberate flouting of Quality and Quantity maxims raises significant questions for media literacy and educational practice. According to N. Anstead et al. (Anstead et al., 2025) media literacy interventions must equip audiences with the critical capacity to navigate ambiguous, non-literal, and persuasive media contexts. In educational audio settings, listeners – particularly non-native and younger speakers – are supposed to continuously differentiate rhetorical hyperbole from literal claim-making. Modern digital education moves beyond basic textual comprehension toward critical media analysis (DiGiacomo et al., 2023). The demand for high listener retention and dynamic audio flow encourages podcast creators to adopt conversational styles characterized by spontaneity, personal anecdotes, and stylistic maxim flouts (Ellis, et al., 2021; Jung, 2024). The identified, systematic, genre-linked patterns of maxim flouting also contribute to the design of conversational AI systems and dialogue models which aim to generate and correctly interpret non-literal language such as irony, hyperbole, or humour (Rappa et al., 2026). While advanced audio language models are beginning to navigate metaphorical reasoning, they often struggle with the subtle acoustic cues essential for 'listening between the lines' in non-literal digital discourse (Xiao et al., 2025). This is the reason why empirical evidence of how and when speakers flout maxims in real discourse could help language models achieve a more human-like grasp of conversational implicature.

From an applied perspective, the research findings highlight the importance of developing learners' pragmatic competence – specifically, their ability to recognize and interpret non-literal language – as a core component of listening instruction in English as a foreign language. Podcasts as authentic materials expose learners to natural conversational strategies rarely found in textbook dialogue, and Spotify platform has been shown to effectively support listening comprehension and digital literacy development among language learners (Yuliana, Wulandari, 2023). Long-term engagement with multimedia audio formats has been shown to foster holistic communicative development and bridge the gap between the classroom instruction and real-world linguistic demands (Mekheimer, 2024). Spotify-hosted educational podcasts constitute a viable and rich data source for pragmatic and discourse-analytic research (Clifton et al., 2020). They can be productively used in future corpus-pragmatics research on implicature, humour, or irony (Rahardi, Noviance, 2025).

4. Results

It was assumed that podcast discourse is typically semi-formal and combines informative and conversational elements (Babayode, 2023). Speakers often react spontaneously, share personal experiences and aim to engage listeners. As a result, communication may include non-literal

language, such as humour, exaggeration, or digressions, which can affect clarity but also increase listener engagement and make the content more memorable (Liu, Jiang, 2024).

Our analysis identified a total of 38 flouting instances of Grice's conversational maxims (Table 2). The Maxim of Quality was flouted most often (12 times, 31.58 %), mainly through exaggeration and humour. The Maxims of Quantity and Relation were each flouted 9 times (23.68 %), while the Maxim of Manner was flouted the least (8 times, 21.05 %). These results do not support Hypothesis 2, which predicted that the Maxim of Quantity would be flouted most frequently.

Table 2. Distribution of maxim flouting across podcasts

	Podcast 1	Podcast 2	Podcast 3	Podcast 4	Podcast 5	Sum	%
Maxim of Quality	1	2	0	7	2	12	31.58
Maxim of Quantity	3	2	2	1	1	9	23.68
Maxim of Relation	2	1	3	2	1	9	23.68
Maxim of Manner	2	1	2	2	1	8	21.05
Sum	8	6	7	12	5	38	100.00
%	21.05	15.79	18.42	31.58	13.16	100.00	–

Figure 1 and Figure 2 transparently present distribution of maxim flouting across all five podcasts as well as comparison of total maxim flouting across them.

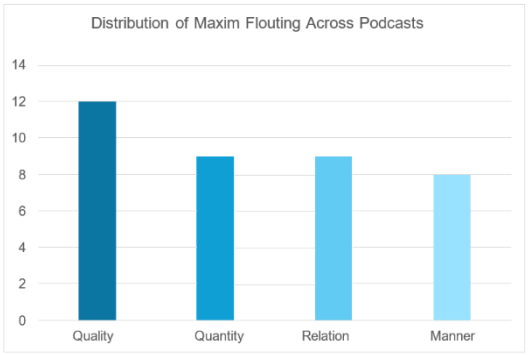


Fig. 1. Maxim flouting across podcasts

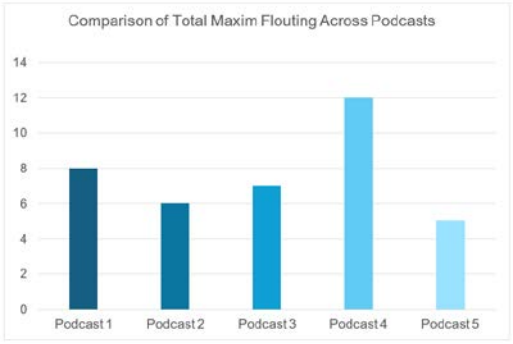


Fig. 2. Maxim flouting per podcast

The high frequency of flouting of the Maxim of Quality can be explained by the nature of spoken discourse, where speakers often use exaggeration, irony, or humour to create additional meaning (Krisdwiyani, Hanidar, 2022; Manurung, 2019). According to Grice's framework, these cases do not represent simple violations, but rather intentional flouting that leads to the interpretation of implicature. In contrast, the low occurrence of Maxim of Manner flouting may reflect speakers' preference for clarity, as they generally avoid ambiguity or confusion (Manurung, 2019). This suggests that the frequency of maxim flouting is influenced by the speaking style, level of formality, overall purpose of the podcast, and its target audience (Al-Shboul, 2022).

Figure 3 presents the distribution of different types of maxim flouts within each podcast. Podcast 4 is strongly dominated by the Maxim of Quality flouting while the other podcasts display a more balanced distribution across maxims. In Podcast 3 the Maxim of Quality flouting is not present.

The findings show that flouting of Grice's maxims plays a significant communicative role in the analysed podcasts. Rather than being communication 'failures', these flouting instances often generate implicatures, meaning that listeners are expected to infer the speaker's intended message beyond the literal words.

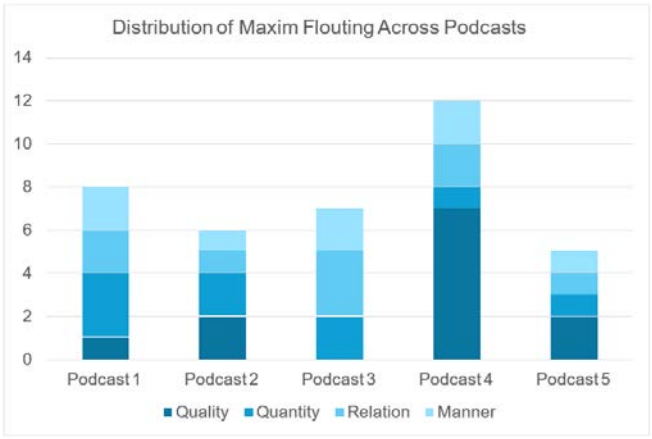


Fig. 3. Distribution of maxim flouting across podcasts

Podcast 1 (Episode: *Growth Discourse: A Framework for Discussing Hard Topics with Students*) represents a semi-formal educational podcast with two speakers. The tone is mostly professional but still relaxed and conversational. There were 8 flouting instances identified in this episode. The Maxim of Quality was flouted with the idiom *"And you can bet your bottom dollar that I have many questions that I would like to ask"* (57:25–57:31). For most native speakers it clearly implies that the speaker had many questions he chose not to ask. The maxim was flouted several more times through over-explanation: when the topic was lesson plans and the speaker gave a very long and detailed description of the Emancipation Memorial (33:25–37:58), including its location, surroundings, and full historical background. This went far beyond what was needed for answering the question. While the extra context helped some listeners better understand the lesson idea, others may have lost focus or felt overwhelmed by the amount of information. The Maxim of Relation was flouted when the speaker used a long bowling analogy instead of a direct answer: *"I don't know if you're a bowler or if you've ever gone bowling... So, think of those pins as truth, right? We're all trying to aim at truth. If we stay right in the middle, we have less of a chance of knocking all those pins down. But if we try to curve it, yeah, we might get closer to truth"* (15:29–15:48). The Maxim of Manner appeared to be flouted when the speaker gave an informal and slightly unstructured explanation: *"One of the things we want them to wrestle with is ... this, um sometimes... I'll give you an example one: sometimes, uh, interrupting is really bad for a group, right"* (54:49–55:27). The hesitations and informal style made it feel authentic, but it could be harder for non-native or less experienced listeners to follow. Despite some over-explanation and occasional figurative language, the podcast remained mostly clear and easy to understand. The educational focus and calm pace helped listeners follow the main ideas without major confusion.

Podcast 2 (Episode: *Keep Calm and Lead on with Patrick Cozier*) included three speakers involved in a mixed professional discussion with personal stories and light humour. The Maxim of Quality was flouted twice: *"I was scared of my own shadow"* (19:54–20:01) and *"We have got to be a couple of adrenaline junkies"* (51:16–51:22). These exaggerations helped emphasize how overwhelming and intense leadership felt at the beginning, making the speaker seem more human and relatable. The Maxim of Quantity was flouted when the speaker said, *"Let's not talk about me"* (11:18–11:24) and then immediately told a long personal story. This created a humorous and self-aware tone, though it slightly contradicted his own statement. The Maxim of Relation was flouted by shifting from the main topic to personal political views (11:24–11:30). The intended meaning was to show the tension between personal identity and professional responsibility. Most listeners likely found this honest and engaging. The Maxim of Manner occurred when the speaker became disorganized and admitted, *"Yeah, I know I'm messing up completely..."* (37:17–37:23) while trying to recall a saying. This moment of vulnerability made him more authentic and likeable to the audience. The podcast was clear and enjoyable to listen to. The light humour and personal stories made the content feel warm and relatable, even though a few small digressions and exaggerations occurred.

Podcast 3 (Episode: *The Purpose of Education: In Conversation with Professor Gert Biesta*) represented a focused academic interview with one main speaker and interviewer. Its tone was

serious and educational with several personal statements. The Maxim of Relation was flouted three times – when the professor started with a long story about the destruction of Rotterdam in WWII (1:46–2:08), before answering the question about his background, or when he suddenly brought up child labour in 19th-century mines (32:15–32:21) while discussing learning environments. These digressions initially seemed off topic, but they served to give a deeper historical and moral context and help listeners understand the seriousness of the topic. The Maxim of Quantity was flouted twice by giving very detailed explanations instead of short answers. They sometimes made the conversation feel dull but, on the other hand, allowed listeners to gain richer insight into the speaker's philosophy. The Maxim of Manner flouting appeared through hesitation and use of complex words like *"subjectification"* (12:10–12:25). Despite reduced immediate clarity, listeners were encouraged to think more deeply about the idea behind it. The episode was intellectually rich but occasionally intense and challenging to comprehend. Thanks to the thoughtful examples and clear structure, the main ideas remained understandable for listeners, though some parts required more attention than others.

Podcast 4 (Episode: *Our First-Year Teaching Was ROUGH...*) presented three speakers who shared funny personal stories using slang, sarcasm, inside jokes, and personal stories with cases of exaggeration. This episode had the highest number (12) of flouts. The Maxim of Quality was heavily flouted (7 times) through strong exaggeration and irony. Examples include *"Those kids have aim"* (10:02–10:10) after a desk was thrown at her, *"I'm rich, I'm rich"* (18:28–18:36), and *"I'm actually a trash teacher. I taught the kids that the Earth was flat"* (22:07–22:09). These flouts created humour and made the difficult first-year experiences more entertaining and relatable, especially for teachers who have been through similar situations. However, some listeners might take the exaggerations too literally and feel unnecessarily worried. The Maxim of Relation was flouted with sudden unrelated jokes and pop-culture references (e.g., *"you can dodge a wrench"* at 20:14–20:21). The shifts kept the energy high and made the episode funny, but they could have confused new listeners who didn't understand the popular references. The Maxim of Manner was flouted due to unclear and disorganized speech (especially at the beginning of the podcast) with many inside jokes that new listeners might not understand. While this contributed to the podcast being friendly and authentic, it risked leaving some listeners feeling excluded. The podcast was highly entertaining and easy to listen to if people enjoyed casual, humorous conversation. Nevertheless, due to frequent digressions and heavy use of exaggeration, it was sometimes less clear and could feel chaotic. We could recommend it to listeners who want to relate to others' real-life teaching struggles rather than learn practical teaching strategies.

Podcast 5 (Episode: *The Elements of Great Teaching – Dimension 1, Element 1*) functioned as a formal online webinar with only one speaker giving a structured presentation. As expected, it had the lowest number of flouts, most of them were Quantity (using vague phrases like *"lots and lots of different ways"* at 9:19–9:27) and Manner (some hesitation and stuttering while searching for words at 11:02–11:08) flouting cases. Quantity flouting occurred twice through exaggerations: *"every second counts"* (23:52–23:59) and *"they seem to have eyes in the back of their heads"* (28:02–28:07). They made the message more memorable and motivating without confusing the listener. The webinar was clear, well-structured, and easy to follow. The formal style and focus on straight-forward delivery made it one of the most understandable episodes, ideal for listeners seeking straightforward educational content without unnecessary digressions or personal stories.

In summary, the results clearly show that the style of the podcast strongly influences how often maxims are flouted. The most common reason for Quality flouting was exaggeration used for humour or emphasis. Speakers often sacrificed literal truth to make stories more entertaining or relatable. Quantity flouting usually involved over-explanation, while Relation was mostly flouted through temporary digressions and personal stories. Manner was flouted when speakers hesitated with their answer, became disorganized, or used unclear expressions.

The research results confirmed Hypothesis 1 – the number and type of flouting instances depended on the style of each podcast, with recurring patterns of over-explanation, exaggeration, topic shifts, and disorganized speech observed across the sample (Table 1). Podcast 4, for example, showed a markedly higher number of flouting instances than the other episodes, reflecting its more conversational and spontaneous style.

Hypothesis 2 was not confirmed. Rather than the Maxim of Quantity, the Maxim of Quality proved to be the most frequently flouted, accounting for 12 of the 38 identified instances (31.58 %). The Maxim of Quantity and the Maxim of Relation were each flouted 9 times (23.68 %), and the

Maxim of Manner was flouted least often (8 times, 21.05 %). We can conclude that speakers relied more heavily on exaggeration and humour to enhance engagement and expressiveness than on providing excessive detail, although extended explanations remained a frequent strategy as well.

Hypothesis 3 was confirmed – flouting of the Maxim of Quality occurred primarily through exaggeration and humour rather than deliberate falsehood, supporting the view that such flouting functions as a rhetorical and stylistic device rather than a breakdown in cooperative communication.

Podcast 1 combined educational content with a conversational style, leading to fewer cases of flouting, mainly through long explanations and analogies. Podcast 2 included personal stories and humour, which made the discussion more appealing while still maintaining its formal tone. Podcast 3 was more academically focused, where flouting supported deeper thinking in listeners but sometimes made the content harder to understand. Podcast 4 relied heavily on humour and exaggeration, making it very engaging yet occasionally unclear and not much educational. In contrast, Podcast 5 remained clear and structured, with only minor flouts that did not affect understanding of the professional educational data.

Overall, the findings showed that flouting of Grice's maxims is a natural part of podcast communication rather than a communication problem. Although flouting may at first appear to reduce clarity or seem like a breach of effective communication, especially for non-native listeners, it usually makes the content more interesting and memorable. In most cases of discovered flouting cases, the main message remains clear – the Maxim of Quality is most often flouted through hyperbole and exaggeration, and the Maxim of Quantity is typically flouted through over-elaboration, where speakers provide too much information, or occasionally too little of it. The Maxim of Relation is mainly flouted through topic shifts and digressions while the Maxim of Manner is most often affected by unclear, hesitant, or disorganized speech. Across all podcasts, exaggeration appeared 9 times, making it the most common strategy of flouting. Topic shifts were observed 7 times, Unclear or disorganised speech was observed 8 times, topic shifts 7 times, and over-elaboration 5 times. The results confirm that speakers frequently move away from strict conversational norms in order to make their speech more engaging, expressive, or easier to relate to.

Table 3. Frequency of flouting strategies across podcasts

	Hyperbole	Over-elaboration	Topic shift	Disorganized speech
Podcast 1	0	2	1	1
Podcast 2	2	0	1	2
Podcast 3	0	2	2	2
Podcast 4	5	1	2	2
Podcast 5	2	0	1	1
Sum	9	5	7	8

The analysis of flouting strategies shows that the most common reason for flouting the Maxim of Quality is hyperbole. It appears in the forms of dramatic overstatements and exaggerations, ironic comments, or statements that are not meant to be taken literally. Speakers often exaggerate situations (*"this was the worst day ever"*) or use ironic praise to express criticism. They are not intended to mislead the listener but rather create a particular communicative effect. Podcasts are typically informal and conversational, and speakers often aim to engage their audience. Exaggeration makes speech more expressive and memorable and helps maintain listeners' interest. In this context, flouting the maxim of truthfulness does not harm communication; on the contrary, it enhances it. Speakers use exaggeration to highlight their feelings, attitudes, or opinions. By overstatements they signal that a situation is important, surprising, or emotionally significant. This allows listeners to better understand the speaker's viewpoint, even if the statement itself is not literally true. In several cases, speakers say something that is obviously false in order to imply the opposite meaning. Thus, they require the listener to recognize the non-literal intention and interpret the statement correctly.

Less frequently, the Maxim of Quality flouting may also occur through using idiomatic expressions or figurative language – the meaning is easy to grasp but not literally true. Listeners rely on shared knowledge and context to interpret the intended meaning correctly. The Maxim of Quality flouting in podcasts is not random or problematic, but rather a systematic and purposeful strategy. Speakers use non-literal language to achieve communicative goals such as humour,

emphasis, and engagement. And, evident violations of conversational norms often serve important, pragmatic functions.

5. Conclusion

The present study identified 38 flouting instances across the five podcasts, with the Maxim of Quality flouted most frequently (12 times, 31.58 %), primarily through exaggeration and humour rather than deliberate falsehood. Beyond its descriptive findings, it carries applied relevance. The results underline the importance of developing learners' pragmatic competence in EFL listening instruction, since recognizing non-literal language such as hyperbole and irony is essential to interpreting authentic spoken discourse. They also support the view central to both Grice's original framework and later developments (e.g., Relevance Theory) that conversational maxims are best understood not as fixed rules but as flexible, adaptable guidelines against which meaningful flouts are interpreted. Future studies drawing on larger and more genre-diverse samples can develop a fuller picture of how conversational maxims operate in real-world spoken communication. They will help determine whether the patterns identified reflect a broader tendency in podcast discourse or are specific to the educational genre examined in this study. Flouting the maxims is an important and meaningful part of real communication, contributing to the creation of implied meaning and making interaction more expressive, natural, and effective. Understanding this process offers deeper insight into how language works in practice, beyond the idealized models often presented in linguistic theory.

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