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by Nina Setyaningsih

Submission date: 12-Dec-2025 11:43AM (UTC+0700)
Submission ID: 2844087550
File name: LE_15023-Article_Text-53203-1-9-20251210.pdf (616.12K)
Word count: 10360
Character count: 58069

E-Structural (English Studies on Translation, Culture, Literature, and Linguistics)
Vol 8 No 02
p-ISSN: 2621-8844, e-ISSN: 2621-9395
http://publikasi.dinus.ac.id/index.php/estructural

Flouting of Conversational Maxims among Characters in *Conclave* (2024)

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Article History: Submitted November 3rd, 2025; Accepted December 9th, 2025; Published December 19th, 2025

Abstract. This study analyzes the character interactions in the 2024 film *Conclave* with an eye on the Grice (1975) conversational maxims. Subsequently, the study intends to highlight the different varieties, i.e., types of maxim frequency of maxim flouting, and classify using Cutting (2005), and explain the reasons behind it using Leech's (1983) Politeness Theory. The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach, which focuses on providing detailed and accurate descriptions of the data. In this study, seventy utterances drawn from the movie and its script were analyzed in depth to determine how conversational maxims were flouted. This enabled the researcher to analyze each utterance in its context straightforwardly, without recourse to cumbersome theories, thereby keeping the analysis grounded in the film's actual words. The findings indicate that all four Gricean maxims, which are the quantity maxim, quality maxim, relation maxim, and manner maxim, are violated in the film. The most frequent maxim flouting observed was the quality maxim (44.29%), in which the dialogue was often embellished, ironically. Of all the possible techniques, the most frequent was irrelevance (25.71%), followed by irony (21.43%) and hyperbole (14.29%). This film relies heavily on indirect and subtle means of communication. The dominant motivation is conflictive (54.29%), characteristic of characters differing in moral perspective and vehemently defending their positions. This study also contributes to the analysis of film by taking a pragmatic approach and demonstrating the use of indirect discourse as a strategy of counterargumentation in institutional settings.

Keywords: *Conclave*; flouting maxim; illocutionary motivation; Gricean theory; Cutting theory

Abstrak. *Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pelanggaran maksim dari percakapan antar karakter dalam film Conclave (2024) melalui theory Flouting maxim Grice (1975), serta klasifikasi dan pengelompokkan maxim dianalisis melalui theory Cutting (2005) serta menganalisis alasan dibalik pelanggaran maksim yang dilakukan dengan menggunakan teori kesantunan Leech (1983). Peneliti mengaplikasikan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dimana pendekatan ini memfokuskan penelitian secara detail dan akurat dalam menganalisis data. Penelitian ini menggunakan tujuh puluh tuturan dari film dan naskah yang dianalisis secara mendalam bagaimana percakapan tersebut dilanggar. Hal ini memungkinkan peneliti menganalisis setiap tuturan sesuai konteksnya secara langsung tanpa perlu menggunakan teori yang rumit, sehingga analisis tetap berfokus pada ujaran yang benar-benar muncul dalam film. Penelitian ini menggunakan empat maxim Grice diantaranya yaitu Quantity (kuantitas), Quality (kualitas), Relation (relevansi), dan Manner (kejelasan) yang mana telah dilanggar dalam film ini. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa semua maksim, yaitu dengan pelanggaran maksim kualitas sebagai maksim yang dominan dilanggar (44,29 %). Teknik yang paling banyak digunakan dalam pelanggaran adalah irrelevance (25,71 %), diikuti dengan ironi (21,43 %), dan hiperbola (14,29 %). Film ini sangat bergantung pada cara komunikasi yang tidak langsung dan halus. Motivasi yang dominan bersifat konflik (54,29 %), karakteristik karakter yang berbeda dalam perspektif moral dan dengan keras mempertahankan posisi mereka. Studi ini juga berkontribusi pada analisis film dengan mengambil pendekatan pragmatis dan menunjukkan penggunaan wacana tidak langsung sebagai strategi kontra argumentasi dalam konteks institusional.*

Kata kunci: *Conclave; motivasi ilokusi; teori Gricean; teori Cutting; pelanggaran maksim*

INTRODUCTION

In today's communication in political contexts, language plays a central role in exercising and capturing power. Memon et al. argue that political leaders strategically utilize language as a mechanism for persuasion, reinforcing their authority while delegitimizing alternative viewpoints (Memon et al., 2024). In this sense, the choice of words and the way the speaker conveys their intention to achieve that purpose are certainly different from ordinary communication so that is why the speaker often flouted the maxim (Viryani et al. 2023). While doing that the speaker also applies different strategies to express their implicit meaning. According to Cutting's theory (2005) speakers use different strategies to break the maxims on purpose to establish hidden meanings, such as using hyperbole, metaphor, or banter, also being irrelevant, being obscure, etc.

The problem is the type of this communication cannot be understood literally but instead, the listener must interpret and break them down to uncover the intended message through the lens of flouting theory and analyzing the reasons behind the utterance to help listeners uncover the hidden meanings implied in the characters' utterances by using Leech's theory (1983) (Viryani et al., 2023). Hadi and Isa (2023) explain that by examining the communicative strategies employed in flouting Grice's maxims, society can better understand and distinguish the nature of political language. This pragmatic complexity reflects real-world discourse, where cooperation is strategically flouting to achieve persuasive or ideological goals.

The film *Conclave* (2024) features political conversations in which numerous conversational maxims are deliberately flouted, which dealt with the voice of political religion. This film's focus shifted from ordinary philosophical or interpersonal conversations to a domain shaped by rivalry, domination, ritual formalism, and negotiations of power. The characters often had to speak, but did so indirectly and instead used the technique of maxim flouting speak unopenly, critique on the sly, preserve their unblemished conscience, and pull the strings to influence the election of the Pope. The importance of interpreting such indirect meanings is supported by previous research, as Bărbuleț underscores how dialogue can convey implicit meanings that emerge from the context, reflecting Grice's Cooperative Principle, which posits that conversational participants cooperate to enrich understanding (Bărbuleț, 2024). By examining character interactions, it becomes apparent that audience members must interpret these layered meanings through contextual cues and shared knowledge. Hasan et al. support this notion, explaining that implicature involves a flexible interpretation of language, where words can take on new meanings significantly divergent from their literal connotation, thereby inviting deeper analysis of filmmakers' intentions (Hasan et al., 2024).

Although previous studies have examined flouting of maxims in film, the majority of them focus on interpersonal and emotional themes rather than political contexts. For instance, romance and family drama are noticeable in *Five Feet Apart* (Dwiyanti & Ambalegin, 2022) which identified the maxim of relevance as the most frequently flouted and in the film *Her* (Viryani et al., 2023) found the maxim is Quantity as the most dominant type of maxim flouting, this study also found collaborative is the most frequently strategies to flouted the maxim. In other genre films, such as teen romance with comedic elements, appear in *Tall Girl* (Misiantari et al., 2022), while combination genres such as science fiction-comedy drama *The Adam Project* (Holifatunnisa & Wuryandari, 2023) and the musical family comedy *Encanto* (Fauziah & Rudianto, 2023) show how maxim flouting creates both humor and emotional depth. Despite this thematic diversity, these studies remain centered on personal and family-oriented narratives, offering limited attention to political or ideological dimensions of communication.

In addition, recent analyses such as those by Safitri and Hartati (2023) in *Radium Girls* show how maxim flouting can reflect social critique and power imbalance, showing that pragmatic strategies serve not only interpersonal but also ideological purposes. Similarly, Kurniati and Hanidar (2023), in their study of *Insidious* and *Insidious 2*, highlight that emotional tension and psychological pressure often cause intentional violations of the Gricean maxims, especially those of quantity and relation. Averina (2023) also examines *Freedom Writers*, showing that maxim flouting appears in both classroom and broader social interactions to convey encouragement, authority, and empathy, demonstrating how pragmatic choices uncover power negotiation and moral positioning in educational settings. Similarly, Tasyarasita and Wibowo (2022) in *All the Bright Places* reveal that characters flout all four Gricean maxims, with the maxim of quality most frequently flouted in contexts of power imbalance and social distance. These findings strengthen the view that maxim flouting in film dialogues can reveal underlying social, emotional, and ideological struggles, thereby linking everyday interactional meaning with broader contextual implications.

Beyond film, maxim flouting has also been examined in professional and political discourse. Ohmayed (2024) analyzed televised political interviews with Bashar al-Assad and Joe Biden, finding that maxim flouting was tied to communicative goals and ideological positioning. Hadi and Isa (2023) studied Syed Saddiq's podcast, showing how politicians strategically flouted quantity and relation maxims to achieve rhetorical effects. These works confirm the broad applicability of Grice's framework while also highlighting its relevance to discourse shaped by authority and persuasion.

These studies prove the wide applicability of Grice's framework but also underline a gap: little attention has been paid to politically charged cinematic narratives, where conversational strategies of persuasion, authority, and ideology converge with dramatic storytelling. However, many existing studies also do not simultaneously discuss the types, motivations, and techniques behind conversational flouting in an integrated manner. As a result, there remains an academic gap in understanding how maxim flout operates within discourse marked by moral pressure, political tension, and hierarchical constraints.

Although Grice's Cooperative Principle provides a clear and systematic foundation, particularly useful for identifying implicature, it has been critiqued for assuming universal cooperation and underestimating cultural, power, and institutional context. Despite these limits, this study adopts Grice's theory as its framework because its systematic categorization of maxim flouting directly supports the research objectives and enables comparison with prior film studies.

Unlike films that depict maxim flouting in casual or humorous contexts, *Conclave* presents such floutings in a formal, religious environment. This makes it significant for pragmatic study, revealing language as a tool of power and strategy within hierarchy. Unlike romantic or comedic narratives, *Conclave* centers on a tense papal election where each utterance carries institutional and moral implications. Analyzing flouting here reveals how speakers manipulate cooperation, relevance, and truth not for humor but for persuasion, secrecy, and survival.

The film mirrors real-life institutional discourse, where politeness and ritual formality conceal true intentions, as seen in politics, religion, and diplomacy. It dramatizes the conflict between truth and decorum, sincerity and strategy, showing how indirect speech serves negotiation and control. The researcher identified seventy instances of maxim flouting, confirming the film's richness as data for pragmatic analysis.

By examining *Conclave* (Straughan, 2024), this study expands pragmatic film analysis and addresses a broader social issue: the strategic use of indirect language to maintain power and ideology. The findings are thus relevant for linguists and communication scholars seeking to understand how conversational principles function within hierarchical and moral systems.

This research's novelty lies in analyzing maxim flouting within a political-religious film, unlike earlier studies focused on humor or daily talk. It explores how main characters use pragmatic strategies to build up rules, negotiate power, and manage ideological conflict. By analyzing frequency, categories, and motivations of flouting, the study contributes to understanding how language shapes persuasion and moral pressure in institutional discourse.

This research is significant in two ways: it extends pragmatic film analysis into political-religious contexts and demonstrates how cinematic dialogue reflects issues of credibility, persuasion, and ideology. Its value lies not only in classifying maxim flouting but also in interpreting how these strategies create meaning where power and belief intersect.

The study aims to examine instances of maxim flouting in *Conclave* (2024), focusing on all major characters. It identifies which maxims are flouted most, classifies them using Cutting's (2005) framework, and analyzes the motivations based on Leech's (1983) Politeness Theory.

Grounded in Grice's Cooperative Principle, this research systematically classifies and interprets maxim flouting in film dialogue. Beyond classification, it analyzes why characters flout conversational norms to express politeness, irony, or power tension. Thus, the research contributes to pragmatic film studies by showing how flouting advances narrative meaning and reflects ideological dynamics in a hierarchical context.

In line with this aim, the study addresses the following research problems:

1. What types of conversational maxims are flouted by the characters in *Conclave* (2024)?
2. Which conversational maxim is most frequently flouted throughout the film?
3. What categories of maxim flouting appear in the characters' dialogues, based on Cutting's (2005) classification?
4. What are the pragmatic motivations behind the characters' flouting of maxims, as interpreted through Leech's (1983) Politeness Theory?

Addressing these four interrelated questions allows the study not only to describe the forms and patterns of maxim flouting but also to explain the underlying reasons and communicative purposes that make such flouting meaningful in film discourse.

A central framework to analyze this phenomenon is Grice's (2004) Cooperative Principle, which proposes four conversational maxims: quantity, quality, relation, and manner. When these maxims are deliberately flouted, speakers generate conversational implicatures that extend meaning beyond the literal level. In cinematic discourse, such flouting becomes a powerful tool to express irony, conflict, or ideological struggle, offering insight into how filmmakers represent complex social interactions and moral ambiguity. They convey conversational implicatures that go beyond surface meaning, which allow filmmakers to represent hidden conflicts, sarcasm, irony, or power struggles.

This phenomenon, known as maxim flouting, can serve as a valuable lens to analyze character dynamics, thematic depth, and ideological meanings in cinematic discourse. These maxims include:

Maxim of Quantity: Give the right amount of information, not too much or too little. It is not only about word count, but the significance of information density. Consider the following example:

Abuela: "Stop. First, an announcement. I've spoken to the Guzmans about Mariano's proposal to Isabela.

Dolores: "Do we have a date?"

Dolores : "Tonight. He wants five babies." (Fauziah & Rudianto, 2023)

Maxim of Quality: The speaker only says something true, and it has a proof. It shows that the speaker is honest and trustworthy when talking to someone. Consider the following example:

Renai: "Can you wake up Dalton, Josh?"

Josh: "Yeah."

Josh: "Hey, Mr. Sleepy-pants. Get up. Hey, Sleepypants. You'd better get out of that bed or your mother's gonna kill us both." (Kurniati and Hanidar, 2023)

Maxim of Relation: Talk about items that are linked to the issue. This saying makes sure that communication is clear. Consider the following example:

Will: "Abby's dead, isn't she?"

Stella: "You're as delicate as a Jackhammer." (Dwiyanti & Ambalegin, 2022)

Maxim of Manner: Be plain, short, and don't leave anything open to interpretation. This saying is about how clear the language is, not how true or relevant the substance is. Consider the following example:

Will: "I don't know, man. Sounds like you love her."

Poe: "Of course, I love her."

Will: "So, why haven't you done anything about it?"

Poe: "Because she's not a he." (Dwiyanti & Ambalegin, 2022)

Although Grice's maxims explain the general principles of cooperative communication, they do not describe the specific techniques speakers use when they intentionally break these principles. Cutting (2005) offers a more comprehensive explanation of how maxim flouting is performed in actual discourse.

Cutting's Classification on Maxim Flouting

Cutting (2005, p. 36) builds on Grice's Cooperative Principle by finding the exact language methods that speakers use to break the maxims on purpose to establish implicit meanings. According to

Cutting, maxim flouting occurs when a speaker consciously appears to break a maxim, so that the listener is prompted to infer an additional meaning beyond the literal meaning.

Flouting the Maxim of Quantity

Cutting says that presenters who break the Maxim of Quantity "seem to give too little or too much information" (Cutting, 2005, p. 36). Giving too much information that goes into too much depth. The extra information shows enthusiasm or anything else that is not obvious. Another one is delivering too little information, which is giving information but not enough detail. The goal is to get the listener to figure out what the speaker really means or to realise that something is being left unsaid. Consider the following example:

A: "How does my soup taste?"

B: "The broccoli is well-cooked."

Flouting the Maxim of Quality

There are four subcategories: First sub-category is using hyperbole, which is expressing something considerably stronger than the truth to make a point (Cutting, 2005, pp. 37-38). For example: "I could eat a horse." (Cutting, 2005, p. 37). The second one is using metaphor, which is comparing one item to another in a way that isn't literal, usually for impact or imagery. For example: "My house is a refrigerator in January" (Cutting, 2005, p. 38). Another sub-category is using irony, when someone says something but means the opposite, usually in a sarcastic tone. For example, if there is a student who comes down to breakfast one morning and says, 'if only you knew how much I love being woken up at 4 a.m. by a fire alarm' (Cutting, 2005, p. 38). The last sub-category is using banter, which, unlike sarcasm (which can be harsh), it is joking in a lighthearted, pleasant style that both the speaker and the listener know is not serious. For example: "You are nasty, mean, and stingy. How can you only give me one kiss?" (Cutting, 2005, p. 38)

Flouting the Maxim of Relation

This maxim is about being irrelevant, which means that when someone says something that does not matter, it really does have an implied meaning. For example: when A asks, "So what do you think of Mark? and B replies, "His flatmate's a wonderful cook," the irrelevance invites the listener to infer implicature (Cutting, 2005, p. 39).

Flouting the Maxim of Manner

This maxim is about being obscure, which means that the speaker purposely uses words or phrases that are perplexing, imprecise, or too convoluted to get their point across. (Cutting, 2005, p. 39). For example, when A asks, "Where are you off to?" and B answers, "I was thinking of going out to get some of that funny white stuff for somebody," prompting A to interpret the unclear statement through context (Cutting, 2005, p. 39).

Cutting describes how speakers flout the maxims, however, this does not explain the reasons why the speakers do so. For this reason, Leech (1983) outlines several motivations that guide the speakers when they break the maxim consciously.

Leech's Four Reasons for Flouting the Maxims

According to Leech (1983, pp. 104-107), there are four reasons for flouting the Cooperative Principle Maxims, namely competitive, convivial, collaborative, and conflictive reasons. First, competitive illocutions occur when the illocutionary goal (what the speaker really wants to achieve) conflicts with the social goal (politeness). These acts, such as ordering, requesting, demanding, or even begging, essentially to expecting someone to do something, whether it is a law, duty, or expectation, sometimes also without regard for others' willingness or convenience (Leech, 1983, pp. 104-105). Consider the following example:

Mr. Embry: How's everything going?

Finch: "Everything" is a really big word.

Mr. Embry: Let's start with...

Finch: Do you mean physically? Emotionally? Those both could encompass "everything." Or is "everything" encompassed by both things?

This exchange indicates how Finch flouts the maxim for competitive reasons: he complicates the question to avoid the counseling talk Mr. Embry intends to begin. (Tasyarasita & Wibowo, 2022)

Second, convivial illocutions show a coincidence between the illocutionary goal and the social goal; both benefit the speaker and the hearer. Instances include inviting, greeting, congratulating, and thanking someone. The speakers may flout the maxims here not to obscure the meaning of the utterances, however, to enhance warmth or politeness to the hearer (Leech, 1983, pp. 105-106). Consider the following example:

Brown: "And not satisfied a bit despite giving them more than what they paid for".

Northup: "It's the national mood. There's too much grief to make room for frivolity."

Here, Northup adds more explanation than needed to comfort Brown, and his extra details serve a convivial reason. (Anjani, Jepri, & Hafsah, 2021)

Third, collaborative illocutions involve neither conflict nor perfect harmony; both goals differ, however aim to share understanding. These involve asserting, reporting, announcing, and informing. Flouting here occurs when speakers intentionally trigger inference for some clarification or even persuasion from the hearer (Leech, 1983, pp. 106-107). Consider the following example:

Hamilton : "No letter to post?"

Northup : "No need. My return will coincide with my family's."

Brown : "We"re off then."

Northup gives extra information to make Hamilton feel sure that a letter is not needed, so his polite reply and his real intention work together, showing a collaborative reason. (Anjani, Jepri, & Hafsah, 2021)

Lastly, conflictive illocutions happen when the speaker's illocutionary goal directly opposes the social goal, examples including threatening, accusing, cursing, or even criticizing. Flouting maxim in conflictive speech acts often enriches the attack or even irony (Leech, 1983, p 107). Consider the following example:

Brown: "If we could persuade you to accompany us as far as New York… We would give you one dollar for each day's service and three dollars for every night played at our performances. In addition, we would provide sufficient pay for the expenses of your return from New York here to Saratoga."

Northup: "You understand this is all very sudden."

In this talk, Northup's remark signals hesitation while keeping the conversation polite, creating a conflictive reason for flouting the maxim. (Anjani, Jepri, & Hafsah, 2021)

METHOD

Research Design

This study applied a qualitative descriptive design to provide a detailed and contextualized understanding of how the whole characters in *Conclave* (2024) flout Grice's conversational maxims and the pragmatic motivations behind those floutings. A qualitative descriptive approach focuses on giving a rich, accurate account of a phenomenon from the participants' or data's perspective while remaining faithful to the original context (Hong et al., 2021; Ojifinni & Ibisomi, 2020). It is especially suitable for linguistic and pragmatic studies where meaning and intention are central, rather than numerical measurement (Renjith et al., 2021).'

This design was chosen because it enables the researcher to describe and interpret the implied meanings and communicative strategies found in natural dialogues. In line with the research title, the study not only aim to quantify maxim floutings but also to explore how and why these floutings occur. Therefore, this method supports an in-depth, interpretive analysis of language behavior. Accordingly, the study focuses on verbal data in the form of dialogues that reflect pragmatic interaction within the film.

The object of the study is the film *Conclave* (2024), selected purposively because its narrative contains complex political and institutional dialogues where conversational maxims are likely to be flouted. The primary data consist of all utterances produced by all major characters that potentially include maxim flouting. The data are qualitative in nature, consisting of spoken utterances that contain potential instances of maxim flouting. The movie script was obtained from a verified source, ScriptSlug (https://www.scriptslug.com/), and cross-checked with the actual film to ensure textual accuracy.

Technique of Data Collection

In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument for collecting and interpreting data. In this study, the researchers used several supporting tools, such as a data note sheet and a classification checklist, based on Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle. The note sheet was used to record utterances, contexts, and initial interpretations, while the checklist helped identify and

categorize the type of maxim flouted. Each identified excerpt was verified by comparing it to both the original script and the spoken dialogue to ensure accuracy and consistency.

The data were collected through several steps. The researcher repeatedly watched *Conclave* (2024) from start to finish to understand the context and pragmatic situation of each utterance. Some scenes were paused and replayed frequently to ensure accuracy and comprehension. While watching, the researcher referred to the ScriptSlug version of the script to locate and verify the dialogues. Utterances from all major characters that showed maxim flouting were then documented in a data sheet with contextual notes.

Technique of Data Analysis

The data were analyzed and classified according to Grice's (1975) four maxims, which are quantity, quality, relation, and manner. Further analysis based on Cutting's (2005) framework, the data were analyzed to find the strategies behind the flouting maxim, and through Leech's (1983) Politeness Theory, the data were analyzed to find the speaker's reason for flouting the maxim.

Credibility of the Study

To enhance credibility, peer debriefing was conducted with two other linguistics researchers to cross-check coding and interpretations, minimizing potential bias. In addition, an audit trail (Sullivan-Bolyai & Bova, 2021) was maintained to document all analytical steps, coding sheets, and interpretive decisions. These procedures ensure transparency, reliability, and fidelity to the original data, allowing the research findings to accurately represent the linguistic behavior observed in *Conclave* (2024). Thus, the methodological framework, combining Grice's, Cutting's, and Leech's theories, ensures that the analysis captures both the linguistic form and the pragmatic motivation behind each instance of maxim flouting.

RESULTS

The Types of Conversational Maxims Flouted by the Characters in *Conclave* (2024)

Based on the data collected and analyzed from the film *Conclave* (2024), a total of 70 utterances were identified as instances of maxim flouting. These cases represent all four types of conversational maxims proposed by Grice (1975): Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. Table 1 below presents the overall frequency and percentage of maxim flouting found throughout the film.

Table 1 Frequency of Flouted Gricean Maxims in *Conclave* (2024)

Types of Maxim Flouting	Total	Percentage
Quantity	16	22.86%
Quality	31	44.29%
Relation	18	25.71%
Manner	5	7.14%
Total	**70**	**100%**

As shown in Table 1, the characters in the film violated all four maxims of the Cooperative Principle. The maxim of Quality was flouted most frequently with 31 cases (44.29%), followed by Relation with 18 cases (25.71%), Quantity with 16 cases (22.86%), and Manner with 5 cases (7.14%). These

findings indicate that the characters in *Conclave* flout the maxim of Quality more than the other maxims. This relates strongly to the film's primary subject of secrecy, political intrigue, and ulterior motives in the papal elections. Over the course of the film, some characters on the stage of the ceremony quarrel and overstate their claims, or make unsubstantiated assertions, that protect their interests or that seek to influence the results of the election. This is similar to the behaviour of some cardinals, who, in different exercises, provide untruths about the reputations of other candidates, and who also, in their exercises, ignore vital information or pass judgments that we know to be untruths. These examples show the use of dishonesty and deception as devices of the narrative. Therefore, the frequent flouting of the Quality maxim reflects the film's portrayal of power struggles, manipulation, and the moral ambiguity surrounding the conclave process.

The Most Frequent Types of Conversational Maxims Flouted throughout the Film

As presented in Table 1, the maxim of Quality is most often flouted, representing almost half of the instances in *Conclave* (44.29%). This suggests that the particular figures of speech characters built included exaggeration, irony or insincere statements during communication. An illustration would be when Lawrence states, "I feel as if I'm at some American political convention". The scenario in question is, however, a private ecclesiastical setting. Not providing the audience with the needed information is describing the moment and the tension, though discomfort is the primary feeling. The political convene is not a tussle, but a struggle of words, and as Lawrence tells Bellini, "You talk as if it's a war," and Bellini's, "Because it is a war!" Lawrence is using hyperbole, not providing the audience with the information, describing how drastic the struggle is. The characters describe illustrations of hyperbole, irony, and metaphor to express, critique, and complain.

The Categories of Maxim Flouting Based on Cutting's (2005) Classification

The next analysis identifies the linguistic strategies used by the characters to flout the maxims, referring to Cutting's (2005) classification. Table 2 below presents the distribution of the eight specific strategies used to violate Grice's maxims: TL (Too Little), TM (Too Much), HB (Hyperbole), MP (Metaphor), IO (Irony), BA (Banter), IR (Irrelevant), and OB (Obscure).

Table 2 Strategies Used The Characters to Flout The Maxim

Strategies	Quantity	Quality	Relation	Manner	Percentage
Too Little	8	-	-	-	11.43%
Too Much	8	-	-	-	11.43%
Hyperbole	-	10	-	-	14.29%
Metaphor	-	5	-	-	7.14%
Irony	-	15	-	-	21.43%
Banter	-	1	-	-	1.43%
Irrelevant	-	-	18	-	25.71%
Obscure	-	-	-	5	7.14%
Total	**16**	**31**	**18**	**5**	**100%**

Table 2 shows that the most dominant strategy used by the characters is Irrelevance (IR) with 18 occurrences (25.71%), followed by Irony (IO) with 15 occurrences (21.43%) and Hyperbole (HB) with 10 occurrences (14.29%). These strategies mainly appear within the flouting of the maxims of Relation and Quality. In contrast, the least frequent strategy is Banter (BA) with only 1 occurrence (1.43%). The findings show that the characters mostly employ indirect and ironic expressions that hint at deeper or hidden meanings rather than direct statements.

The Pragmatic Motivations as Interpreted through Leech's (1983) Politeness Theory

The final analysis identifies the pragmatic motivations behind the maxim flouting, categorized according to Leech's (1983) four types of illocutionary motivation: Competitive, Convivial, Collaborative, and Conflictive. Table 3 summarizes the frequency and percentage of each motivational category as found in the film.

Table 3 The Reason behind Flouting Maxim in the *Conclave* Movie

Reason	Quantity	Quality	Relation	Manner	Frequency	Percentage
Competitive	2	-	2	-	4	5.71%
Convivial	-	6	1	-	7	10%
Collaborative	9	3	6	3	21	30%
Conflictive	5	22	9	2	38	54.29%
Total	**16**	**31**	**18**	**5**	**70**	**100%**

Table 3 reveals that Conflictive motivation is the most dominant reason behind the flouting of conversational maxims, accounting for 54.29% of the total occurrences. This is followed by Collaborative motivation (30%), Convivial motivation (10%), and Competitive motivation (5.71%). The high frequency of conflictive motivation indicates that most maxim flouting occurs in situations involving disagreement, accusation, or challenge among characters. In *Conclave*, such cases are frequent in scenes where the cardinals argue about moral failures, political motives, or the personal histories of cardinals. When a cardinal, for example, speaks about the confidentiality of another cardinal and past scandals while not presenting the information and details, the dialogue of this situation denotes how the speaker, influenced by conflict, is motivated to disregard maxims such as Quality. These acts serve the purpose of antagonism, discrediting another, or defending oneself in the context of moral and structural confrontation. They illuminate how the characters employed maxim flouting to gain control, discredit others, or manipulate the power dynamics of the conclave.

Flouting Maxim of Quantity

Excerpt 1

Timestamp: 00:07:06-00:07:12

Adeyemi: "Who was the Adeyemi: "Who was the last to have a scheduled meeting with him?

Tremblay: "I believe that may have been me. I saw him at four. Is that right Janusz? Was I the last?"

In the conversation between Adeyemi and Tremblay, Tremblay's reply shows a clear example of flouting the Maxim of Quantity by sharing too much information than it required. When Adeyemi asks simply, "Who was the last to have a scheduled meeting with him?", a helpful response following Grice's (1975) rules would be short and brief, something like, "I think it was me." Instead Tremblay adds some extra detail of information: *"I believe that may have been me. I saw him at four. Is that right Janusz? Was I the last?"* He includes the exact time and asks for confirmation from someone else, giving more information than needed. This extra information creates an implied meaning: his long response suggests that he is nervous and trying to defend himself or to hide something that he has done, not just answering the question directly. In Grice's view, this indicates he is not being fully cooperative in conversation.

According to Leech's (1983) framework, this aligns with the competitive reason for flouting the maxim, where the speaker's goal to protect his reputation amidst suspicion clashes with the social need for polite talk which arises when an illocutionary goal conflicts with the social goal. Tremblay wants to justify his actions during a tense time after the Pope's death, when every cardinal's moves are under supervision. His extra words act as a way to avoid blame or suspicion, but they actually make him seem more suspicious. In the story, this highlights his anxious personality under pressure and self-protection

Excerpt 2

Timestamp: 00:14:15-00:14:25

Tedesco: "How have you found your new responsibilities? You have everything under control"

Lawrence: "Credo di sì."(I believe so.)

A different example happens in the talk between Tedesco and Lawrence. When Tedesco asks, "How have you found your new responsibilities? You have everything under control?", Lawrence answers briefly and shortly, "Credo di sì" ("I believe so"). This short answer flouts the maxim of quantity by giving too little information or not giving enough details that it needed, as polite conversation usually expects more reassurance. But this lack of information is deliberate and carries an implied meaning. By saying little, Lawrence hints at his tiredness and carefulness without explaining openly. The implied message lets others guess that he is emotionally drained and exhausted during this papal election without him spelling them out.

According to Leech's (1983) framework, Lawrence's utterance also aligns with the collaborative reason for maxim flouting, where the speaker's goal to stay calm does not fight the illocutionary goal of being polite. Unlike Tremblay's long talk, Lawrence's quietness reflects self-restraint, introspection, thoughtfulness, and control rather than manipulation or some tricks. His goal is not to compete or to attack but to maintain composure and avoid unnecessary conflict. The under-informativeness here works as a cooperative gesture within a tense institutional setting; it allows him to remain polite while still conveying emotional complexity. In the *Conclave*'s tense setting, it lets him stay professional while showing his inner burdens and feelings that reflect his character as a man burdened by moral responsibility and doubt, making the scene feel more real and emotional.

Flouting Maxim of Quality

Excerpt 3

Timestamp: 00:26:07-00:26:16

Lawrence: "And Bellini?"

Bellini: "Why do I feel like a cow being priced by the farmer?"

In the dialogue between Lawrence and Bellini, Bellini's utterance, *"Why do I feel like a cow being priced by the farmer?"*, shows an example of flouting the Maxim of Quality by using a metaphor. Literally, Bellini is not a cow, nor is Lawrence a farmer;so it does not follow the maxim's rule to say only what is believed to be true. However, as Grice (1975) says, flouting a maxim can intentionally create implicature or deeper meaning. In this case, the metaphor functions to express Bellini's sense

of objectification and moral discomfort within the political condition of the conclave. Through this metaphor, Bellini implicitly criticizes the selfish deals in the conclave, where choosing a pope seems like a transactional or like buying something to be negotiated rather than a holy task or divine calling.

According to Leech's (1983) framework, this instance aligns with the conflictive reason, where the illocutionary goal (to criticize or challenge) conflicts with the social goal (to maintain harmony). Bellini's goal to protest clashes with the social need for peace. His metaphor is emotionally strong, charged, and confrontational; it exposes his anger, frustration, and opposition toward the unfair treatment of the cardinals in the papal election. Instead of using polite or neutral words, he uses figurative speech to show his anger. Contextually, this utterance reflects the deep moral tension in the film: Bellini represents the progressive side of the modern Church, revealing the political games and bad practices during the papal selection. The metaphor, therefore, not only conveys irony and frustration but also functions as a form of moral resistance. By flouting the maxim of quality through figurative exaggeration, Bellini communicates what cannot be directly stated, showing his words act as a challenge to the Church's surface rituals and point to the real decay beneath.

Excerpt 4

Timestamp: 01:24:27-01:24:43

Bellini: Put them back. Put them back or burn them or... put them back. I couldn't possibly become Pope in such circumstances, a dirty trick, a stolen document, the smearing of a brother cardinal... I'd be the Richard Nixon of Popes!

Later in the film, Bellini's strong words, *"Put them back. Put them back or burn them or... put them back. I couldn't possibly become Pope in such circumstances, a dirty trick, a stolen document, the smearing of a brother cardinal... I'd be the Richard Nixon of Popes!"* also exemplifies the flouting of the Maxim of Quality, this time through hyperbole. Literally, comparing himself to "the Richard Nixon of Popes" is untrue and just too much, thus breaking the maxim's rule. Grice (1975) views such deliberate exaggeration as a form of Quality flouting used to make a strong point and produces powerful implicature. The hyperbolic comparison shows his fear of being dirty and tainted by the scandal, just as Nixon was by political corruption. Instead of just saying no to being Pope, Bellini dramatizes his rejection to express his deep moral disgust and anger, highlighting why leadership built on deceit is unacceptable. This dramatization makes his protest even stronger, showing his ethical worries and concerns.

According to Leech's (1983) framework, this utterance also aligns with the conflictive reason because of Bellini's illocutionary act, his choosing not to cooperate with corruption, or the bad fights with the social need for unity and saving face. His emotional outburst disrupts the expected calm of church dialogue, showing how moral conviction and strong beliefs clash with hierarchical politics and power struggles. Contextually, the scene comes after Lawrence finds a secret document that exposes political manipulation and tricks among the cardinals. Bellini's reaction is personal, moral, and symbolic, representing something greater: he values honesty over power, and even integrity over ambition, even if such a stance isolates him. In this sense, Bellini's hyperbolic flouting of the Maxim of Quality shows his moral fears and anxiety and highlights the film's central theme, the conflict between truth and power in religious institutions. This adds depth to the film's portrayal of tough choices and moral struggle in a high-pressure setting.

Flouting Maxim of Relation

Excerpt 5

Timestamp: 00:09.48–00:09.58

Archbishop Mandroff: "Apparently so. Security say...eavesdroppers can use lasers to "read the vibrations on the glass?"

Lawrence: "Let's hope none of our brothers suffer from claustrophobia. Who knows how long we'll have to be in here."

In the conversation, when the security team tells Archbishop Mandorff that they want to test the electronic jammers again, he explains that *"Eavesdroppers can use lasers to read the vibrations on the glass."* Lawrence then replies with a comment that sounds unrelated: *"Let's hope none of our brothers suffer from claustrophobia. Who knows how long we'll have to be in here."* This response is seen as a clear example of flouting the Maxim of Relation, as described by Grice (1975), which says that every response should stay on the topic. Mandorff's statement about security, while Lawrence suddenly shifts to talking about people's feelings and the mental well-being of the cardinals. However, the reply seems off-topic; it actually adds deeper meaning instead of confusion. By mentioning *claustrophobia*, the fear of small spaces, Lawrence hints at how stressful and oppressive the conclave feels, both physically and emotionally. His utterances subtly suggest that the cardinals are not only locked in a room, but also trapped by the strict rules and moral pressure of the conclave itself.

Based on Leech's (1983) politeness framework, this flouting maxim aligns with the convivial reason, where the illocutionary and social goals are in harmony (to make others feel more comfortable). Lawrence's humour and light irony help to ease the tension and turn a serious topic into a moment of shared humanity. Instead of arguing with Mandorff, he keeps things friendly and calm among the church leaders. Contextually, this shows his kind of leadership, which combines authority with his kindness, warmth, and compassion. Therefore, through a flouting of relation, while Lawrence's utterances seem irrelevant, they actually help build unity and point to the limits, political, and moral, inside the world of conclave.

Excerpt 6

Timestamp: 01:03:10-01:03:44

Lawrence: "No, Your Eminence. She was very young. Nineteen years old. You were thirty."

Adeyemi: "Thomas, please... Listen to me. I sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit this morning. I swear it. I am ready to take this burden. Does a single mistake thirty years ago disqualify me? I was a different man! I beg you, please don't use this to ruin me."

In a more serious scene, Lawrence questions Cardinal Adeyemi about something from his past: *"No, Your Eminence. She was very young. Nineteen years old. You were thirty."* Adeyemi does not answer the accusation directly. Instead, he says, *"Thomas, please... Listen to me. I sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit this morning. I swear it. I am ready to take this burden. Does a single mistake thirty years ago disqualify me? I was a different man! I beg you, please don't use this to ruin me."* Pragmatically,

Adeyemi's response shows a flouting of the Maxim of Relation. Lawrence is talking about a specific wrongdoing, but Adeyemi changes the topic to his spiritual awakening and God's forgiveness. He tries to shift the focus from the accusation to a moral argument about redemption. This change shows his attempt to defend himself, not by denying the event, but by asking for understanding and sympathy.

According to Leech's (1983) framework, this type of flouting aligns with the conflictive reason. Here, the illocutionary goal (self-defense and moral justification) clashes with the social goal (honest and cooperative conversation). By bringing up religion, he avoids direct responsibility and instead appeals to emotion and faith. The scene reflects the film's larger theme: how human weakness and power struggles can turn the truth. Adeyemi's irrelevant response indicates not just a communication failure, but also a moral one, where personal defense wins over honesty, making implicature full of moral meaning and fitting the story.

Flouting Maxim of Manner

Excerpt 7

Timestamp: 00:10:32-00:10:42

Lawrence: "I don't think that's possible. The cardinals will begin arriving in an hour. What's it about?"

Monsignor O'Malley: "He didn't say. (Beat). I wouldn't have mentioned it but he seemed so...upset?"

When Lawrence questions Monsignor O'Malley, O' Malley answers uncertainty with a hesitant and unclear statement: *"He didn't say. (Beat). I wouldn't have mentioned it but he seemed so... upset?"* His hesitant tone and unclear utterance break Grice's (1975) rule of manners, requiring the speaker to be clear, organized, and orderly. This indicates the flouting maxim of manner, way. O'Malley's pauses and incomplete thoughts make his message vague, but this is not accidental. It is a careful way of hinting that something important or confidential is happening. This vagueness and unclear statement add tension and make Lawrence and the audience feel that something serious is being left unsaid. O'Malley's hesitation suggests that he knows more than he can reveal but tries not to mention that.

From Leech's (1983) view, this instance aligns with the collaborative reason for breaking the maxim. A collaborative reason happens when the illocutionary goal of the speaker (to give a warning) matches the social goal (to stay polite and respectful). His indirect utterances let him express his concern and worry while still protecting the honor of the people involved. Saying someone was "upset" is a subtle, diplomatic way of showing concern. Contextually, this scene happens right before the cardinals arrive for the conclave, a very private and formal event; his vagueness suits the situation of the Conclave itself. By being unclear, O'Malley manages to protect relationships and hint at a hidden conflict at the same time.

Excerpt 8

Timestamp: 01:02:32-01:02:44

Adeyemi: " It was...it was... (Helplessly) A lapse, Dean. A lapse! "Let God grant us a Pope who sins and asks forgiveness, and carries on." Your words!"

A more intense emotional example of the Flouting maxim of manner that happens later in the film, when Cardinal Adeyemi again struggles with words when Lawrence confronts him: *"It was... it was... (Helplessly) A lapse, Dean. A lapse! 'Let God grant us a Pope who sins and asks forgiveness, and carries on.' Your words!"* His broken sentence structures, repetition, and sudden use of Lawrence's previous statement all break the rule of Manner, which values clarity and order. Instead of explaining clearly and straightforwardly, Adeyemi speaks in fragments, showing emotional chaos. His utterances are not a mistake; it is meant to show his fear, guilt, and effort to excuse himself. By calling his wrongdoing just "a lapse," over and over, he tries to make it sound minor, and by quoting Lawrence, he shifts the focus toward forgiveness instead of guilt. This lack of clarity, therefore, is not accidental but strategic and planned; the vagueness helps him to manipulate interpretation and control how others see this situation, moving attention from his duty to moral issues to the idea of God's mercy.

Based on Leech's (1983) view, Adeyemi's speech aligns with a conflictive reason for flouting the maxim, where the illocutionary goal (to defend himself) conflicts directly with the social goal (to be truthful). His stammering and repetition reflect both his inner struggle and his attempt to twist the moral discussion in his favor. Contextually, this scene captures the tension between confession and avoidance, showing how language becomes a tool for both faith and manipulation and dishonesty. His broken way of speaking is not random but also reflects the moral confusion at the heart of Conclave, where guilt and power constantly fight for control inside the Church's centers of power.

DISCUSSION

Overall, the data indicate that the maxim of quality was the one that was most frequently contravened in *Conclave* (2024), and this is easy to explain. Most exchanges during the Conclave take place during a period of intense pressure and extreme secrecy surrounding the papal elections. Characters often avoid stating the truth openly because honesty can expose their political motives, past scandals, or even personal weaknesses. Thus, they rely on irony, exaggeration, or half-true statements to protect their status. This setting naturally encourages indirectness: The characters must appear to be virtuous, even while manipulating the situation from behind the curtain. The contradiction of public virtue with private vice is what ultimately brings the maxims of quality and quantity to the forefront.

This also explains why the most common strategy, based on Cutting's categories, is irrelevant. Many characters avoid answering questions directly, especially when the topic is desperate, such as political alliances, corruption, discrimination against women, and other personal failures. Instead, they change the topic or reply that does not fit the questions. This is one way for them to protect their statues, avoid conflict. In a story that is full of fear, pressure, hierarchy, and religiosity, being irrelevant is a safe and strategic way to choose.

For the motives behind the flouting maxim, conflictive motives appear the most, and that is to be expected considering the film depicts the overwhelming battle to become a Pope. Many characters do not breach the maxims in order to assist the dialogues, but rather to resist, defy, and perhaps interrogate someone else's true motives in some cases. They want to demonstrate their control or disagreement passively. This is perfectly in line with the film's motif, in which the absence of rage is complemented by quiet, albeit tense, voices. In *Conclave* (2024), the maxim violations are not used for comedic purposes, but rather to illustrate conflict, tension, and the politics of the situation.

Though this study and Viryani et al. (2023) on *Her*, Misiantari et al. (2022) on *Tall Girl*, and Tasyarasita and Wibowo (2022) on *All the Bright Places* show marginal differences in purpose, the same communicative intent involving the maxim of quality was evident. In *Her* and *Tall Girl*, the

emotional intimacy and honesty of relationships were maneuvered through quality flouting. *All the Bright Places* exhibited emotional struggle and psychological instability. Conversely, in *Conclave*, quality flouting is used in the preservation of power and control of ideology. The characters indirectly articulate apathy rather than emotions, but rather conceal the truth and ease the moral complexity of the institution's structure. This comparison confirms that although the same maxim appeared across studies, its pragmatic purpose shifts from emotional expression in personal contexts to moral diplomacy in institutional discourse.

The reasons for breaking rules in the *Conclave* confirm this point. The highest motivation was *conflictive*, where the speaker's illocutionary goal clashes with the social goal. Leech (1983) mentions such *conflictive* functions, such as accusing, refusing, or critiquing. Similar to the works of *Tall Girl* (Misiantari et al., 2022) and *All the Bright Places* (Tasyarasita & Wibowo, 2022), the conflictive motivation, where the language in question serves the purpose of emotional resistance. However, *Conclave* is more of a conflict at the ideological, and not emotional, level, which is a moral conflict of the contradiction of institutions and their assumed purposes. On the other hand, Her's emphasis on a collaborative motive to foster a common understanding is a stark contrast of the confrontational tone in *Conclave*. This is to confirm that the alteration of motive from collaborative to conflictive is in response to the contextual shifts, where for emotional genres, the emphasis falls on empathy and for ideological genres, the emphasis is on moral conflict.

When speaking of the strategies used in *Conclave*, Irrelevance took the lead, followed by irony and hyperbole. In *Conclave*, Definitional Irrelevance is ranked first among *Conclave* respondents. In line with Hadi and Isa's 2023 finding on *Syed Saddiq's Podcast*, *Conclave* respondents also used Definitional Irrelevance to avoid sensitive issues to protect their face. In *Conclave*, Definitional Irrelevance is a means of active politeness c in formal warfare. The evidence in both cases demonstrates that Definitional Irrelevance is a means of controlling discourse and doing power, but in *Conclave*, the focus is on morality instead of politics.

Overall, quality flouting, irrelevance strategy, and conflictive motivation indicate that Conclave Externalizes Indirectness as Moral Defense and Ideological Defiance. This becomes the novelty of the study, as it expands the discussion of flouting maxims to cover more than the personal and emotional to the institutional and moral. The importance lies in showing that Grice's and Leech's frameworks hold for analyzing pragmatic interaction even in highly charged discourses like Religion and Politics, where indirectness upholds both conflict and civility.

However, since this study focused solely on a single film— *Conclave* (2024)—its findings have limited generalizability. Subsequent research may investigate or add more focus on maxim flouting across various film genres, cultures, and narrative contexts to examine the impact of context and character relationships on pragmatic decisions. In addition, research may encompass audience perception analysis or cross-cultural pragmatics to show how viewers from diverse linguistic backgrounds can actually interpret implicatures in cinematic dialogue. Moreover, subsequent research may also integrate Grice's theory with the alternative pragmatic frameworks, including relevance theory or politeness strategies, to enhance the understanding of conversational meaning in film.

CONCLUSION

This research analyzed the flouting of conversational maxims based on the theory by Grice (1975), Cutting (2005), and Leech's (1983) four types of illocutionary motivation through the film *Conclave* (2024). It concentrated on discerning which maxims were actually contravened, how these flouting influenced the communicative intentions between all the characters, and the reason behind the flouting. The result of this analysis showed that the film purposefully broke all four maxims, which are Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. The analysis revealed that the Maxim of Quantity was the most frequently flouted, followed by the Maxim of Quality, Relation, and Manner. Each type of flouting had a specific purpose, such as bringing out hidden meanings or information, making people laugh like a joke, avoiding being direct, and staying polite in hierarchical or sensitive situations.

The results suggest that these rule-breaking of conversational maxims in *Conclave* (2024) do not represent failed communication but rather a strategic mechanism employed by the characters to convey profound social, emotional, and ideological conflicts. The conversation between the characters shows that using non-literal language and being indirect can actually make things more realistic and give characters more depth by showing hidden power dynamics, secrecy, and moral ambiguity. These results bolster Grice's Cooperative Principle by demonstrating that communication remains effective despite the violation of maxims, as both speaker and listener possess contextual awareness and pragmatic understanding.

This study enhances the comprehension of conversational implicature in cinematic discourse. It highlights the significance in the film *Conclave* (2024) the dialogue transcends mere literal interpretation, encouraging audiences to deduce, interpret, and critically engage with the underlying messages.

This study reiterates the significance of Grice's maxims in the examination of contemporary cinematic communication. The breaking of conversational rules in *Conclave* (2024) shows how complicated human interaction can be, where indirectness and implication can often convey truth more strongly than direct speech.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to express sincere gratitude to Dr. Rusdi Noor Rosa, S.S., M.Hum., and Prof. Dra. T. Silvana Sinar, Dipl. TEFL, M.A., Ph.D., lecturers of Scientific Publication, for their valuable guidance, knowledge, and support throughout the writing of this article.

Deep appreciation is also extended to Prof. Dr. Erikson Sara[illegible], S.Pd., M.Hum., lecturer of MKWU, for his insightful feedback and academic encouragement. The authors would also like to express gratitude to the chief editor and reviewers of the journal for their constructive comments and careful evaluation, which have improved the quality of this article. Finally, the author gratefully acknowledges all parties whose support and assistance have contributed to the completion of this article.

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