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GRICE COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE ON “THE TONIGHT SHOW”

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Abstract

This thesis explores the application of Grice's Cooperative Principle within the discourse of televised talk shows, with a specific focus on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. The study examines how the four conversational maxims – Quantity, Quality, Relevance, and Manner – are flouted in interview interactions and how such flouting generates conversational implicatures that serve various implicature functions.

The first chapter presents the theoretical foundation of pragmatics and conversational implicature, outlining Grice's Cooperative Principle and its interpretive mechanisms. The second chapter offers a practical analysis of talk-show discourse through quantitative and qualitative approaches. The data, drawn from interviews with Taylor Swift, Michelle Obama, and Ryan Gosling, reveals that maxim flouting is a frequent and strategic element of mediated communication, especially for achieving implicature functions as humour, emphasis, avoidance, rapport-building, and implicit reference.

Our findings show that in entertainment discourse, cooperation is not undermined by flouting but rather reshaped to fulfil the expectations of spontaneity, irony, and indirectness. Grice's model proves to be a valuable framework for analysing how meaning is constructed, implied, and interpreted in public media interaction.

Keywords: pragmatics, Grice's Cooperative Principle, Grice's maxims, conversational implicature, talk show, maxim flouting, implicature functions.

Анотація

У цій кваліфікаційній роботі досліджується застосування принципу кооперації Пола Грайса в дискурсі телевізійних ток-шоу, зокрема на прикладі *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. У роботі аналізується, яким чином порушення чотирьох максим кооперації – кількості, якості, релевантності та способу – у взаємодії між ведучим та гостями створює імплікатурні значення, що виконують різноманітні функції.

У першому розділі викладено теоретичні засади прагматики та поняття розмовної імплікатури, розглянуто принцип кооперації Грайса та механізми його інтерпретації. Другий розділ містить практичний аналіз дискурсу ток-шоу за допомогою кількісного та якісного підходів. Дані, зібрані з інтерв'ю з Тейлор Свіфт, Мішель Обамою та Раяном Гослінгом, демонструють, що порушення максим є частим і стратегічним елементом медіа-комунікації, особливо для досягнення таких прагматичних функцій імплікатур, як гумор, акцентування, уникнення, побудова взаєморозуміння та неявні посилання.

Наші результати свідчать, що в розважальному дискурсі порушення принципу кооперації не руйнує комунікацію, а трансформує її відповідно до вимог жанру – спонтанності, іронії та непрямоти. Модель Грайса є цінним інструментом для аналізу того, як значення формуються, імплікуються та інтерпретуються в умовах публічної медіакомунікації.

Ключові слова: прагматика, Кооперативний принцип Грайса, максими Грайса, розмовна імплікатура, ток-шоу, порушення максими, функції імплікатур.

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INTRODUCTION

In everyday conversation, people rarely say exactly what they mean, and yet, we often understand each other with remarkable ease. This ability to infer meaning beyond literal words lies at the heart of pragmatics, the field of linguistics concerned with language in use. One of the most influential contributions to this area is Grice's Cooperative Principle, which outlines how interlocutors typically cooperate in conversation to communicate effectively. However, this cooperation is often strategically suspended in highly stylised, entertainment-driven contexts such as television talk shows, where deviation from conversational norms serves specific pragmatic functions.

The relevance of the research topic. In contemporary media discourse, the intersection of linguistics and entertainment presents a dynamic site for pragmatic inquiry. Conversations within television talk shows, although seemingly spontaneous, are governed by underlying communicative principles that guide interpretation and meaning.

Television talk shows, particularly those like *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, provide a fertile ground for analyzing the use and flouting of these maxims. The interactions in such settings often involve humorous, strategic, and contextually nuanced speech, making them ideal for studying conversational implicatures and cooperative violations. By examining how speakers manipulate conversational norms for entertainment, critique, or rapport-building, this study highlights the centrality of pragmatics in mediated discourse.

The theoretical foundation of the study lies in the further development of pragmatic theory and the exploration of indirect meaning in discourse. As the basis of this research serve the works of H. P. Grice *Studies in the Way of Words*, S. C. Levinson *Pragmatics*, G. N. Leech *Principles of Pragmatics*, B. J. Birner *Introduction to Pragmatics*, Y. Huang *Pragmatics*, P. Griffiths *Introduction to English Semantics and Pragmatics*, and J. L. Austin *How to Do Things with Words*. The role of implicature and conversational maxims in media discourse has also been discussed in the works of

M. Talbot *Media Discourse*, A. O’Keeffe *Media and Discourse Analysis*, and G. Barbulet *Social Media – Pragmatic Approach*.

The object of the research is conversational implicature and its realisation through Grice’s Cooperative Principle and its maxims in the context of televised talk-show discourse.

The subject of the research is the analysis of how speakers flout Grice’s maxims, and how such strategies contribute to the creation of implicit meaning and implicature functions (such as humour, avoidance, emphasis, rapport-building, or implicit reference) in selected episodes of *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*.

The aim of the study is to explore how Grice’s Cooperative Principle is realised, flouted, and manipulated in a talk-show format, with an emphasis on understanding the pragmatic functions these deviations serve.

The main tasks of the research are:

- To provide a theoretical overview of pragmatics and the notion of conversational implicature;
- To examine the principles and structure of Grice’s Cooperative Principle and its conversational maxims;
- To explore the phenomena of maxim violation and flouting, including their theoretical implications and communicative significance;
- To investigate the role of the Cooperative Principle in media discourse;
- To compile and analyze a corpus of selected interviews from *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*;
- To identify and classify instances of maxim flouting in the talk-show discourse;
- To interpret maxim flouts and their role in constructing implicature;
- To systematise the communicative roles of implicature in mediated conversation, focusing on functions such as humour, emphasis, avoidance, rapport-building, and implicit reference.

Research methods. The research employs a combination of theoretical and practical methods. The theoretical framework draws from pragmatic theory, speech act theory, and media discourse studies. Practical methods include qualitative and quantitative analysis of transcribed interview segments, discourse analysis, and contextual interpretation of conversational implicatures and pragmatic cues.

Research material. The primary corpus consists of selected interview segments from *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, featuring diverse guests (Taylor Swift, Ryan Gosling, and Michelle Obama), offering a range of interactional styles and communicative contexts for analysis.

The practical significance of the research. This thesis contributes to the understanding of how pragmatic principles operate within popular media formats. By focusing on real-time interactions in entertainment contexts, it underscores the relevance of Gricean pragmatics beyond academic discourse and highlights its applicability to media studies, linguistic analysis, and communication theory. The findings can inform studies in media linguistics, pragmatics, and intercultural communication, and may serve as a resource in teaching discourse analysis or pragmatic theory.

Structure of the thesis. The paper consists of an introduction, two main chapters, conclusions, a bibliography, and appendices. The first chapter outlines the theoretical basics of pragmatics, conversational implicature, and Grice's maxims. The second chapter applies these concepts to practical examples from *The Tonight Show*, combining quantitative analysis of maxim flouting with qualitative interpretation of pragmatic effects.

CHAPTER 1. THE PRAGMATICS OF COOPERATION IN CONVERSATION

1.1. Pragmatics and Conversational Implicature

1.1.1. Overview of Pragmatics

Pragmatics, as a field of study, has evolved through several interpretations, each reflecting the discipline's complexity and its connection to language and context. The term *pragmatics* was first coined by Charles W. Morris in his *Foundations of the Theory of Signs* (1938), where he defined it as “the science of the relation of signs to their interpreters” [23, p. 30].

Stephen Levinson offers a more comprehensive definition in his 1983 book *Pragmatics*, defining pragmatics as the study of the relationships between language and context that are encoded or grammaticalized in a language's structure [19, p. 9].

The *Concise Dictionary of Linguistics* (2014) adds that pragmatics is primarily concerned with the meanings of sentences in specific contexts [22, p. 290].

Although the definitions of pragmatics vary, they all emphasise the central role of context in shaping language use. The Cambridge Dictionary provides a definition, describing pragmatics as “the study of how language is affected by the situation in which it is used, of how language is used to get things or perform actions, and of how words can express things that are different from what they appear to mean” [8].

Many scholars, while defining pragmatics, also focus on its distinction from semantics. Griffiths states that semantics gives words and phrases a range of potential meanings, but pragmatics decides how these meanings are selected and interpreted in a particular situation [13, p. 2]. A key difference between pragmatics and semantics is how they approach meaning: pragmatics looks at meaning in the context of speech, whereas semantics analyses linguistic units separately. Leech provides a concise and apt example to distinguish the difference between these two fields: while semantics tries to answer *What does X mean?* pragmatics deals with *What did you mean by X?* [18, p. 5-6]. Beyond interpreting words literally, pragmatics considers the context, the speaker's intentions, and the shared knowledge between the speaker and hearer. In order to identify the additional layers of meaning that emerge through context, social

interaction, and inference, pragmatics studies how humans look beyond what was literally uttered [13, p. 13].

The way people use language to carry out communication is one of pragmatics' main areas of study. When we use words to make requests, give commands, or apologize, for example, this is clear. On a smaller scale, pragmatics also addresses our interpretations of specific words or phrases. For example, as is frequently the case with metaphors or hyperbole, should we interpret them literally or idiomatically? In order to effectively express the intended meaning, pragmatics also examines how speakers structure their utterances with the hearer's possible interpretation in mind. As Griffiths notes, pragmatics operates on both high and low levels: the broad social actions we perform through language and the specific, nuanced interpretations we make of individual expressions [13, p. 101].

The notion that an utterance's meaning is not necessarily the same as what is expressed literally is a foundational idea in pragmatics. People often use hedges or indirect language to express their objectives rather than making straightforward requests. Birner demonstrates this idea by emphasising how, without explicitly articulating the request, speakers may inquire about a hearer's capacity or readiness to fulfill a request or convey their own need for the request to be realised [7, p. 7]. In this sense, rather than using direct, explicit language, speakers express meaning by inferred behaviours. The core of pragmatic analysis lies in this nuanced interaction between meaning and speech.

By analysing the implicit meanings that language conveys, pragmatics contributes significantly to the larger theory of meaning. It emphasises on the underlying information that influences how language is used and perceived, as well as the implied and unspoken. Pragmatics is an important field because it explains things that traditional semantic theory finds difficult to explain, as Levinson points out [20, p. 654]. Philosophy, linguistics, sociology, psychology, and anthropology are all included in its multidisciplinary approach, which offers important insights into how people understand language in various situations.

The cognitive and cultural aspects of language use are also related to pragmatics. Humans interpret language using a wide range of general world information, cultural presumptions, and behavioral norms, as Carston implies [8, p. 117]. These cognitive tools help people to comprehend both the normal meanings of words and the more complex, non-compositional meanings that emerge in particular situations, such fixed phrases and idioms.

1.1.2. The main concepts of pragmatics

After having a basic understanding of pragmatics, it is important to look at the key concepts that lie behind this field of study. They set the basic framework of pragmatics and understanding how language works beyond literal meaning. We outlined several main concepts that should be discussed, which are deixis, presupposition, speech acts, implicature (conventional and conversational).

Expressions that need context to be fully understood are referred to as *deixis*. Who is speaking, who is listening, the time, and the location of the conversation all influence these deictic expressions. Deictic expressions are frequently used in time markers like “now” and “then”, pronouns like “I” and “you”, and spatial terms like “here” and “there”. Deictic expressions are essential because they help put a conversation in the right context and improve understanding for both the speaker and the hearer [36, p. 13].

The notice “*I’ll be back in an hour*” on someone’s office door, for example, depends on context. We do not know when it was written, we cannot know when the writer will return. Therefore, the meaning is context-dependent and cannot be fully understood without additional information about when the notice was placed [19, p. 54].

According to Levinson, deixis is especially crucial in face-to-face communication because it allows speakers to make references to topics that are directly related to the shared context [20, p. 654]. For deictic expressions to work, the speaker and the hearer need to have a common understanding of specific information, such as the speaker’s location or the time. Misunderstandings can easily arise without any shared context.

Presupposition involves background assumptions or shared information that a speaker takes for granted when communicating. These assumptions are important because they provide the underlying context needed to make sense of what is being said. For example, the sentence “*He stopped smoking*” presupposes that the person used to smoke. Such assumptions are usually uncontroversial and are accepted as true so that the conversation can move forward smoothly [36, p. 25-28].

Presuppositions can be triggered by specific linguistic elements, such as definite descriptions (“*the man*”, “*his car*” - *His son didn’t see the man in the red coat* means *There exists a man dressed in the red coat* means *The man has a son.*), factive verbs (“*know*”, “*regret*” - *Nick Fury regrets initiating the Avengers project* means *Nick Fury initiated the Avengers project*), or temporal clauses (“*before*” – *After losing his leg in the car accident, he became grumpy – he lost his leg*). These expressions imply certain facts about the world that both the speaker and hearer are assume to accept. Because of this, presuppositions are often taken as given and may go unnoticed unless they are questioned or proven false [34, p. 39-41].

Speech acts represent a central concept in pragmatics, pointing out the idea that language is not only used to convey information but also to perform actions. Speakers are doing speech acts – doing something with language instead of just talking something – when they ask for something, apologize, give instructions, or make a promise [28, p. 16].

Austin distinguishes three main types of speech acts: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. A locutionary act involves the production of an utterance, or the actual words spoken. An illocutionary act refers to the communicative intent behind the utterance, such as asserting, questioning, or requesting. A perlocutionary act, on the other hand, focuses on the effect that the speech has on the hearer, such as encouraging persuading, or causing someone to act [5, p. 80-85].

Take, for example, the sentence “*The room is hot*”. On the surface, it is simply a statement, representing the locutionary act, the literal meaning of the utterance. However, its intended function may be to suggest that the addressee open the door, which constitutes the illocutionary act, or the speaker’s communicative intent. If the

hearer then responds by opening a window or door, the utterance also achieves a perlocutionary act, as it has successfully influenced the hearer's behaviour [34, p. 79].

The illocutionary force, the intended function, of an utterance is particularly important in understanding how speech acts work in context. The same sentence can perform different functions depending on how, when, and why it is used. For instance, "*I'll see you later*" may function as a promise in one situation or as a warning in another, depending on the speaker's intention and the expectations within the conversation [36, p. 49].

1.1.3. Implicature

Following the discussion of core pragmatic concepts, we now turn to the concept of implicature – one of the most influential ideas in the field.

The concepts of *inference* and *implicature* are crucial in pragmatics. Both inference and implicature describe this type of contextual meaning, although they are fairly distinct. In a broad sense, inference is the process of deriving meaning from context, while implicature refers to meanings that are conveyed indirectly through speakers' intentions and the context of conversation.

Inference in the narrow sense refers to deriving meaning from context, which may include non-verbal cues, background knowledge, and shared assumptions [1]. Implicature, introduced by philosopher Herbert Paul Grice, focuses on meanings that a speaker intends to convey indirectly. It refers to the additional meaning implied by the speaker's utterance that is not part of the literal content. This distinguishes implicature from other inferred meanings that may arise from the hearer's interpretation without the speaker's intent. Grice's theory of implicature is rooted in the speaker's communicative goals and how their words are interpreted [12, p. 24-25]. In short, implicature is the combination of inference and speaker's (communicative) intention, or "speakers implicate, hearers infer" [30, p. 35]. For example, suppose A and B are discussing their mutual friend C, who now works at a bank. A asks how C is doing at his job, and B replies: "*Oh, quite well, I think; he likes his colleagues, and he hasn't been to prison yet*".

While B's literal statement is simply that C has not been imprisoned, the hearer (A) is likely to infer an implied meaning such as C might be the kind of person who could commit fraud, or that working at the bank poses certain ethical risks. This implied meaning is not directly stated but is conveyed indirectly through context and speaker intention. Thus, it represents an implicature [12, p. 24].

Implicature can be divided into two categories: conventional implicature and conversational implicature. *Conventional implicatures* are tied to the meaning of specific words and expressions, "is carried semantically (by the conventions for meaning socially infused in the words themselves)". In contrast, *conversational implicatures* arise from the context of the conversation, or "is rather carried pragmatically", where the speaker's intention leads the hearer to infer additional meaning not directly stated [11, p. 1]. For instance, by saying "*He is an Englishman; he is, therefore, brave*", Grice implicates that it follows from his being an Englishman that he is brave, thus suggesting a stereotype, which is conventional implicature [12, p. 25]. While by saying "*The soup is warm*" we may conversationally implicate that the soup is not hot. Such assumptions are based on the hearer's recognition of the context and the general expectations of the conversation. Conversational implicature, in this case, relies on the hearer's ability to infer meaning beyond the literal statement [14, p. 157].

The concept of conversational implicature is deeply intertwined with Grice's Cooperative Principle, which supports much of our understanding of how meaning is communicated indirectly. According to Grice, conversation is a cooperative activity where speakers and hearers work together to achieve mutual understanding. The maxims of the Cooperative Principle such as, Quality, Quantity, Relevance, and Manner, guide this process by establishing expectations about how contributions should be made in order to build up effective communication. Conversational implicature relies on these maxims, as speakers often rely on them to convey meaning indirectly, and hearers, in turn, use them to infer the speaker's intended message [20, p. 655].

The connection between conversational implicature and the Cooperative Principle becomes evident through the mechanisms by which meaning is conveyed and interpreted in interaction. Grice's maxims serve as the underlying framework that allows speakers to imply additional meaning and hearers to infer it, based on rational and cooperative assumptions.

Generalized conversational implicatures occur when no special background knowledge is required to derive the implied meaning. These rely heavily on the maxim of Quantity, which assumes that the speaker is being adequately informative. For example, when someone says, "*I was sitting in a garden one day. A child looked over the fence*", the hearer typically infers that neither the garden nor the child belongs to the speaker. This inference arises because if the speaker had meant *their* garden or *their* child, they would have said so. The use of the indefinite article ("a garden", "a child") signals to the hearer that the speaker is being intentionally general, thus triggering the implicature that these are not personally related to them. These types of implicatures, often associated with indefinite articles, are calculated automatically and are relatively context-free [36, p. 40-41].

Scalar implicatures, a subtype of generalised implicatures, depend on ordered scales of informativeness. For instance, saying "*I'm studying linguistics and I've completed some of the required courses*" typically implicates that the speaker did not complete all of the courses. The scalar term "some" is lower on the scale than "all", and based on the Quantity maxim, the hearer infers that the stronger alternative (*all*) was not chosen because it is not true [36, p. 41-42].

In contrast, *particularized conversational implicatures* depend on specific contextual knowledge. These require the hearer to draw on shared situational or cultural understanding to interpret the speaker's intent. For example, in the conversation:

Rick: Hey, coming to the wild party tonight?

Tom: My parents are visiting.

Tom's reply does not directly answer the question. However, Rick is expected to infer that spending time with one's parents usually implies staying in. Here, Tom's

indirect answer implicates “*No, I can’t come*”, even though he never explicitly says it. This relies on the maxim of Relevance, which assumes that Tom’s response must be relevant to the question if he is cooperating [36, p. 42-43].

These examples show how implicature and the Cooperative Principle work as an interpretive system. The maxims guide how much to say, what to say, and how to say it, and when a speaker seems to go against one of these expectations, the hearer assumes there is a reason for it and looks for a possible implied meaning.

As conversational implicatures rely on shared expectations and mutual understanding, Grice’s Cooperative Principle offers a foundational framework for how these implied meanings are generated and interpreted in discourse.

1.2. Grice’s Cooperative Principle

1.2.1. Introduction to the Cooperative Principle

Since conversational implicatures depend on shared assumptions and context, it is crucial to understand the framework that supports them – Grice’s Cooperative Principle. This principle was formulated by British philosopher Herbert Paul Grice in the 1960s and first presented in his William James Lectures at Harvard University in 1967. It was later published in his seminal essay “*Logic and Conversation*” (1975), which appears in the collection *Studies in the Way of Words* (1989). Grice developed the Cooperative Principle as a theoretical solution to the gap between what is said and what is meant in everyday conversation, proposing that successful communication relies on a shared assumption of cooperation between interlocutors.

He formulated the Cooperative Principle as “Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged” [12, p. 26]. This principle contributes to the idea that in order to understand implied meanings, or implicatures hearers must assume that the speaker has a communicative purpose in mind. The connection between what is said and what is meant is not arbitrary; rather, it must be governed by rules that make intended meaning recoverable in context. Grice’s insight was that conversation relies on mutual effort and a baseline assumption that speakers

are trying to be understood. Even when disagreements occur, the very act of engaging in dialogue still shows an effort to be understandable [17, p. 137].

This collaborative basis allows interlocutors to make deductions, for example, when interpreting statements that appear tautological or uninformative at first glance. The literal meaning seems insignificant, for example, when someone replies, “*A hamburger is a hamburger*”, in response to a question about their lunch. But if the speaker is being cooperative, the hearer looks for a more nuanced explanation, like that the food is average or unimpressive. Such cases show that cooperation is not only expected but also essential for effective communication [36, p. 35].

This principle is the foundation for efficient reference, presupposition, and implicature. Yule claims that without the assumption that speakers are not trying to mislead, conceal, or confuse important information, conversation would not succeed [36, p. 35]. Therefore, the principles of conversation are based on Grice’s Cooperative Principle, which allows hearers to understand what is said and what is meant in a context-sensitive, rule-governed way.

1.2.2. The Four Maxims

In order to clarify how the Cooperative Principle functions in everyday interaction, Grice introduced a set of underlying categories that guide conversational behaviour. These categories, which he referred to as maxims, help explain the specific ways in which speakers typically work together to make communication effective. Each maxim reflects a different aspect of this cooperation, shaping how information is conveyed and understood in context.

Overall, there are four main maxims (or categories, as Grice defines them):

- Maxim of Quantity;
- Maxim of Quality;
- Maxim of Relevance;
- Maxim of Manner [12, p. 26].

Together, they form the foundation for how speakers are expected to contribute to a conversation. Speakers ensure that communication clear, truthful, relevant, and

appropriately detailed. To understand the full scope of Grice's proposal, it is essential to examine each maxim individually and think about how it supports the general idea of cooperation in conversation.

The first of maxims is *the Maxim of Quantity* that relates to the amount of information provided. Grice indicates that speakers must make their contributions as informative as is required. At the same time, although the scholar thinks it may be disputable, it is crucial to not overload speakers' contributions with too much information than is required, as it can cause more confusion, or hearers may be misled thinking that there is some important particular point in those details, as well as other maxim will be violated [12, p.26-27].

A: Bill and Martha are leaving tomorrow.

B: I'll miss Martha.

In the example above, speaker B violates the maxim by responding only to the part of the A's sentence. This omission might imply that speaker B does not like Bill [16, p. 447].

The Maxim of Quality impose on speakers to be truthful, or as Grice says "Try to make your contribution one that is true", or specifically "Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence" [12, p. 27]. Birner also specifies that speakers do not have to *make* their contributions true, but *try* to make it so. This is an implicit acknowledgement that people cannot know for certain what is true and what is not, so in such way, we are supposed to make contributions which we *believe* to be true instead [7, p. 39].

Jack does not know the exact place Mary went for the summer vacation:

Tom: Where did Mary go last summer?

Jack: She went somewhere in Europe.

The Maxim of Quantity states that Jack must give Tom the precise location he asks for. However, if he is unsure of it, he should not make it up, according to the Maxim of Quality [34, p. 57].

Grice explains *the Maxim of Relevance* simply as "Be relevant". Although the requirement for the maxim sounds concise, the scholar outlines some problems it might

cause in defining what information should be considered relevant. As Grice acknowledges, the notion of relevance raises several questions: “what different kinds and focuses of relevance there may be, how these shift in the course of a talk exchange, how to allow for the fact that subjects of conversation are legitimately changed, and so on” [12, p. 27]. These points show that relevance is not something fixed or straightforward to define. Instead, it shifts with the flow of conversation, depending on things like context, what the speakers already know, and how the discussion unfolds. Because of this, the Maxim of Relevance can be especially open to interpretation, which creates room not only for confusion but also for deliberate use of ambiguity in communication.

A Professor is writing a reference letter to a Ph.D. applicant in linguistics:

Tom is a warm-hearted person and he shows up in class on time

The maxim has been flouted in the example as the information provided by the professor will not help the student if he needs the reference letter for a work in linguistic field where other soft and hard skills are more appreciated [34, p. 58].

Finally, *the Maxim of Manner*, which relates more to *how* things are said rather than what is actually said. It can be concluded in “Be perspicuous” or, to be precise, “avoid obscurity of expression/avoid ambiguity/be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)/be orderly” [12, p. 27]. However, Birner makes a joke that the maxim violates itself by saying “be perspicuous” instead of just “be clear”. Nevertheless, this maxim remains central to one of the main ideas behind the Cooperative Principle – the gap between what a sentence literally says and what the speaker actually means [7, p. 43].

Waiter: Miss, what can I get you for dessert?

Mary: Ice cream, please.

Waiter: Pardon?

Mary: Ice cream.

Waiter: I’m sorry?

Mary: I-C-E C-R-E-A-M, ice cream!

Waiter: I got it. Here is your ice cream.

In the example, the early parts of the conversation follow the Maxim of Manner, especially the expectation to be brief [34, p. 58].

Grice's maxims act as guiding principles that shape how people communicate, helping both speakers and hearers keep conversations coherent and meaningful. While they are not strict rules, the maxims reflect what we typically expect from each other during conversations. When speakers follow them, they show a willingness to cooperate, which helps hearers pick up on implied meanings, sort out ambiguities, and understand what's being said in context [12, p. 29-30].

1.2.3. Limitations and Criticism of the Cooperative Principle

Despite its lasting influence on pragmatics studies, Grice's Cooperative Principle has been criticised a few times over the years. A number of theoretical and practical limitations have been pointed out by scholars, creating doubt about the universality of Grice's ideas.

According to Leech, there is a continuing concern that the Cooperative Principle alone does not clearly explain how indirectness works in conversation, especially in more polite or socially nuanced exchanges. Although Grice's method is based on truth-based claims and logic, everyday communication often works in a different way. In an attempt to be tactful or polite, people typically use indirect language, and not because they are being uncooperative. Leech gives example such as "*A: We'll all miss Bill and Agatha, won't we? B: Well, we'll all miss BILL*", in which the speaker avoids addressing Agatha directly in order to avoid being rude. If politeness is not taken into account, the Cooperative Principle does not explain the speaker's decisions in this case. For this reason, Leech suggested the Politeness Principle as an essential addition to Grice's framework.

Leech also brings up the subject of cultural diversity. Conversational norms in some cultures may place a higher value on things like indirectness, silence, or understatement – practices that conflict with Grice's beliefs about relevance and informativeness [18, p. 80-81].

The internal consistency of the maxims themselves has been questioned as well. For example, the Maxim of Manner, which requires brevity and clarity, frequently

overlaps with the Maxim of Quantity, which is about providing the appropriate amount of information. In the same way, it is possible to reduce the two components of the Maxim of Quality – that speakers ought to avoid saying things they believe to be false and refrain from saying things without supporting evidence – to just one idea. People probably do not think something is true in the first place if they do not have proof for it. The overall structure of the theory is weakened by these types of overlaps and redundancies [34, p. 60].

The question of how to distinguish between what is implicated and what is said is also a topic of continuous discussion. Grice's model sometimes oversimplifies this relationship. Take, for example, the statement "*He's ready*", said in reference to Usain Bolt as he approaches the starting blocks of a 100-meter race. On a strictly semantic level, the sentence asserts only that he is in a state of readiness. However, it does not specify what he is ready *for*. The speaker does not say "He's ready for the race" and yet the hearer typically understands it this way. The interpretation is highly context-dependent: in this setting, the assumption is that readiness pertains to the impending competition, not, for example, to eating lunch or giving an interview. As a result, scholars have proposed alternative frameworks, such as Relevance Theory or the minimalism-contextualism debate, to better capture the nuances of real-world communication [34, p. 61].

Finally, Davies notes that "cooperation" is often misinterpreted as being helpful or avoiding misunderstanding. According to him, this results in "cooperation drift", when a more informal interpretation of Grice's phrase replaces its technical meaning. Therefore, people may conclude that a discourse is not cooperative just because it appears to be conflictual or unclear, even though it may still adhere to Grice's model through purposeful flouting and implicature [10, p. 6-7].

These criticisms reflect both theoretical and practical challenges in applying Grice's framework. Deviations from the Cooperative Principle may be either explicit or contextually implied, depending on the communicative situation. Such non-cooperation can complicate interpretation and requires more complex inferencing from the hearer. In many cases, meaning cannot be conveyed effectively without

implicature, especially when indirectness is needed. This underscores implicature as an essential element of discourse-based communication [2].

Despite these criticisms, Grice's framework remains a valuable tool for analysing how speakers deviate from conversational norms to generate implied meaning, particularly through maxim violations, the focus of the next section.

1.3. Violations of Grice's Maxims

1.3.1. Understanding Maxim Violation

Within the framework of Grice's Cooperative Principle, conversational maxims are rules that speakers are supposed to stick to in order to guarantee effective and meaningful communication. However, speakers do not always follow these maxims. They frequently, whether on purpose or by accident, fail to fulfil them. Grice presents a number of ways a speaker might not follow a maxim, each with different interpretational implications.

First, a speaker may quietly and unostentatiously *violate* a maxim, especially the maxim of Quality. In doing so, they give the appearance of cooperation while purposefully omitting important facts or providing incorrect information. Since the utterance does not indicate a deviation from the expected cooperative behaviour, this covert violation may lead to the hearer being misled.

Second, a speaker may *opt out* of a maxim altogether. This occurs when the speaker explicitly or implicitly indicates that they are unwilling to provide information in the way a maxim requires. For example, someone might say, "*I'm sorry, I can't say more*", or "*My lips are sealed*". Such opting out does not mislead the hearer, as it clearly signals non-cooperation in the conventional sense.

Third, a speaker may experience a *clash* between maxims. This happens when fulfilling one maxim would lead to the violation of another. For instance, giving as much information as required (Quantity) might conflict with the need to avoid saying something for which one lacks evidence (Quality). In such cases, the speaker must prioritise one maxim over the other, which may result in a compromised but still cooperative exchange.

Fourth, a speaker may *flout* a maxim, intentionally and obviously failing to observe it. The speaker depends on the hearer to look for an implied meaning and to understand that the maxim is being broken on purpose [12, p. 30].

The key difference between the violation and flouting lies in the speaker's intention and transparency. While flouting a maxim allows interpretation and indicates that the literal meaning is not the entire message, violating it conceals the speaker's genuine communicative goal [7, p. 37].

Actually, flouting plays a particularly important role in conversation because it is often the trigger for the generation of conversational implicatures. When a speaker flouts a maxim, the apparent breach draws the hearer's attention and prompts them to search for a deeper, intended meaning that reconciles the utterance with the Cooperative Principle. Therefore, far from being a failure, flouting becomes a powerful communicative tool that relies on shared assumptions and inferential reasoning between speaker and hearer [12, p. 30].

1.3.2. Flouting the Maxims

Having explored the general idea of maxim violations and how they form conversational implicatures, the next step is to see how these actually take shape within everyday conversation. Each type of violation, whether it is of Quantity, Quality, Relevance, or Manner, can trigger different kinds of implicatures.

The flouting of the Maxim of Quantity occurs when a speaker provides either too little or too much information, breaking the conversational expectations for informativeness. When a speaker provides insufficient information, they deliberately omit information that the audience expects, causing them to assume what is not said. However, giving too much information can overwhelm the hearer, causing confusion or giving the impression that the speaker is unsure or attempting to avoid being direct.

For example, a flouting of the Maxim of Quantity through insufficient information can be observed in a testimonial for a philosophy job. A writes a testimonial about a student who is a candidate for a philosophy job, and his letter reads as follows: "*Mr. X's command of English is excellent, and his attendance at tutorials has been regular*". While these statements are accurate, they do not provide relevant

context for understanding Mr. X's qualification for the philosophy role. Although it is not stated explicitly, the limited content implies that A might not think Mr. X is qualified for the position. In this case, the speaker purposefully avoids passing judgment, suggesting a negative evaluation without explicitly saying so.

Moreover, a flouting of the Maxim of Quantity can occur when someone provides more detail than necessary. For instance, if A asks B whether a particular statement is true, B might answer by not only confirming the statement but also elaborating with excessive supporting arguments, background information, and unnecessary details. Because the over-explanation may suggest doubt or uncertainty, this excess of information may lead A to doubt B's confidence in the response. In this case, the over-explanation can imply that there is a lack of clarity or certainty and that the situation is actually more complicated or unclear than first stated [12, p. 33-34].

When a speaker provides information that is either untrue or not supported by enough proof, they flout the Maxim of Quality. Conversational implicatures are usually produced by this kind of violation since the intended meaning must be interpreted by hearers through common knowledge and context. Flouting this maxim can take various forms, such as irony, metaphor, meiosis, and hyperbole, each of which conveys meaning indirectly.

One of the best examples of flouting the Maxim of Quality is irony. For example, it is obviously untrue if Person A claims that "*X is a fine friend*" after X has revealed A's secret. The audience and A are both aware of X's treachery and realise that A is not truly complimenting X. For ironic effect, A's statement is flouted. The true intent is to subtly criticise X's behavior rather than praise him. This implicature means that X is actually a bad friend, which is the opposite of what is said openly.

The Maxim of Quality is also flouted by metaphor. Saying "*You are the cream in my coffee*", for instance, is completely untrue and does not make literal sense. The speaker is not claiming that that person is really cream. Rather, the goal is to convey love or respect, suggesting that the hearer is something valuable or necessary, like cream is to coffee. The speaker's high regard for the hearer is implied here. Because of

the figurative nature of the phrase, the hearer recognises that the flouting of the Maxim of Quality is acceptable.

Another way to flout the Maxim of Quality is by stating something for which there is insufficient evidence. For example, if someone says, “*She is probably deceiving him this evening*”, without any concrete evidence to support the claim, the speaker flouts the maxim. While there’s no solid proof, the hearer may infer that the speaker is alluding to a broader, more general belief or suspicion, such as that the woman has deceived him in the past or is known for deceptive behavior. The implicature here does not make a literal claim about what is happening that evening; instead, it suggests something about the speaker’s general suspicion or belief regarding the woman’s behaviour [12, p. 34-35].

The Maxim of Relevance, which states that one should contribute information that is relevant to the ongoing conversation, is sometimes flouted in a way that conveys a meaningful implicature. For example, during a genteel tea party, if A remarks, “*Mrs. X is an old bag*”, and B immediately responds, “*The weather has been quite delightful this summer, hasn’t it?*” B’s comment is clearly irrelevant to A’s original remark. This apparent violation of the Maxim of Relevance signals that B is deliberately avoiding engaging with A’s inappropriate or socially offensive remark. The implicature here is that B believes A’s comment should not be discussed, and possibly that A has made a social gaffe. B’s choice to change the topic in such an overt way emphasizes the social breach without directly confronting it [12, p. 35].

When the Maxim of Manner is flouted, it can result in the intentional obscurity or ambiguity that conveys complex meanings.

One common way to flout this maxim is to be ambiguous. The hearer’s interpretation may be left up to the speaker’s deliberate use of confusing language. The phrase “*love that never told can be*” in the line, “*Never seek to tell thy love, love that never told can be*”, for example, can be understood in some different ways. The speaker deliberately leaves the meaning open, conveying multiple possible interpretations. In this case, the speaker might be suggesting that love that is never expressed can still exist, but the ambiguity itself is used to evoke deeper, layered meanings [12, p. 35].

To sum up, the study of how Grice's maxims are flouted to produce conversational implicatures emphasises how complex human communication is. Speakers can express meanings beyond the literal content of their words by intentionally flouting the maxims. Through context, common knowledge, and social cues, these violations lead the hearer to deduce deeper, frequently nuanced meanings. Each type adds a layer of complexity to the discourse, regardless of whether the flouting involves providing too little or too much information, using metaphor or irony, changing the subject, or purposefully leaving things unclear.

1.4. Conversational Implicature in Media Discourse

After establishing how conversational implicatures function in spoken exchanges, we need to explore how these same principles operate in media discourse – a domain where context and indirect meaning play a crucial role.

Media discourse refers to interactions that occur through broadcast platforms, either spoken or written, that are directed toward an audience who is not physically present. Despite the fact that these communications are meant for viewers, readers, or hearers, the recipients are usually unable to reply to the discourse's producers right away. The audience continues to influence the conversation despite the absence of face-to-face interaction. This implies that media discourse is by its very nature manufactured, public, and written down [25, p. 441]. The term *media* includes various channels of communication such as newspapers, television, radio, and the internet. It refers to the main ways information and entertainment are delivered to large audiences. Media can be categorised into print media, like newspapers and magazines; broadcast media, like radio and television; and electronic or digital media, such as websites and social platforms [26].

Media discourse matters from a linguistic standpoint because it offers many types of easily accessible language data. It gives scholars a means to investigate how language develops and how it works in social settings [29, p. 4-5].

Although conversational implicature remains relatively under-researched within the field of media discourse, several new examples show how conversational implicature is used practically in a variety of media genres. For example, implicature

is commonly used in public service announcements (PSAs) to subtly convey behavioral expectations or public health guidelines, depending on the audience's background knowledge to determine the intended message [21, p. 221]. The Indonesian Ministry of Health posted an image of a person using a laptop in front of a clock on Instagram with the caption, "*Hidup Normal Baru, Hidup Lebih Sehat dan Produktif*" (The New Normal Life is a Healthier and More Productive Life). This public service announcement, which was released four months after the government started advising people to work from home, encourages people to continue their work routines while following health precautions. The implicit message suggests that adjusting to the new normal is not about sacrificing productivity but rather adopting a way of life that promotes both personal and financial security. The Ministry hopes to encourage the public to keep making safe and responsible contributions to the economy through this indirect but context-dependent communication [21, p. 219]. (In this case, the Maxim of Manner is flouted. Grice's Maxim of Manner suggests that communication should be clear and orderly, avoiding ambiguity. However, the message uses an indirect or implicit way of conveying its point. By combining the idea of maintaining productivity with health protocols, the message does not directly tell the audience how to balance work and health but instead relies on context and the audience's ability to infer meaning).

Advertising is another field of media discourse. For entrepreneurs, advertising is a necessary instrument for informing customers about their products or services. The success or failure of an advertisement often hinges on how effectively it communicates predetermined information and attitudes to the right people, at the right time, and at the right cost. Language is essential in this situation. In addition to providing clear information, advertising language selection has a significant impact on consumer behavior. In order to engage or persuade the audience in a way that is subtle and in line with their needs and desires, advertisers strategically use language [33, p. 82]. Conversational implicature is used in the Rolex commercial with the slogan, "*How will you earn yours*", to subtly suggest exclusivity and success. The advertisement urges the reader to connect owning a Rolex with confidence, success, and prestige rather than

emphasising the watch itself. By suggesting that the watch must be “earned”, the commercial highlights the aspirational lifestyle it symbolises rather than the product’s features [33, p. 89]. The watch’s emotional and social value are highlighted rather than its usefulness, which flouts the Maxim of Relevance.

Internet memes are a rich source for examining conversational implicature because, as a type of media discourse, they mainly rely on social and educational context to convey meaning. In order to enable the audience to deduce implicit messages, meme creators frequently rely on shared cultural knowledge or experiences [27, p. 34]. The meme says, for example, “*You can drink lava... but only once*”. On the surface, it offers unexpected information, such as the claim that we can drink lava. But by introducing a contrast, the word “but” directs the reader to understand the message in a particular way. The use of the phrase “*only once*” reinforces this implication by implying that while drinking lava is possible, the result would be lethal. The meme employs epistemic context to guide the audience into understanding the implied meaning, which is “Stop drinking lava”. [27, p. 32]

Both the Maxim of Quantity and the Maxim of Manner are flouted in this case. The possibility of drinking lava is implied in the caption, but the reader is left to infer the fatal consequence, which is a violation of the Maxim of Quantity, which promotes for giving just the right amount of information. Because the caption uses ambiguity (“only once” and “but”) to create a contrast rather than being clear and direct, it also violates the Maxim of Manner, requiring the reader to use context in order to fully comprehend the implied message.

British newspaper blogs is another example, where the use of conversational implicature is influenced by the larger social and cultural context in addition to the immediate context [6, p. 423].

In the Guardian’s coverage of the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, the phrase “*the heavens have opened*” is used to describe the heavy rain, but it also carries an implicature related to the divine blessing of the monarchy. The phrase plays on the traditional belief that the monarchy is divinely appointed, suggesting that God’s approval is present even in the form of rain during the jubilee celebrations [6, p. 424].

However, this implication is challenged by blogger Pete Faulkner, who humorously questions the monarchy's divine connection by suggesting that if the Queen were truly God's representative, the rain would not have occurred. He argues, "*The Queen claims to be God's lieutenant here on Earth. But if that were true, then God wouldn't let it rain heavily on her multi-million-pound procession would he? So either she is lying or God hates her*" [32]. This ironic commentary flouts the Maxim of Relevance, as it contrasts the expected divine approval with the reality of the rain, subtly questioning the legitimacy of the Queen's divinely ordained status.

In the United States, Saturday Night Live (SNL) is a well-known talk show that features spoken conversations between the host and guests. The format of talk shows makes it possible to examine humor, conversational implicatures, and social interactions that take place in a mediated context. SNL offers a rich environment to examine how language works pragmatically in a public discourse setting through its clever banter, satire, and timely commentary on societal events [37, p. 190].

For example:

Jim: I checked the website "FiveThirtyEight" to find out my election fate. Nate Silver, he will know the score, even though...

Kyle: I was wrong before.

Kyle's statement "I was wrong before" is a flouting of the Maxim of Quantity since it offers little context and no additional explanation. Kyle wants to correct or acknowledge a mistake, but he leaves the details up to the hearer to infer, so this brevity creates an implied meaning. His statement is an example of a generalized conversational implicature since the hearer can understand the intended meaning without further explanation or context [37, p. 194].

Or another exchange:

Michael: If you got a platinum record, you can plan on him doing a photo with you.

Jim: Trump cannot win. We must do better than that spray tan super spreader. I will win because I'm a baller.

By quickly moving from Michael's remark regarding Trump's public appearances to an exaggerated and inflated statement about Trump and himself, Jim's response flouts the Maxim of Relevance. Because its complete meaning depends on the hearer's knowledge of the political background and cultural allusions – such as Trump's appearance and COVID-19 controversies – this statement produces a particularized conversational implicature. Instead of directly contrasting Trump's policies and qualifications, Jim's use of hyperbole (“spray tan super spreader” and “I'm a baller”) subtly suggests that Joe Biden is a better candidate. Contextual interpretation is the only way to get at the implicature [37, p. 195].

The relevance of pragmatics and conversational implicature in media communication is increasingly being explored, as media texts often rely on indirectness and contextual cues to convey multi-level meanings. Media messages often flout Gricean maxims to prompt audiences to infer meaning beyond what is explicitly stated. By using language strategically, media producers can avoid direct statements while addressing sensitive or nuanced topics. Pragmatic techniques like implicature are essential for shaping interpretation, especially when directness may be inappropriate. These strategies highlight how media, public, fixed, and one-directional, depends heavily on indirect communication to guide audience understanding.

On the audience's side, decoding these pragmatic cues requires active engagement with the content. By analyzing examples from various media forms, such as public service announcements, advertising, memes, blogs, and talk shows, we may claim that audiences rely on prior knowledge, cultural competence, and awareness of social norms to interpret what is implied. Since media communication lacks immediate feedback, recipients must infer speakers' or writers' intentions from contextual clues. These cases show that successful interpretation depends on the audience's inferencing skills, reinforcing the importance of pragmatics not only for crafting messages but also for critically interpreting them [37, p. 195].

Conclusion to Chapter 1

Chapter 1 has explored the foundational principles of pragmatics, with a particular emphasis on the mechanisms of conversational implicature as formulated by

H. P. Grice. Beginning with a theoretical overview of pragmatics, the chapter outlined key concepts such as deixis, presupposition, speech acts, and implicature, all of which contribute to understanding how meaning is shaped by context and speaker intention. Grice's Cooperative Principle and its four conversational maxims were examined as the structural basis for inferring implied meaning in conversation. Attention was also given to the ways in which these maxims may be violated or flouted to create communicative effects, such as irony, ambiguity, or critique. The final section illustrated how conversational implicature operates within media discourse, including public service announcements, advertisements, memes, and talk shows, where indirectness and contextual cues are essential for audience interpretation. Together, these elements establish a comprehensive framework for analyzing how speakers manage meaning beyond the literal in both everyday and mediated interactions.

With this theoretical foundation in place, Chapter 2 will shift focus to the practical application of Gricean pragmatics within television discourse. Specifically, it will investigate how conversational maxims are followed, flouted, or violated, how conversational implicatures emerge as the result of flouting in the context of *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, highlighting how such pragmatic strategies contribute to humour, politeness, critique, and the overall dynamic of host–guest interaction. This analysis will demonstrate how media language both reflects and manipulates conversational norms to engage and entertain audiences.

CHAPTER 2. EXPLORING GRICE'S MAXIMS IN "THE TONIGHT SHOW"

2.1. Methodology

The methodological foundation of this study draws on principles outlined in communicative linguistics and language communication theory. As Yashenkova notes in *Основи теорії мовної комунікації (Fundamentals of the Theory of Language Communication)*, the study of language communication benefits from combining general scientific and special linguistic research methods. This includes the systemic approach, which examines how communicative elements interact to produce pragmatic meaning. Accordingly, this study applies methods such as analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, and discourse and conversational analysis. These approaches offer a valid framework for exploring how Grice's maxims are flouted and implicatures are generated in spontaneous, media-based interaction [3, p. 29-33].

The methodology for this study is structured to systematically explore the occurrence and communicative functions of Grice's maxim flouting within the context of talk-show discourse. Given the dual focus on both quantitative patterns and qualitative interpretations, the methodological framework is divided into distinct but interrelated sections.

The first section outlines the corpus selection, detailing the criteria for selecting specific episodes and interviews from *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. The second section addresses the quantitative analysis, specifying how cases of maxim flouting were identified, categorized, and quantified to establish overarching patterns. The third section focuses on qualitative analysis, where selected excerpts are examined in-depth to illustrate how maxim flouting serves specific pragmatic functions, such as humour, emphasis, and avoidance.

The methodology provides empirical grounding for the analysis and enables a nuanced interpretation of how conversational implicatures are strategically generated and perceived in mediated interactions by integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

2.1.1. Corpus selection

The corpus for this study is drawn from *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, one of the longest-running and most influential late-night talk shows in American television history. *The Tonight Show*, which has been broadcast on NBC since 1954 and has won numerous Emmy Awards, is considered the industry standard [31]. According to public metrics, it holds an IMDb rating of 7.0 and a fame rate of 91%, reflecting its wide recognition and cultural significance across generations [15][35].

The Tonight Show was chosen for a number of reasons that are closely related to the objectives of the study. The focus on spontaneous conversation characterizes talk shows as a genre, whether they are produced as podcasts, televised, or radio broadcasts. The phenomenon of “fresh talk”, or language that seems spontaneous or is spontaneous, is a defining characteristic of the format. In a standard talk show, the host initiates and facilitates conversations with one or more guests on a range of subjects, many of which touch on contemporary social, political, or cultural issues [4]. The tone and style of the show are greatly influenced by the host's personality, and Jimmy Fallon’s unique style is a prime example of this.

Fallon’s hosting style is characterized by warmth, playfulness, and an intentional informality that fosters a relaxed atmosphere. His interpersonal skills, often referred to as the “Jimmy Fallon Effect”, create a setting in which guests are comfortable telling stories, light-teasing, and making jokes – pragmatic behaviors that frequently involve flouting conversational maxims for strategic communicative effects [24]. This particular dynamic renders *The Tonight Show* an ideal TV show for exploring Cooperative Principle within mediated dialogue.

To ensure diversity in speaker profiles and interactional styles, three interviews were carefully selected from *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*:

- Taylor Swift (November 26, 2022) [38];
- Michelle Obama (April 20, 2023) [39];
- Ryan Gosling (April 12, 2024) [40].

The main goal of this selection was to analyze how different types of guests – an international pop icon, a renowned Hollywood actor, and a respected political figure – engage in spontaneous conversation and employ maxim flouts for various communicative purposes. The purpose of selecting these interviews was to create a corpus that would provide linguistic and social diversity, enabling a more thorough investigation of Grice’s maxims in a late-night talk show context.

Michelle Obama, Ryan Gosling, and Taylor Swift were specifically picked based on several reasons. First of all, they each represent different professional domains: public service, the film industry, and the music industry. This diversity guarantees that the corpus contains a range of communicative objectives and discursive expectations. Second, there is a great deal of difference in the way they converse, ranging from Obama’s sophisticated yet approachable speech to Gosling’s dry wit and Swift’s lighthearted and self-deprecating humor. Selecting such a range of speakers allowed for a richer investigation into how factors such as celebrity persona, linguistic strategies, and interactional aims shape the flouting of Grice’s maxims.

Each speaker’s linguistic profile further contributes to the diversity required for this analysis.

Taylor Swift is recognized for her polished, narrative-driven style of communication, which reflects her broader artistic and public engagement strategies. Swift has developed a persona as a singer-songwriter that is focused on direct fan interaction, emotional authenticity, and storytelling. Her use of “Easter eggs” – secret messages, symbolic allusions, and multi-layered meanings woven throughout her music, videos, and public appearances – is a crucial component of her communication and it encourages her fans to actively decode her messages.

In contrast, Ryan Gosling interacts in an indirect and plain manner. Dry humor, subtle irony, and economy of expression are characteristics of his linguistic profile.

Michelle Obama offers yet another distinctive way of communication. As a former First Lady and a skilled public speaker, she combines warmth, authority, and clarity in her delivery. Obama frequently makes her answers approachable while incorporating inspirational or convincing ideas. She skillfully alters her register in

lighter interview contexts, such as *The Tonight Show*, using humour and conversational implicatures to appeal to a wider audience.

Together, these three speakers create a corpus rich in pragmatic variability. A strong basis for examining the deliberate application of Grice's maxim flouts in unplanned media discourse is provided by their distinct interactional styles, public personas, and thematic content. In addition to improving the study's findings' broader relevance, this diversity provides insightful information in various social contexts.

Having established the rationale for the corpus selection, the next step involved the transcription and preparation of the interview data. Given the focus on spontaneous conversation and the need for detailed pragmatic analysis, particular attention was paid to capturing not only the spoken words but also relevant paralinguistic features such as pauses, laughter, and intonation patterns. A systematic approach was adopted to ensure that the transcriptions would accurately reflect the dynamic and interactive nature of the talk show exchanges, thereby providing a reliable basis for subsequent analysis of maxim flouts and conversational implicatures.

The transcription is focused on the interview portions, omitting musical performances and game segments. Specifically, we transcribed material from *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* episodes S10 E42 ("Taylor Swift Talks Record-Breaking Midnights Album, Music Video Cameos and Easter Eggs"), S10 E124 ("Michelle Obama Dishes on Her White House Return and Her Friendship with Oprah Winfrey"), and S11 E142 ("Ryan Gosling on 'I'm Just Ken' Oscars Performance, Hosting SNL and The Fall Guy Stunt WorkAcross"). Across these three interviews, approximately forty-five minutes of spontaneous conversation were transcribed, providing a sufficiently dense corpus for pragmatic analysis.

By using orthographic transcription, the transcription method kept the basic features of spoken interaction, including hesitations, discourse markers (e.g., "well", "you know", etc) and informal syntactic structures, while capturing the spoken information in conventional written English. Although they were not fully transcribed, paralinguistic signals like laughter, overlapping speech, audience reactions were

included when they improved the understanding of pragmatic strategy or conversational implicature.

We segmented each excerpt into turns at talk and organized in a spreadsheet format. The main categories included:

- Speaker (Host or Guest),
- Excerpt,
- Grice's maxim(s) involved,
- Implicature function achieved (e.g., humour, rapport-building, etc).

This structured preparation allowed for both quantitative summaries (e.g., frequency of different maxim flouts) and qualitative analyses of how maxims and implicatures functioned within the broader conversational context.

The corpus was compiled to capture the richness and complexity of in modern media discourse by concentrating on a program that thrives on the interaction of scripted and unscripted talk and by choosing guests with contrasting linguistic profiles.

2.1.2. Quantitative analysis

The primary objective of the quantitative analysis in this study is to systematically identify and evaluate patterns of conversational maxim flouts within the selected interviews from *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. The study aims to detect recurring tendencies in pragmatic behaviour across various speaker types and conversational contexts by observing instances in which the Grice's maxims are strategically flouted. In this context, a quantitative method is especially suitable, as it enables an objective evaluation of frequency and distribution, thereby facilitating comparisons between speakers and episodes. Through numerical categorization, this approach offers a macro-level perspective on which maxims are most frequently flouted and for what communicative purposes. Quantitative analysis is a powerful tool for identifying systematic variation in spontaneous media discourse. Moreover, this approach provides a broader understanding of how conversational implicature operates across different social personas and interactional styles, providing a solid empirical basis for following qualitative research.

For the purposes of this analysis, we examined a total of 58 utterances extracted from three interviews on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. These utterances were taken exclusively from the interview portions of each episode. We found 65 examples of Grice's maxim flouting in the dataset. We treated each utterance as a distinct unit of analysis and evaluated the type of flouting and its implicature function. In order to do this, we used a set of functional categories that we independently created based on trends we saw in the data. This approach allowed us to establish a systematic framework for detecting and interpreting patterns of flouting across different speakers and conversational contexts.

To organize the data systematically, we developed a two-level categorization framework. First, each instance of maxim flouting was assigned to one of the four categories derived from Grice's Cooperative Principle: Quantity, Quality, Relevance, and Manner. This helped us to classify the type of maxim being flouted in each utterance. Second, we introduced a set of functional categories that captured the communicative purpose of each flout. These functions are: *humour*, *emphasis*, *implicit reference*, *rapport*, and *avoidance*. These categories were not predefined but rather emerged inductively through repeated close readings of the data. While most categories are self-explanatory, the notion of implicit reference may need clarification. According to our analysis, this term was applied to situations in which a speaker made subtle references to contextually salient information, fan-oriented content, or shared cultural knowledge. Each utterance was thus evaluated both in terms of its type of maxim flouting and its implicature function within the conversational context. This dual-layered approach enabled us to capture not only what kind of maxim was flouted, but also why it might have been flouted, offering insights into speaker intention and audience engagement.

To ensure consistency and clarity in the coding process, we organized all data using a structured Excel spreadsheet that can be found in Appendix 1-3 (one table for each interview). We later visualized the descriptive summaries through a series of tables and charts, including frequency of floutings, charts displaying the overall distribution of flouts across maxim types, and pie charts representing the proportion of

implicature functions. These visual tools not only enhanced the clarity of our findings but also served as an essential bridge between the raw data and its interpretation. All visualizations are presented and analyzed in detail in Section 2.2.1.

While the quantitative approach provides a valuable overview of pragmatic tendencies within the corpus, we understand that numerical data alone cannot fully capture the complexity of conversational meaning and speaker intention. The categorization of maxim flouts and implicature functions offers a broad, foundational perspective, but it does not account for the nuanced interplay of context, tone, and delivery that often underlies implicature. For this reason, the present quantitative analysis is intended as a preliminary stage, serving to highlight salient patterns that allows deeper examination. These patterns are further explored through detailed contextual interpretation in the qualitative analysis.

2.1.3. Qualitative analysis of conversations, guest interviews, and interactions

This section describes the qualitative methodology used to examine how conversational maxims are flouted in *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. Unlike the preceding quantitative analysis, which provided a statistical overview of maxim floutings, the qualitative component is concerned with interpreting individual instances of flouting in their specific conversational and pragmatic contexts. The objective is not only to identify which maxims are flouted, but to explain how such flouts function communicatively and what they reveal about speaker intent, interpersonal dynamics, and audience engagement.

The framework of Grice's Cooperative Principle and its four maxims: Quantity, Quality, Relevance, and Manner – serve as the foundation for the qualitative study. A special focus is placed on statements that flout maxims in a way that leads the hearer, or in our case, the audience, to infer extra, implicit meaning. In media discourse, where communication often balances between entertainment and social commentary, these implicatures are particularly important because they show how speakers use indirect language to create humorous effects, build rapport or avoid direct statements. Additionally, the analysis takes into account contextual and paralinguistic elements

including tone, laughter, and shared cultural references, all of which usually support or change the understanding of what is said.

As previously discussed, the qualitative analysis draws on excerpts from three selected interviews, each featuring a guest with a distinct public persona and communicative style: Taylor Swift, Ryan Gosling, and Michelle Obama. Their contrasting approaches to discourse allow for a comparative perspective on how different types of speakers strategically manage conversation in a mediated setting.

We followed a systematic interpretive framework grounded in Gricean pragmatics to conduct the research. Our aim was to examine how conversational maxims are flouted in *The Tonight Show* and to explore the implicit meanings that arise as a result.

First, we identified the specific maxim being flouted in each selected excerpt in a way that pointed out intentional deviation rather than communicative failure. We treated a flout as a strategy to prompt the audience to infer an implicit meaning.

Second, we examined each utterance in relation to its surrounding context. This meant looking not only at what the speaker said, but also at what was said immediately before and after. We also thought about the speaker's identity, the interview's overall subject, and how a talk show's casual, entertainment-oriented format can affect the way things are spoken. Understanding the full context allowed us to see how a phrase that seems neutral or unclear on its own could take on a specific meaning depending on how, when, and by whom it was used.

Third, we interpreted the implicature generated by the flout. We looked at what the statement implied beyond its literal meaning, assuming that the speaker adhered to the Cooperative Principle.

Fourth, we defined the implicature function served by the flout. We took into account the pragmatic purpose of the utterance by using the functional categories that were developed throughout our analysis. Based on the categories we identified during the analysis, such as humour, building rapport, emphasis, avoidance, or implicit reference, we examined what the speaker was trying to achieve with their utterance.

This layer of interpretation helped to explain why the maxim was flouted and to what effect.

Finally, we conducted comparisons between various speakers and episodes. By doing this, we were able to identify speaker-specific strategies as well as more general trends in the way maxim flouting functions in this particular media environment. Understanding how discourse roles, celebrity personalities, and audience expectations impact pragmatic behavior was made possible by the variety of communicative styles.

This step-by-step approach forms the basis for the detailed analysis, where we could explore how particular instances of maxim flouting serve a variety of communication purposes and generate implicit meanings in the context of talk shows. The following section (2.2.2) puts this approach into practice through a series of selected examples, grouped according to the type of maxim flouted and interpreted according to their implicature function.

2.2. Grice's Maxims in "The Tonight Show"

Building upon the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 1, this section delves into the practical application of Grice's Cooperative Principle within the context of *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. By analyzing selected interviews with Taylor Swift, Michelle Obama, and Ryan Gosling, this section examines how conversational maxims are strategically flouted to produce specific communicative effects. The analysis is divided into two primary subsections: quantitative patterns of maxim flouting, which identifies the frequency and distribution of flouts across the dataset, and qualitative insights, where individual examples of maxim flouts are contextualized to reveal underlying implicatures and pragmatic intentions. By contrasting quantitative data with qualitative interpretations, this section illustrates how maxim flouting functions as a rhetorical strategy and also highlights its role in shaping humorous, emphatic, and context-dependent interactions within the talk-show format.

2.2.1. Quantitative Patterns of Maxim Use

In this section, we present the quantitative results of our analysis of Grice's maxim flouting in *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. This analysis serves not

only to document instances of maxim floutings, but also to underscore the systematic and functionally motivated nature of these pragmatic deviations. We establish a strong empirical foundation for examining the deeper pragmatic significance of conversational maxims by calculating the frequency and manner in which speakers flout them in various contexts.

A key starting point in our analysis was to determine how frequently Grice's maxims are flouted in the talk show context. The 65 instances of maxim flouting were drawn from approximately 45 minutes of spontaneous talk show conversation, resulting in an average of 1.44 flouts per minute. This comparatively high frequency demonstrates how regularly in this media environment, speakers deviate from Grice's guidelines. These flouts function as deliberate and often strategic choices, shaped by the performative and relational demands of the talk show format, rather than indicating communicative failure.

Establishing this frequency is important for two reasons. First of all, it emphasizes that maxim floutings are frequently observed in mediated interaction in entertainment environments. Second, it justifies the need for qualitative exploration of how these flouts operate in context: if flouts occur so frequently, then understanding their pragmatic functions, speaker intentions, and audience effects becomes essential for a full account of meaning-making in such discourse.

To further support our analysis, we examined the overall distribution of maxim floutings across the dataset. The classification of each flout followed Grice's four maxims: Quantity, Quality, Relevance, and Manner. Among the 65 instances of maxim flouting identified, flouting of the Maxim of Quality and the Maxim of Quantity were the most frequent, with 23 and 22 instances respectively. These were followed by floutings of the Maxim of Manner (13 cases) and the Maxim of Relevance (7 cases).

This distribution suggests that the most commonly flouted maxims in the talk show context are those concerning informativeness and truthfulness. The flouting of the Maxim of Quality is often associated with irony, exaggeration, or hyperbolic statements, which are common strategies in entertainment discourse. Similarly, flouting of the Maxim of Quantity, through either over-explaining or withholding

information, serve various pragmatic functions such as comedic delay, teasing, or implication.

Floutings of the Maxim of Manner, although less common, often involve intentional vagueness or ambiguity, which can create space for interpretation or maintain a humorous tone. The comparatively lower number of Relevance flouts may reflect the structured nature of televised interviews, where thematic relevance is largely maintained through the host's direction. However, when flouted, the Maxim of Relevance often marks moments of topic shifting, avoidance, or redirection for strategic or humorous effect.

A summary of these findings is presented in *Appendix 3* which visualizes the overall distribution of flouted maxims across all speakers.

In addition to categorizing maxim floutings by type, we also examined the implicature functions that each instance of flouting served. With the help of this layer of analysis, we can understand speaker intention and pragmatic effect in addition to structural classification. The flouts were coded into five emergent functional categories: humour, emphasis, implicit reference, rapport-building, and avoidance. Among these functions, humour was by far the most prevalent function, accounting for nearly half of all flouting instances. This dominance reflects the inherently comedic and performative nature of talk show discourse, where wit, irony, and exaggeration are central to engaging the audience.

The second most common function was emphasis, which is frequently accomplished by exaggerating or repeating something. Also, implicit reference was commonly seen, especially in Taylor Swift interviews where fan knowledge and multiple meaning were crucial. Cases of rapport-building were usually characterized by cooperative humour or encouraging back-and-forth conversations, whereas avoidance suggested deliberate ambiguity or a failure to address a subject.

A visual summary of the distribution of these implicature functions is presented in *Appendix 5*.

These results demonstrate how rarely is maxim flouting on *The Tonight Show* random. Rather, it functions as a purposeful communication tool that is influenced by

the speaker's personality, the medium's expectations, and the social dynamics of the interview setting. In the next section, we move from these quantitative patterns to qualitative interpretation, examining selected instances of maxim flouting in detail to explore how implicatures are constructed and understood in real-time conversation.

2.2.2. Qualitative Insights into Maxim Flouting

In this section, we look more closely at how maxim flouting functions as a means of interaction in the talk-show setting, moving past methodologies. We present these flouts as dynamic instruments that speakers use to negotiate the multi-layered interactional needs of talk show discourse, rather than as separate pragmatic deviations.

As previously outlined in Section 1.2.2, according to *the Maxim of Quantity*, information should be provided that is appropriate for the hearer's informational needs in a particular situation – that is, neither too much nor too little. However, we see deliberate floutings from this maxim in talk show language, which serve a variety of implicature functions, from emphasis and humour to avoidance and implicit referencing.

The interactions with Taylor Swift, whose public persona is defined by a narrative-driven style, are rich in instances of over-informing. For example, in the excerpt from Appendix 1:

- *Yeah, it's actually – It's a concept record, but it's my first directly autobiographical album in a while. Because the last album that I put out was a re-record of my album "Red", so that has some space. You know, I wrote that stuff a decade ago. "Folklore" and "Evermore", I was -- It was like story time. It was like mythology. Like, I'm creating a character. They went and did this and felt this way".*

Here, Swift provides an elaborate narrative, which, however, exceeds the informational requirement of the question, so she flouts the Maxim of Quantity. The implicature function here is *implicit reference*, as she seeks to contextualize her current work within her broader artistic heritage, while the implicature implies an effort to support her artistic development as purposeful and intensely personal.

On the contrary, Michelle Obama uses under-informing as a subtle, face-saving strategy, as seen in her response (Appendix 3) to Fallon's question:

-...*I noticed that you went back -- you went back to the White House recently. You haven't been back.*

- *No. Wasn't invited. [Laughter] Ooh, shade. [Laughter]*

Here, the implicature function is *avoidance*, as Obama deliberately withholds further explanation, opting for a brief, ambiguous reply that invites the audience to infer potential social or political tensions. The implicature hints at possible political tension, but by using humor, she avoids addressing it directly and keeps the tone light.

Jimmy Fallon's hosting style involves exaggerated repetition, particularly when he praises someone's success. In the Gosling interview (Appendix 2), Fallon's use of repetitive praise is fairly evident in the example:

- *Buddy, you were unbelievable. It was the best. That was awesome. It was giant*".

The implicature function in this instance is *emphasis*, as Fallon uses a string of stacked, progressively exaggerated remarks to compliment Gosling's performance. The implicature is to strongly praise Gosling, using exaggerated compliments to emphasize his performance and keep the tone upbeat.

Another clear example of Quantity flouting appears in the interaction between Gosling and Fallon, who humorously exaggerate the same idea in a circular exchange (Appendix 2):

- *She's unflappable.*

- *She really is.*

- *She can't be flapped.*

- *No. I think that's what that means. Yes, I think that's what that means. She can't be flapped.*

The Maxim of Quantity is flouted when the same idea is repeated in several rewordings, going beyond the exchange's informational needs. *Implicit reference*, *emphasis*, and *humour* all combine to fulfill the implicature function. A straightforward remark is transformed into a cooperative comic moment by the overly dramatic and repetitive wording, which also improves the host-guest relationship and engages the audience in language play. The implicature is that Emily Blunt remains composed and

unshaken in all situations, to such an extent that the speakers feel the need to invent increasingly exaggerated ways to express it. Since the British colloquial idiom “to be flapped” means “to be agitated or confused”, the exchange implicitly alludes to Emily Blunt’s British nationality in addition to being a literal reinforcement of her calmness. For those who are familiar with the phrase and the actress’s background, this additional layer of meaning improves the humour and strengthens the closeness of the dialog between the speakers and the audience.

These examples show the strategic use of over- and under-informing to achieve particular implicature functions. Speakers can discreetly keep audience attention, promote specific opinions, and regulate the conversational flow by varying the quantity of information they present. Therefore, rather than resulting in a communicative failure, the deliberate flouting of the Maxim of Quantity becomes a rhetorical device that improves the talk show’s entertainment value.

The talk-show often involves *the Maxim of Quality* by presenting information that is overtly false, exaggerated, or ironic. Instead of trying to mislead, speakers exploit this strategy to make people laugh, draw attention to absurdity.

A classic example of how exaggerated self-deprecation may serve as a funny critique of ageism in the music industry is Taylor Swift’s joke about being a “geriatric pop star” (Appendix 1):

- *It’s like, you know, I’m 32. So, we’re considered **geriatric pop stars**. [Laughter]*
- *No, I don’t think so.*
- *They start trying to put us out to pasture at age 25. I’m just happy to be here.*

Here, *humour* serves as the communication function, and Swift does this by presenting herself as both relatable and sarcastically critical of the industry’s unrealistic requirements through self-deprecation. The implicature playfully critiques the music industry’s unrealistic age standards, using humor to highlight how absurd it is to consider 32 as “geriatric” for a pop star.

Another example of hyperbole can be seen in Ryan Gosling’s reply (Appendix 2), where it is used to humorously show tiredness:

- *You're hosting "Saturday Night Live" this weekend, this Saturday, for the third time. [Cheers and applause] You're a great host. You're a great guest star as well.*

- ***I haven't slept in three days.***

The implicature function in the example is *humour*, using exaggeration to downplay the situation and make Gosling's statement feel more relatable to the audience. The implicature humorously plays on the concept of hosting a "night" show, suggesting that he has not slept for three nights straight, aligning with the late-night format of SNL. Or it can also be interpreted as a deliberate exaggeration to emphasize his exhaustion, using hyperbole to create a comedic effect and maintain a light-hearted, relatable tone.

Jimmy Fallon often uses exaggerated reactions to make simple comments seem more dramatic and amusing. We can observe it in the interaction with Michelle Obama (Appendix 3):

- *...I noticed that you went back -- you went back to the White House recently. You haven't been back*

- *No. Wasn't invited. [Laughter] Ooh, shade. [Laughter]*

- ***Wow. Wow. I'm adding a chapter right here. Hold on.***

The maxim is flouted, as Jimmy is obviously not writing anything. *Humour* serves as a communicative, achieved through overstatement that turns a casual remark into a grand, exaggerated moment. The implicature is that Fallon is humorously pretending that Obama's brief comment is a major revelation, thus maintaining the light, comedic tone that characterizes his hosting style.

Fallon similarly flouts the Maxim of Quality through ironic exaggeration when he jokingly introduces Taylor Swift with a mock honorific (Appendix 1):

- *Sorry, I should have announced you earlier as doctor.*

Although Taylor Swift does in fact hold an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree, the statement flouts the Maxim of Quality by presenting the title in an exaggerated and overly formal context. The implicature function here is *humour*, blending irony with praise. The implicature is that Swift's influence and prestige in pop culture are so substantial that she deserves formal recognition even in a lighthearted setting. Fallon

jokingly raises her stature while preserving the show's comic tone by employing a stately title in an informal setting. The exaggerated delivery and the environment contrast to provide a multi-layered joke that respects Swift's cultural significance while maintaining an entertaining and lighthearted moment.

The deliberate flouting of the Maxim of Quality in talk-shows serves as a comedic tool, allowing speakers to exaggerate, overstate, and make up information in ways that are clearly not intended to deceive. Speakers can use humour to engage the audience by using irony and hyperbole. In each case, the humour emerges from the audience noticing the gap between what is said and the obvious exaggeration or irony in the speaker's tone. This playful contrast draws the audience in, creating an engaging and light-hearted atmosphere typical of talk-show entertainment.

The Maxim of Relevance guides speakers to stay on topic, contributing information that is directly related to the ongoing conversation. However, in talk shows speakers often flout this maxim to introduce humour, avoid questions or make amusing irrelevant comments.

In response to Fallon's warm welcome, Ryan Gosling demonstrated a typical case of relevance flouting (Appendix 2):

- *Ryan, welcome back to the show. Lots of love for Ryan Gosling here tonight. Come on. [Cheers and applause] Welcome back.*

- ***I always make sure my pants are not too tight before I come on your show, and then they're always too tight.***

Fallon's introductory remarks set the stage for a conventional exchange, yet Gosling unexpectedly shifts the focus to a trivial and unrelated comment about his pants. The use of a spontaneous, off-topic comment to break the expected conversational flow and successfully shift attention from Fallon's compliments to Ryan's observation is the implicature function of *humour*. By purposefully avoiding the expected reaction to Fallon's compliments and instead redirecting attention with a humorous, self-deprecating joke about his pants, Gosling supports his playful, unpretentious attitude.

Gosling offers another example of relevance flouting with an abrupt, contextually disconnected comment (Appendix 2):

-Congratulations, Duwan.

Because of its abrupt entry into the conversation, the audience infers that the comment refers to an off-camera or contextually private reference. *Implicit reference* and *humour* act as the implicature function when the viewer is led to believe that it alludes to an off-camera situation or a co-star in the studio by the absence of any explanation. The implicature is that Gosling is jokingly breaking the fourth wall and fostering a relaxed and welcoming environment by making a reference to something that the live crew would understand, even if the general audience does not. This part gently immerses viewers in the world behind the scenes of the show.

Similarly, Fallon employs relevance flouting during a conversation with Ryan about fear of heights (Appendix 2):

- Well, I have a fear of heights. Do you?

- I do, kind of. Yeah.

- What happens?

- Like, right now I think I'm too high off the ground. Normally, I would sit here. Yeah. Yeah. That's a bit like –

In this instance, Ryan's seemingly serious question about the host's fear of heights is derailed by Jimmy's irrelevant, exaggerated response about feeling '*too high off the ground*' while sitting in a chair. By turning a potentially serious subject into a hilariously ridiculous assertion, *humour* serves as the communication function in this instance. The implicature is that Fallon is downplaying the seriousness of the topic by making a ridiculous, exaggerated remark about being "too high" while sitting in a chair, using humor to keep the tone light and playful.

These examples show how the Maxim of Relevance is purposefully flouted to add humour and take the conversation in unexpected ways. Speakers establish humorous contrasts between what is expected and what is actually said by bringing remarks that appear to be off-topic or ridiculous. In keeping with the entertainment-driven nature of talk show discourse, this usage of irrelevant or contradictory

comments engages both the guest and the audience, creating a playful and unpredictable mood.

The Maxim of Manner stand for clarity, brevity, and orderliness in communication. But in the context of talk shows, speakers often flout this maxim by using ambiguous or vague language to avoid answering questions, create comedic moments, or maintain a playful, unpredictable tone.

Taylor Swift provides a clear example of manner flouting when she responds ambiguously to a direct question (Appendix 1):

- *Are we talking sooner than later? (a question about a possible concert)*
- *Um... You know, I should do it.*

Swift's response is deliberately vague, as she avoids providing a specific timeframe. The implicature function here is *avoidance*, using ambiguity to not answer the question without giving concrete information. In fact, she already knew about the upcoming concert, but she did not want to reveal it at that moment. The implicature is that Swift is intentionally withholding specific information about the concert, using vague language to keep the audience guessing while maintaining a casual, non-committal tone.

Swift continues to use manner flouting when she humorously acknowledges her own use of hyperbole (Appendix 1):

- *Yeah, that was me committing an act of extreme hyperbole.*

Swift uses the formal, rather pompous language to contrast with the conversation's informal tone while ironically drawing attention to her own overstated assertion. Here, *humour* is the implicature function, and it is accomplished by emphasizing the ridiculousness of her own claim in an overly dramatic and vague manner. The implicature is that Swift is playfully acknowledging her own exaggeration, using formal, overly dramatic language to mock herself, inviting the audience to share in the humour of her self-awareness.

Swift also flouts the Maxim of Manner in a moment of emotionally charged, scattered speech (Appendix 1):

- *Well, yeah, I mean, she's just the greatest. And she's -- I mean, I don't -- I don't even believe I'm saying things like this. And then -- And so, then, we have one of my favorite performers...*

The expectation of organized and clear expression is flouted by the statement's lack of cohesion and clarity. The implicature function is *rappport-building* since the speaker's disfluency conveys sincere excitement. The implicature is that she is genuinely thrilled and somewhat overwhelmed, leading her to speak in an unfiltered, unstructured way. Her speech is more honest and encourages the audience to join in her excitement since it is a genuine emotional reaction rather than a prepared remark.

Ryan Gosling further flouts the Maxim of Manner through lexical innovation in the line (Appendix 2):

- *Dad's Kenning again.*

The invented verb "Kenning" creates ambiguity and requires inferential interpretation. The implicature function uses *humour* and *implicit reference*, relying on viewers' knowledge of Gosling's Barbie role. The implicature is that Gosling's kids have grown used to watching him practice or act as Ken that they now consider it to be completely normal. The purposeful ambiguity relies on common cultural knowledge to interpret the allusion, creating sense of in-group communication.

These cases show how the Maxim of Manner can be flouted to avoid giving clear answers, maintain uncertainty, or provide amusement. Speakers that intentionally blur the boundaries between seriousness and comedy, sidestep questions, or point out everyday comments with vague, mysterious, or overly dramatic language can preserve the unexpected and humorous nature of talk show interactions.

The strategic use of maxim flouting in talk show discourse underscores the dynamic and multifaceted nature of mediated communication. While conversational maxims are conventionally intended to foster productive and cooperative dialogue, their intentional flouting in talk shows serves different functions, creating a complex interplay of humour, ambiguity, and exaggeration that not only entertains but also disrupts expectations of clarity, relevance, and truthfulness. Because audiences are forced to identify the contradictions, read between the lines, and decode the underlying

meanings, they are encouraged to actively engage in the interpretation process through this deliberate manipulation of maxims. As a result, flouting becomes a way to create many levels of meaning, blur the distinction between performance and sincerity, and turn everyday interactions into times of greater humorous and rhetorical significance.

Also, the frequent usage of flouting refers to a rethinking of communication standards in the talk show format, where ambiguity and exaggeration are not only accepted but are necessary components of the conversation. The tendency is a reflection of a larger societal norm that values fun, spontaneity, and unpredictability as indicators of authenticity and entertainment value. In this way, maxim flouting is a structural aspect of talk show discourse rather than just a rhetorical device, highlighting its hybrid character as a setting where conversational norms are both followed and broken to keep viewers interested and entertained.

2.3. Functions of Implicature in Maxim Flouts

In order to systematise our analysis of conversational implicatures in *The Tonight Show*, we apply a set of functional categories that we developed inductively during close examination of the data. These categories are not grounded in any predefined theoretical model, but rather emerged from observable patterns within the corpus. They help us explain *why* speakers flout Gricean maxims — that is, what communicative purposes these instances of flouting serve in the context of mediated talk-show discourse. We identified five main implicature functions: *humour*, where indirectness produces comedic effects through exaggeration, irony, or absurdity; *emphasis*, where repetition or elaboration highlights particular meanings or emotions; *avoidance*, where speakers withhold or obscure information to sidestep direct engagement; *implicit reference*, where meaning relies on shared knowledge or culturally salient cues; and *rappport-building*, where informal or emotionally charged language strengthens the interpersonal connection between speakers and audience. These categories serve as an interpretive framework for our subsequent analysis, allowing us to evaluate not only the structure of implicatures, but also their communicative and social functions in the talk-show setting.

Humour often appears in the show as a main function of implicature created by flouting the Maxim of Quality. The interpretative mechanism of implicature is activated when speakers use intentional exaggeration, irony, and explicit absurdity to create conversational frames that force the audience to deduce meanings beyond the actual content. Speakers involve hearers rationally by using irony or self-deprecation to alter facts and encourage them to make sense of the appeared contradiction between the explicit sense and the underlying purpose. A notable example occurs when Taylor Swift jokingly invents a fake cat breed during a game segment (Appendix 1: “*A cat that knocks pens off of desks!*”) Generally, this might keep things lighthearted while allowing speakers to subtly touch on delicate subjects. It also keeps the lighthearted conversational tone.

The Tonight Show uses *emphasis* as a implicature function that is usually produced by the flouting of the Maxim of Quantity. Speakers can make certain remarks seem more important by purposefully repeating or purposefully giving too much information. This makes the audience believe that the information being presented is more important or urgent. As a rhetorical strategy, repetition increases the effect of particular points by repeating them, whereas the presentation of excessive material highlights the speaker’s viewpoint or narrative attitude. In one excerpt (Appendix 1), Swift recalls a production setup: “*We had a teeny, tiny little room with a teeny, tiny table... tiny little wine bottle*”. The repetition of diminutives goes far beyond what is informationally required, but serves to dramatize the memory, reinforcing its visual and emotional impact. Since talk shows are entertainment-driven, this expressive usage of implicature creates a heightened interpretative context where specific themes or messages are emphasized or exaggerated, maintaining audience interest and strengthening narrative coherence.

Implicit referencing and *rapport-building* are pragmatic techniques in *The Tonight Show* that are usually realized through the flouting of the Maxim of Relevance to connect with the audience. Indirect cultural allusions or seemingly off-topic comments help presenters establish a rapport with the audience and the host. For instance, Jimmy Fallon casually remarks (Appendix 2), “*The alien sketch*”, without

elaboration. This minimal reference assumes shared knowledge and relies on the audience to supply the missing context, reinforcing a sense of inclusion for those who understand. This strategic use of relevance flouts allows speakers to align themselves with specific audience segments, maintaining a casual, approachable tone that bridges the gap between public persona and intimate interaction. Additionally, implicit referencing functions as a conversational bridge, bringing together seemingly unconnected material to suggest situations that are fan-oriented or shared cultural frameworks. In addition to establishing rapport, presenters who discreetly acknowledge shared experiences or cultural cues present themselves as approachable and culturally aware, maintaining a lighthearted, conversational tone that fits in with the social dynamics of talk show conversation.

Rapport-building also appears through the flouting of the Maxim of Manner. For example, Jimmy Fallon enthusiastically addresses Swift (Appendix 1): *“Is it tough -- I mean, I don't know how you do it. Do you just get up and go -- in the middle of your -- Or, you know, record something on your phone or you jot something down. Or like, 'This is something, I don't even know if it's good – I'm blurting it out'. Or you do go like, 'Oh, this has got a good hook'?”* The layered, emotionally charged tone and informal speech structure convey admiration, attentiveness, and solidarity, inviting Swift to respond as a collaborator in the exchange rather than a distant celebrity. Such moments transform the interaction into a space of mutual engagement and shared enthusiasm, deepening the relational dynamic in the public performance of the interview.

Avoidance frequently involves flouting the Maxim of Quantity in talk show discourse by withholding information or giving limited answers. Speakers enable the hearer to figure out underlying ideas without directly stating them by purposefully leaving out certain facts. A clear instance of this strategy appears when Fallon mentions Swift's absence from touring (Appendix 1): *“You haven't toured in like four years”. “I know”, “We want you to”, “I think I should do it”*. While the exchange appears cooperative, Swift's final statement avoids any specific commitment, teasing fans without confirming or denying tour plans. By using this approach, speakers may keep

away from controversial or delicate subjects without taking a firm stand, preserving the flow of the discourse and safeguarding their reputation. As a precaution, limited responses allow speakers to subtly communicate implicit messages while maintaining narrative control and social interaction.

The Tonight Show's use of implication is a complex approach to communication that goes beyond traditional dialogue and allows speakers to concurrently express both explicit and implicit meanings. In addition to entertaining the audience, speakers who deliberately flout Grice's maxims also mold their public personas and influence how their ideas are understood. In talk show discourse, implicature maintains a good mix between audience participation, reputation management, and narrative control as a communication tool. By emphasizing the layered structure of talk show communication, this interplay between apparent content and underlying connotations invites viewers to take part in decoding and interpreting deeper meanings woven throughout the discussion. The strategic use of implicature functions in mediated discourse demonstrates the principles outlined in Grice's framework and also shows how speakers navigate conversational norms to balance informative, humorous, and rapport-building objectives.

Conclusion to Chapter 2

Chapter 2 has provided a comprehensive examination of how Grice's Cooperative Principle and its maxims operate within the mediated discourse of *The Tonight Show* Starring Jimmy Fallon. The analysis, which combined quantitative and qualitative approaches, has shown that maxim flouting is not just a breaking of conversational rules but rather a purposeful rhetorical strategy to accomplish various communication effects.

The Maxims of Quality and Quantity were the most commonly flouted, with 65 cases of maxim flouting found by the quantitative analysis. This trend highlights how common exaggeration, hyperbole, and ambiguity are in talk-show speech, which is consistent with the format's entertainment-based goals.

The qualitative analysis further clarified the ways in which certain speakers employ maxim flouting to accomplish practical objectives including humor, emphasis,

avoidance, implicit referencing, and rapport cultivation. The Maxim of Quality is frequently flouted through sarcasm and exaggeration, which produces a lighthearted or self-deprecating tone. Subtly rerouting the discourse while adding humour and unpredictability, abrupt topic shifts or off-topic statements are examples of Relevance flouts. By using vagueness or ambiguity, manner flouts enable speakers to handle delicate subjects without coming seen as confrontational, preserving their public image. Quantity flouts, on the other hand, can range from giving too much information to highlight a point to hiding details to express meanings that are not explicitly stated.

Humour, emphasis, avoidance, implicit referencing, rapport-building, and other implicature functions give talk-show discourse strategic depth. Exaggerated or ironic humor not only provides amusement but also develops a sympathetic, self-aware character. Key points are heightened and made sure to resonate with the audience through emphasis, which is accomplished by repetition or over-explanation. By using ambiguity or vagueness, avoidance helps speakers keep away from touchy subjects. Implicit referencing relies on shared cultural knowledge, fostering a sense of insider connection that strengthens rapport and establishes in-group communication. Together, these features allow presenters to achieve a balance between delicate messaging and amusement, controlling the narrative through implicature and maintaining audience interest in a mediated setting.

In general, talk-show discourse is characterized by the deliberate blurring of the lines between official communication and humorous performance through the purposeful use of Grice's maxims. Speakers can retain audience engagement, develop their public character, and use subtle pragmatic signals to transmit implicit messages by using maxim flouting, a nuanced rhetorical device that maintains the format's entertainment-oriented nature.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, we have explored how Grice's Cooperative Principle operates within the discourse of televised talk shows, focusing specifically on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. We began by outlining the theoretical groundwork of pragmatics and conversational implicature, paying particular attention to Grice's maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relevance, and Manner. We established that effective communication is often not achieved by strict adherence to these maxims, but rather through their intentional and strategic flouting, especially in entertainment contexts where indirectness, irony, and performativity are central.

In the first chapter, we laid the groundwork for our analysis by examining the core concepts of pragmatics, including deixis, presupposition, speech acts, and implicature. We considered how Grice's Cooperative Principle supports the interpretation of meaning beyond the literal level, and we addressed both the utility and the limitations of the framework, especially when applied to media discourse. Through this theoretical lens, we recognised the importance of implicature as a pragmatic mechanism by which speakers signal meaning implicitly, relying on shared assumptions and contextual cues.

In the second chapter, we conducted both quantitative and qualitative analyses of maxim flouting in selected interviews from *The Tonight Show*. We examined 65 instances of maxim flouts drawn from interactions with Taylor Swift, Michelle Obama, and Ryan Gosling. Our quantitative findings indicated that the Maxims of Quantity and Quality were most frequently flouted, suggesting that the manipulation of informativeness and truthfulness plays a prominent role in this genre of discourse.

Through qualitative analysis, we explored the implicature functions of these flouts. We identified humour, emphasis, avoidance, implicit reference, and rapport-building as the primary implicature functions. We showed how speakers flout maxims not as a sign of communicative failure, but as a deliberate rhetorical strategy that enhances audience engagement, sustains a conversational tone, and aligns with the stylistic expectations of the talk show format.

We have shown throughout our research that maxim flouting is not a deviation from conversational norms, but rather a structural aspect of media discourse. We have also emphasized the need for audiences to possess strong interpretation skills, as they must decode multi-layered meanings that arise from contextual clues and indirectness. Our results thus support the notion that Grice's approach, which was created to explain ordinary conversation, is nonetheless applicable and flexible to mediated, performative communication.

In conclusion, we argue that Grice's Cooperative Principle, particularly when examined through the lens of pragmatic strategy and implicature, provides a robust and insightful framework for understanding the complexities of language use in entertainment media. By applying this framework to the talk show genre, we have explained how cooperation in communication is maintained and creatively redefined through strategic non-cooperation.

For further research, we propose extending this analysis to additional genres such as political interviews, podcast discourse, or international talk shows to compare pragmatic strategies across formats and cultural contexts. We also see potential in exploring how audience perception and reception influence the interpretation of implicatures in mediated interaction.

By integrating pragmatic theory with empirical media analysis, we have shown that conversational maxims are not only theoretical constructs but living tools that shape and reflect the communicative practices of contemporary culture.

РЕЗЮМЕ

Представлене дослідження присвячено вивченню застосування принципу кооперації Г. П. Грайса у дискурсі телевізійних ток-шоу. Актуальність теми зумовлена зростаючим інтересом до непрямоти та імпліцитного значення у публічному медіадискурсі, а також потребою у теоретичному осмисленні механізмів порушення мовленнєвих норм у жанрах, що поєднують спонтанність та елементи перформативності. Телевізійні інтерв'ю, особливо у форматі розважальних ток-шоу, створюють умови, за яких мовці свідомо відступають від кооперативних норм, породжуючи імплікатури з прагматичною функціональністю.

Об'єктом дослідження є розмовна імплікатура, сформована внаслідок реалізації або порушення принципу кооперації в медійному комунікативному просторі. Предметом – порушення комунікативних максим Грайса та функції, які ці порушення виконують у контексті англомовного ток-шоу *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*.

Метою дослідження є виявлення способів порушення максим кооперації та аналіз прагматичних функцій, які реалізуються через імплікатури у публічному мовленні телевізійних інтерв'ю. Для досягнення поставленої мети було здійснено виконання таких завдань:

- охарактеризовано основні поняття прагматики, включно з дейксісом, презупозицією, мовленнєвими актами та імплікатурою;
- представлено структуру та інтерпретаційний потенціал принципу кооперації Грайса, його чотирьох максим (кількості, якості, релевантності та способу);
- проаналізовано типологію порушень максим та визначено різницю між їх «flouting» і «violation»;
- здійснено класифікацію прикладів порушення максим у ток-шоу на основі транскриптів інтерв'ю з Тейлор Свіфт, Мішель Обамою та Раяном Гослінгом;

- систематизовано функції імплікатур, які виникають внаслідок порушень: гумор, акцентування, уникнення, побудова взаєморозуміння та неявні посилання.

Структура роботи охоплює вступ, два основні розділи (теоретичний і практичний), висновки, список використаних джерел, а також додатки з аналізованим матеріалом. Теоретичний розділ базується на працях Грайса, Левінсона, Бірнер, Ліча, Хуанга, Гріффітса, О'Кіфф та ін., що дозволило окреслити концептуальну рамку дослідження.

У якості емпіричного матеріалу було використано транскрипти трьох інтерв'ю з *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, у яких брали участь представники різних соціальних сфер – співачка Тейлор Свіфт, колишня перша леді США Мішель Обама та актор Раян Гослінг. Такий відбір забезпечив стилістичне, соціальне й дискурсивне різноманіття, що дало змогу простежити, як порушення максим варіюється залежно від публічного іміджу, ролі спікера та характеру взаємодії з ведучим. Загальний обсяг аналізованого матеріалу склав приблизно 45 хвилин спонтанної розмови, з яких було ідентифіковано 65 прикладів порушення максим кооперації.

Методологія дослідження ґрунтується на поєднанні кількісного та якісного аналізу. Кількісний підхід дозволив виявити частотність порушень кожної з максим: найбільш часто порушувалися максими кількості (22 випадки) та якості (23 випадки), що відображає домінування надмірного інформування, гіперболи та іронії як стратегій у медійному спілкуванні. Максима способу була порушена у 13 випадках, а релевантності – у 7. Ці дані свідчать про систематичність і цілеспрямованість таких порушень у розважальному жанрі.

У межах якісного аналізу кожен приклад було проаналізовано за такими критеріями: яка саме максима порушена, який контекст породжує імплікатуру, і яку функцію вона виконує. Зокрема, виокремлено п'ять основних прагматичних функцій імплікатур:

- **гумор** (через іронію, гіперболу, мовну гру);
- **акцентування** (через повторення або перебільшення);

- **уникнення** (як стратегія відходу від прямої відповіді або зниження гостроти);
- **побудова взаєморозуміння** (через емоційно забарвлені або неформальні висловлювання);
- **неявне посилення** (на культурно маркований або фан-орієнтований контекст).

Зіставний аналіз показав, що кожен із запрошених використовує різні комунікативні стратегії: Тейлор Свіфт активно застосовує імпліцитні посилення й надмірну інформативність, ґрунтуючись на діалозі з фан-базою; Мішель Обама обирає іронічну двозначність і прагматичне уникнення як засоби збереження дипломатичності; Раян Гослінг демонструє сухий гумор і стислість, поєднану з підкресленою несерйозністю.

На основі проведеного аналізу зроблено висновок, що порушення максим Грайса в медійному ток-шоу не лише не порушує кооперацію, а, навпаки, трансформує її згідно з жанровими очікуваннями: створенням ілюзії спонтанності, інформативної легкості, залученості глядача. Імплікатура в такому форматі не є винятком, а нормою, яка дозволяє досягати глибших комунікативних цілей – розважати, натякати, формувати емоційні зв'язки.

Таким чином, порушення кооперативних максим у телевізійному медіадискурсі є ефективною прагматичною стратегією. Результати дослідження можуть бути використані в подальших працях з медіалінгвістики, прагматики, інтерпретації дискурсу, а також у викладанні курсів з аналізу публічної комунікації, розмовної імплікатури та мовної стратегії в засобах масової інформації.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1.

Grice's Maxim Flouts in the Taylor Swift Interview

Speaker	Excerpt	Maxim Flouted	Implicature Function
Host	I just want to break down a couple of things. In just one day of sales, it became the top-selling album of the year already. Yeah, in just one day of sales. Of the whole year.	Quantity: repetition	Emphasis on the success of the album
Host	"Midnights" broke Spotify's record for most streams in a day. Today the top 10 songs on Apple Music and Spotify are from "Midnights". You can plug your ears because I'm going to just keep going.	Quantity: excessive information	Emphasis: praising the guest through exaggerated repetition; Humour
Host	How are you feeling? Is it a lot? Is it exciting? Are you freaking?	Quantity: too many questions	Rapport: conveys enthusiasm through emotionally charged and engaging interaction.
Guest	Yeah, it's actually – It's a concept record, but it's my first directly autobiographical album in a while. Because the last album that I put out was a re-record of my album "Red", so that has some space. You know, I wrote that stuff a decade ago. "Folklore" and "Evermore", I was -- It was like story time. It was like mythology. Like, I'm creating a character. They went and did this and felt this way.	Relevance: not answering the question; Quantity: excessive information	Implicit reference: provides contextual background to emphasize the album's personal significance and artistic departure from recent work.
Guest	It's like, you know, I'm 32. So, we're considered geriatric pop stars.	Quality: exaggeration	Humour: highlights age norms in the music industry through self-deprecating commentary.
Guest	They start trying to put us out to pasture at age 25. I'm just happy to be here.	Quality: exaggeration	Humour: continues the joke about being old for music industry
Host	Is it tough -- I mean, I don't know how you do it. Do you just get up and go -- in the middle of your -- [Laughter] Or, you know, record something on your phone or you jot something down. Or like, "This is something, I don't even know if it's good -- I'm blurting it out". Or you do go like, "Oh, this has got a good hook?"	Quantity: excessive information; Manner: scattered	Rapport
Guest	-And do you know, like, do you know "Mastermind" was going to be the 13th track? -Yeah, yeah.	Quantity: insufficient information	Implicit reference: uses an implicit reference to the number 13, relying on shared cultural knowledge among fans to create an in-group understanding without the need for explicit elaboration.
Host	Wow. That's meta. That's meta right there. That is so "Mastermind".	Manner: allusion	Implicit reference: reference to the song, generating a context-dependent implicature
Guest	I think over the years, my fans and I, we kind of have a really funny sort of -- like, they tease me a lot. And I enjoy it.	Manner: vague response	Rapport: supports host's teasing, and continues the topic

Guest	It's so cool to hear you say that because that was just me, you know, I don't know, with my phone and a Bingo cage.	Manner: vague response	Rapport: responds with modesty to a compliment, downplaying personal achievement
Guest	But I like -- I really -- I love to make things with my friends. I love to work with my friends.	Quantity: repetition	Emphasis
Guest	I think you can -- I think you can write songs about pain or grief or suffering or loss or hard things that you go through in life. Shame, you know -- love to write about that one.	Quality	Humour: invokes her reputation for emotionally introspective songwriting
Guest	-But is it because -- I mean, you've -- you've done the albums, you've done the re-recordings, but, also, you haven't toured in like four years. [Cheers and applause] -I know. -We want you to. -I think I should do it.	Quantity : insufficient information	Avoidance: playfully hints at insider knowledge about the upcoming tour, teasing the audience to build excitement and connection with fans
Guest	-Are we talking sooner than later? -Um... You know, I should do it.	Manner: vague response; Quantity : insufficient information	Avoidance
Guest	So, it's like -- I'm thinking something like, it's like this but with singing.	Quality	Humour: uses exaggeration by comparing concert dynamics to talk show settings; the contrast highlights the joke and is not meant to be taken literally.
Host	Sorry, I should have announced you earlier as doctor.	Quality	Humour: employs ironic exaggeration by attributing fame to an unexpected trait, creating humor through deliberate incongruity with the guest's well-known public image
Guest	No, it's fine. It's fine, it's fine. I respond to many things.	Quality	Humour: self-effacing joke
Guest	Yeah, that was me committing an act of extreme hyperbole	Manner	Humour: uses unexpected phrasing for a talk show setting, creating a humorous moment through playful contrast with typical conversational tone.
Guest	You have to say go! Sorry! I'm sorry. [Laughter] This is really serious.	Quality: exaggeration	Humour: Uses hyperbole to humorously emphasize concern over a trivial matter; the joke resonates with fans familiar with her cat-loving public persona
Guest	A cat that knocks pens off of desks!	Quality	Humour: makes up a cat breed as a means to win the game
Guest	My favorite -- Besides some of the casting, my favorite is when you're, like, I feel like a giant's coming in and, like, kind of ruining the party and coming in and not -- And you sneak in and you're a giant at this dinner party. And they're all freaking out, screaming.	Quantity: excessive information	Implicit reference: shares a personal story to highlight how meaningful and special the casting process was for her.

Guest/Host	-And then we had a teeny, tiny little room with a teeny, tiny table. We just had the most amazing -- We had the most amazing production design and we had the most incredible crew. And they just got me those tiny little forks. -Yeah. -And tiny little wine bottle. -A little, tiny wine bottle.	Quantity: repetition	Emphasis
Guest	Well, so, I -- One of the prerequisites of when I cast anyone for anything is like, "Are they fun? And are they nice? And are we gonna have a fun time on set?"...	Quantity: excessive information	Emphasis: emphasizes how important it is for her to choose the right people, showing how much she values collaboration.
Guest	My country-club-going son, Preston.	Quality: non-existent word	Humour
Host	Just go to parties.	Quality	Humour: makes a joke about how simple Taylor makes casting sound, highlighting that it's actually not that easy.
Guest	You don't -- You know, nobody has to audition. Just come up and say hi at a party.	Quality	Humour: continuation of the joke
Guest	I just never thought I'd see inside of your brain.	Quality	Humour
Guest	Well, yeah, I mean, she's just the greatest. And she's -- I mean, I don't -- I don't even believe I'm saying things like this. And then -- And so, then, we have one of my favorite performers, who I think has been so influential in pop music.	Manner: vague response, scattered	Rapport: expresses genuine excitement about the collaboration
Guest	A psychotic amount	Quality: exaggeration	Emphasis of Taylor's love for Easter eggs

Appendix 2.

Grice's Maxim Flouts in the Ryan Gosling Interview

Speaker	Excerpt	Maxim Flouted	Implicature Function
Guest	I always make sure my pants are not too tight before I come on your show, and then they're always too tight.	Relevance: abrupt topic change	Humour: contrasts self-awareness with talk show expectations.
Guest	This is too tight.	Relevance	Humour: returns to a trivial off-topic remark to maintain playfulness.
Guest	-Oh! Wait, let's not get -- It's not that kind of show. No, it's too scandalous. -Unless it is.	Quality	Humour: plays with double meanings to create mock scandal.
Guest	Congratulations, Duwan.	Manner; Relevance	Implicit reference: unclear or private joke, possibly ironic; Humour.
Host	That was a great part, right? Come on. That was great. That was unbelievable.	Quantity: repetition	Emphasis: uses repetitive praise to highlight the moment.
Guest	Do I get a hoodie?	Relevance	Humour
Host	You have to borrow it from Duwan.	Quality	Humour
Host	Buddy, you were unbelievable. It was the best. That was awesome. It was giant.	Quantity: repetition	Emphasis: appreciation with stacked compliments.

Guest	You can – There’s a lot of ways that can go wrong.	Manner: vague response	Implicit reference: vague phrasing hints at awkward or risky outcomes.
Host	GQ said “Ryan Gosling’s, high camp “I’m Just Ken” was the greatest Oscar moment in years”. Harper’s Bazaar – “Ryan Gosling brought the house down with his Oscars performance”. Uproxx said, “Damn it, Ryan Gosling is too handsome and talented to be such a charming little goofball”.	Quantity: excessive information	Emphasis: lists media praise to underline acclaim.
Host	And then the song “I’m Just Ken” jumped more than 2,000%. “Charming little goofball”. What’s going on? “I’m Just Ken” jumped more than 2,000% in purchases immediately after the performance. Congratulations.	Quantity: repetition	Emphasis: repeats sales numbers to highlight impact.
Host	Oh, I know! You wish. Next time. Next time put in a call.	Quality	Humour: this is not going to happen
Guest	-Dad’s Kenning again.	Manner	Implicit reference: invented term hints to Gosling’s role humorously.
Host	They’re like dance moms but they’re the kids. Yeah, exactly. “Big smile. Big smile, Dad. Dad, big smile”.	Quality	Humour: exaggerated comparison for comic effect.
Guest	I haven’t slept in three days.	Quality	Humour: exaggerates for comedic take on exhaustion.
Guest	Help me.	Quantity: insufficient information	Humour: continuation of the joke
Guest	-Yeah. And it was just perfect. And now that you’re back on the show, third time, are a little less nervous? -Thank you, Alex, got me on the job. Thank you. -Are you less nervous now doing it for the third time?	Relevance	Avoidance: dodges the question, implying nervousness.
Guest	Yeah, well, because now I know -- before I didn’t know, now I know. Don't go, you know?	Manner: not clear formulation	Humour: unclear phrasing reflects nervous humor.
Host	...So people like Will Ferrell attack us.	Quality	Humour
Guest	She’s vicious.	Quality	Humour: ironic exaggeration for comic portrayal.
Host	The alien sketch.	Quantity: insufficient information	Implicit reference: minimal recall relying on shared context.
Host	I think you just go and do what you’re doing. Whatever you’re doing is working out pretty well for you. I think you’re doing really good. So. Yeah. Break a leg. This is going to be good.	Manner: vague response	Emphasis on the guest’s good work, appreciation
Guest/Host	-So that stops here. -Yeah! That’s right! -Enough of that. -That’s right. Stunts. -Enough of that. -We need you.	Quantity: repetition	Emphasis on stunt appreciation
Guest/Host	-She’s unflappable. -She really is. -She can’t be flapped.	Quantity: repetition	Humour; Emphasis; Implicit reference: points out Emily Blunt’s calmness, also reference to the actress’s nationality, she

	-No. I think that's what that means. Yes, I think that's what that means. She can't be flapped.		is British, "to be flapped": British slang
Host	Like, right now I think I'm too high off the ground. Normally, I would sit here. Yeah. Yeah. That's a bit like --	Quality; Relevance	Humour: the host answer the question of fear of heights in humorous way

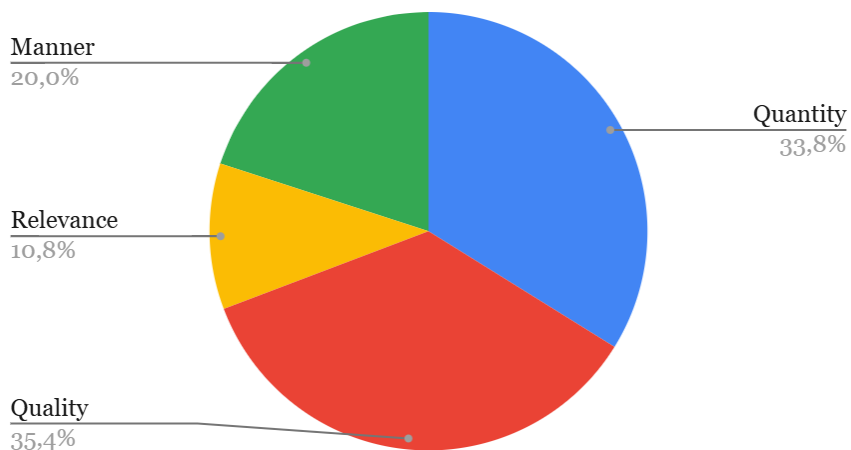
Appendix 3.

Grice's Maxim Flouts in the Michelle Obama Interview

Speaker	Excerpt	Maxim Flouted	Implicature Function
Guest	No. Wasn't invited. [Laughter] Ooh, shade. [Laughter]	Quantity: insufficient information	Avoidance; Humour: hints at underlying political tension, using humor to subtly address a sensitive topic without stating it directly.
Host	Wow. Wow. I'm adding a chapter right here. Hold on.	Quality	Humour: the host is not actually doing it
Guest	Oh! No. Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to say that like that. It's like -- No, no, I don't -- I don't have dreams.	Quantity - overreaction	Humour

Distribution of Flouted Maxims

Distribution of Flouted Maxims



Implicature function distribution

Implicature Function Distribution

