

# Grice's Maxims Flouting and Its Functions in Ernest Hemingway's The Old Man and the Sea

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## Abstract

This research focuses on analyzing the flouting of Grice's conversational maxims in Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. The study aims to identify the types of maxims flouting and examine the functions that each flouted maxim serves in the novel. This research employed a qualitative research method. The data consisted of dialogues containing instances of maxim flouting, which were collected directly from the novel. The data were analyzed using Grice's Cooperative Principle, particularly the four conversational maxims: quantity, quality, relation, and manner. The results reveal that all the four conversational maxims are flouted in the novel. The maxim of quantity is the most flouted maxim among the four maxims. The flouted maxims serve different communicative functions, such as to express optimism, emotional support, perseverance, responsibility and interpersonal closeness. These principles also help in characterization and the development of implied meaning too, reflecting Hemingway's use of indirect speech as a narrative strategy.

**Keywords:** cooperative principle, flouting of maxims, conversational implicature, *The Old Man and the Sea*

## INTRODUCTION

Language is the foundation of human communication in our everyday lives. It functions as a tool for exchanging information and as a medium for expressing ideas, emotions, and social identities. Through language, people establish relationships, negotiate meanings, and share understandings. However, communication is not always transparent; misunderstandings often come not from grammatical inaccuracy, but from implied meanings shaped by context and pragmatic assumptions (Levinson, 1983). Therefore, understanding how meaning is

conveyed beyond literal utterances becomes important in the study of language and communication. Communication is the process by which people use language and other symbolic systems to generate, exchange, and interpret meanings (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). Communication can also be understood as the process of sharing ideas and information to reach a mutual understanding between the speaker and the audience.

Effective communication depends not only on grammatical accuracy, but on the ability of both speakers and audience to cooperate in producing and interpreting

meaning. In pragmatic theory, this cooperative dimension of conversation is described by H. P. Grice, who assumes that speakers make contributions that are truthful, relevant, clear, and sufficiently informative (Grice, 1989). According to the theory of the Cooperative Principle, the four conversational maxims are the maxim of quantity, quality, relation, and manner. They function as normative guidelines that enable speakers to interpret both literal and implied meanings (Grice, 1989). However, conversational maxims are not always strictly observed, so it is possible for speakers to violate maxims in a way that seems to go against them while conveying meaning through implicature (Cutting, 2002).

A violation usually occurs when a speaker intentionally fails to observe a maxim in order to mislead or deceive the audience without clearly revealing the intention (Grice, 1989; Thomas, 1995). For example, a speaker who intentionally provides false information while expecting the audience to believe it violates the maxim of quality. In contrast, flouting occurs when a speaker intentionally appears to break a maxim but expects the audience to recognize the departure and infer the intended meaning through conversational implicature (Cutting, 2002; Mey, 2001). For instance, instead of directly refusing an invitation, a speaker may say, "I am busy tomorrow," implying an inability to attend without clearly saying no. Although both violation and flouting involve departures from the cooperative principle, they differ in their communicative purposes. A violation is intended to conceal the speaker's true intention and mislead the audience, whereas flouting remains cooperative, as it encourages the audience to infer the speaker's implied meaning (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1995). Because of this characteristic, flouting is most relevant

to literary works, where authors often use figurative language, indirect phrasing, and implicit meaning to convey characters' intentions, feelings, and interpersonal relationships without stating them directly.

It is clearly stated that maxim flouting should be viewed not only as a conversational phenomenon but also as a tool that supports story development and reader interpretation (Black, 2006; Short, 1996). Furthermore, maxim flouting may also contribute to the construction of interpersonal meaning between characters. Readers are encouraged to interpret the speaker's intended meaning when they encounter statements that are unclear or deviate from the conventions of everyday discourse. This process can increase readers' emotional engagement and enhance their comprehension of the narrative (Black, 2006; Chapman, 2011; Mey, 2001). Such a characteristic is clearly evident in the works of Ernest Hemingway, whose writing is known for conveying deep meaning through simple language (Baker, 1969; Hemingway, 1932). Among his works, *The Old Man and the Sea* provides a rich context for pragmatic analysis because its dialogues and internal monologues frequently convey meanings beyond their literal expressions. *The Old Man and the Sea* itself centers on the struggle of an aging fisherman, Santiago, in his relentless battle with a giant marlin in the Gulf Stream. Through its simple yet meaningful interactions and reflections, the story presents many pragmatic elements that make it a relevant literary work for analyzing the flouting of conversational maxims.

Many previous studies have investigated the flouting of Grice's conversational maxims in films. Overall, these studies consistently show that all four types of maxim flouting occur in cinematic dialogues and show various communicative functions

depending on the context. The findings also suggest that characters intentionally flout conversational maxims to convey implied meanings, express emotions, provide additional information, avoid answering directly, criticize others, or achieve specific illocutionary purposes such as competitive, collaborative, convivial, and conflictive goals. (Ibrahim et al., 2018; Kurniati & Hanidar, 2018; Nurfarida & Wulansari, 2022). Despite these valuable findings, the studies primarily focus on films and movie scripts rather than literary works such as novels.

Grice's conversational maxims have also been applied to literary works in recent research, showing that novels provide rich material for pragmatic analysis, as their dialogues frequently convey meanings that go beyond the literal (Fatmawati, 2015; Suryani et al., 2025). This recent research shows that maxim flouting is frequently used to create conversational implicature, convey feelings, strengthen opinions, maintain interpersonal relationships, shape characterization, and support story development. In addition, studies have shown that literary characters frequently flout conversational maxims by using devices like metaphor, hyperbole, irony, sarcasm, humor, and indirect answers, which allow readers to infer meanings that aren't stated clearly (Dwi Suryani et al., 2025; Fatmawati, 2015; Noertjahjo et al., 2017). These findings demonstrate that literary discourse provides a useful framework for examining pragmatic phenomena, particularly the connections among maxim flouting, implicit meaning, and characterization. Although previous studies have investigated the flouting of conversational maxims in films and literary narratives, Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* is little discussed, particularly in examining how conversational maxims are flouted and the functions served

by such flouting. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by analyzing the types and functions of the flouting of Grice's conversational maxims in the novel.

Considering the gaps identified in previous studies, this study aims to identify which conversational maxims are flouted in *The Old Man and the Sea* and to examine the functions of such flouting in the novel. These questions are meant to explore how the story departs from the maxim, as well as the communicative goals concealed in these deviations. Additionally, this novel's dialogue often carries meanings that transcend their literal utterances, allowing it to defy conversational maxims and produce a variety of communicative effects.

## METHODS

The current study focuses on *The Old Man and the Sea* because of Hemingway's unique style, which often features simple yet powerful sentences that convey meaning. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method to investigate how Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* flouts Grice's conversational maxims and their functions. Since the aim of this study is to interpret meaning, contextual language use, and implied messages, a qualitative method is considered the best approach. Creswell (2014) asserts that qualitative research is best suited for studies that seek to understand how language features operate in particular situations rather than statistically measuring them. In addition, qualitative descriptive research enables researchers to analyze linguistic expressions in depth and interpret them based on context (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). The analysis is mainly based on Grice's Cooperative Principle, especially the concept of flouting conversational maxims, including

the maxims of quantity, quality, relation, and manner (Grice, 1989).

The data of this research are divided into primary and secondary data sources. The primary data consist of selected dialogues from *The Old Man and the Sea*, which serve as the main data for analysis. These dialogues were selected based on their potential to indicate the flouting of Grice's conversational maxims and the presence of implied meaning. Meanwhile, the secondary data consist of scholarly books, journal articles, and previous studies related to pragmatics, Grice's Cooperative Principle, conversational implicature, and studies on maxim flouting. These sources are used to support the theoretical framework and strengthen the interpretation of the findings. The data analysis was carried out in several steps adapted from the qualitative data analysis framework proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results were then merged to find recurrent maxim-flouting patterns in the novel. By using these techniques, this study aims to provide a systematic and contextual understanding of how conversational maxims are flouted and the communicative purposes they serve in *The Old Man and the Sea*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Types of the Flouting of the Conversational Maxims in *The Old Man and the Sea*

The analysis revealed that all four of Grice's (1989) conversational maxims, which are quantity, quality, relation, and manner, are flouted by the characters in *The Old Man and the Sea*. However, the characters do not flout the maxim with the same frequency. Among them, the maxim of quantity appears most frequently, which is followed by the maxims

of relation, quality, and manner. These findings suggest that the characters tend to provide more information than necessary or to respond indirectly to convey meaning beyond the literal. These instances of maxim flouting encourage readers to infer the intended meaning through conversational implicature rather than being random deviations (Cutting, 2002; Grice, 1989; Thomas, 1995). The occurrence of maxim flouting also reflects Hemingway's writing style, which is well known for its implied meaning. Instead of expressing thoughts and emotions explicitly, the characters mostly communicate indirectly, inviting readers to interpret the hidden meanings behind the dialogue.

There are 21 data points of the conversational maxims in this study, as presented in the table below;

Table 1. Types of flouting maxims

| Types of the flouting maxim | Frequency |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Maxim Quality               | 4         |
| Maxim Quantity              | 9         |
| Maxim Relation              | 5         |
| Maxim Manner                | 3         |

It is evident from the 21 data points gathered that the maxim of quality was flouted 4 times, the maxim of quantity 9 times, the maxim of relation 5 times, and the maxim of manner only 3 times.

From the table, the first type of conversational maxims that are flouted is the maxim of quality. The maxim of quality requires speakers to provide accurate information and to refrain from making claims they don't believe are true or adequately justified (Grice, 1989). However, by using figurative expressions, exaggeration, metaphor, or other non-literal language to communicate meanings indirectly, speakers

may intentionally flout this maxim (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1995). Such statements encourage the audience to infer the intended meaning through conversational implicature rather than deceiving them (Cutting, 2002; Levinson, 1983; Thomas, 1995). In literary discourse, flouting of the maxim of quality is very common because figurative language allows writers to describe emotions, attitudes, and interpersonal relationships more effectively than literal utterances (Black, 2006; Chapman, 2011). The following quotation is the first evidence of flouting the maxim of quality, followed by the second, third, and fourth pieces of evidence.

Manolin: *"He hasn't much faith."*  
Santiago: *"No. But we have, haven't we?"*  
(Hemingway, 1952, p. 11)

Instead of simply agreeing with Manolin's statement, Santiago changes the answer and refers to the mutual trust between them. His statement cannot be objectively verified because "faith" is expressed as a personal conviction, not an observable fact. Therefore, by giving Manolin the idea that they had much faith, the statement violates the quality maxim. This result supports the idea that nonliteral expressions are frequently used to convey interpersonal meanings rather than factual information (Grice, 1989).

Manolin: *"But are you strong enough now for a truly big fish?"*  
Santiago: *"I think so. And there are many tricks."*  
(Hemingway, 1952, p. 15)

Santiago's response reflects self-confidence even though he's actually already old and has a particular physical condition. He inspires Manolin to believe that ability and perseverance can compensate for physical limitations by relying on personal conviction

and experience, rather than factual evidence. Therefore, this statement flouts the maxim of quality because its emphasis lies not on factual certainty but on implied self-confidence. This indirect strategy shows that speakers can express determination through conversational implicature rather than making verifiable claims (Cutting, 2002; Grice, 1989; Thomas, 1995; Chapman, 2011).

Santiago: *"They beat me, Manolin."*  
*"They truly beat me."*  
Manolin: *"He didn't beat you. Not the fish."*  
(Hemingway, 1952, p. 136)

This statement is not literal but figurative. Santiago is talking about the emotional defeat he felt after the sharks destroyed the marlin, which he had worked so hard to catch, not that the fish physically defeated him. Since the statement is intentionally non-literal, it flouts the maxim of quality. According to Leech (1983), figurative language often deviates from literal truth to bring deeper emotional meaning. Similarly, Black (2006) argues that literary dialogue often employs pragmatic deviations to reveal characters' psychological states. Thus, the function of such violations is to express emotional suffering and a sense of personal defeat.

Manolin: *"The hell with luck."*  
*"I'll bring the luck with me."*  
(Hemingway, 1952, p. 137)

Manolin's statement is figurative because luck is not something that can be literally carried from one place to another, just like goods. Rather, his words reflect his determination to accompany Santiago and serve as a source of hope for him. By using a non-literal expression, Manolin encourages Santiago to understand his loyalty and the

emotional support he provided. Such figurative expressions represent a common realization of maxim flouting in literary discourse, as they convey meanings beyond literal interpretation (Black, 2006; Grice, 1989; Thomas, 1995). The statement, therefore, functions to encourage Santiago and regain his confidence before sailing to the sea.

The second type of conversational maxim that is flouted is the maxim of quantity. According to Grice (1989), the maxim of quantity asks speakers to provide information that is informative and necessary, without giving either too little or too much. In the dialogues of *The Old Man and the Sea*, however, the characters often provide more information than is asked. Cutting (2002), argues that speakers frequently flout the maxim of quantity to emphasize particular intentions or interpersonal meanings. The example can be seen in the following dialogue.

Manolin: *"What do you have to eat?"*  
Santiago: *"A pot of yellow rice with fish. Do you want some?"*  
(Hemingway, 1952, p. 17)

In this dialogue, Manolin only asks about Santiago's meal. However, rather than simply answering the question, Santiago makes an additional statement by offering Manolin food. The additional information is not required to answer the question literally, which indicates the flouting of the maxim of quantity. Through this dialogue, Santiago not only indicates what food is available but also expresses his generosity and concern for Manolin despite his own difficulties. Therefore, the additional information serves to tighten their interpersonal relationship.

Santiago: *"One sheet. That's two dollars and a half. Who can we borrow that*

*from?"*

Manolin: *"That's easy. I can always borrow two dollars and a half."*  
(Hemingway, 1952, p. 19)

Instead of simply mentioning a person from whom he could borrow the money, Manolin explains that borrowing it is easy for him. He tells Santiago that getting the money won't be a problem, providing unnecessary information. The implicature conveyed through this utterance reflects Manolin's willingness to help Santiago without making him feel guilty. Thus, the flouting of the maxim of quantity functions to express emotional support.

Manolin: *"Now we fish together again."*  
Santiago: *"No. I am not lucky. I am not lucky anymore."*  
(Hemingway, 1952, p. 137)

Instead of just refusing Manolin's proposal, Santiago explained that he no longer thinks of himself as a wealthy. The additional explanation is unnecessary to refuse the proposal, yet it conveys Santiago's emotional state after his unsuccessful fishing trip. It suggests that Santiago wishes to protect Manolin from sharing his misfortune rather than refusing him directly. Therefore, the flouting of the maxim of quantity functions to express self-sacrifice and concern for another person.

Manolin: *"Can I go out to get sardines for you for tomorrow?"*  
Santiago: *"No. Go and play baseball. I can still row and Rogelio will throw the net."*  
(Hemingway, 1952, p. 12)

Rather than simply refusing the offer, Santiago provides additional explanations. The extra information suggests that he does not want to burden Manolin and that he wishes to be independent. This finding

illustrates how quantity flouting can express interpersonal meaning beyond the literal utterances.

Santiago: *"... Can you remember?"*  
Manolin: *"I can remember the tail slapping and banging..."*  
(Hemingway, 1952, p.13)

This response emphasizes the emotional significance of their shared experience and reinforces their closeness. Santiago's question only needs a brief confirmation, yet Manolin responds with a detailed recollection of the event, which flouts the maxim of quantity.

Manolin: *"Did they search for me?"*  
Santiago: *"Of course. With coast guard and with planes."*  
(Hemingway, 1952, p. 137)

The answer contained more information than was asked for. Santiago mentioned who was looking for Santiago. This implicature emphasized the seriousness of the search and reflected Manolin's deep concern for Santiago's safety.

Santiago: *"What did you catch?"*  
Manolin: *"One the first day. One the second and two the third."*  
(Hemingway, 1952, p. 137)

Instead of giving a simple answer, Manolin provides a detailed information about his catch over several days. This additional information highlights the progress of his fishing experience and reflects his willingness to share everything with Santiago, reinforcing their close relationship.

Manolin: *"He brings our gear himself. He never wants anyone to carry anything."*  
Santiago: *"We're different. I let you carry things when you were five years old."*  
(Hemingway, 1952, p. 29)

Santiago provides more information than is asked for in response to Manolin's statement. This additional information implies that their relationship has been built over many years and is based on mutual trust and affection from the beginning.

Santiago: *"I must thank him."*  
Manolin: *"I thanked him already. You don't need to thank him."*  
(Hemingway, 1952, p. 21)

Rather than simply informing Santiago that he has already thanked the people that help him, Manolin adds that Santiago does not need to thank him again. The additional information goes beyond what is asked and implies Manolin's intention to relieve Santiago of any obligation or embarrassment. This reflects his care and consideration for the old man. Thomas (1995) and Cutting (2002) claim that giving more details can help convey interpersonal connotations that go beyond the literal message. As a result, the flouting shows thoughtfulness.

The third type of conversational maxim that is flouted is the maxim of relation. The maxim of relation requires speakers to make contributions that are relevant to the ongoing conversation (Grice, 1989). Nevertheless, speakers may intentionally flout this maxim by offering a response that appears unrelated to the previous utterance but still expect the audience to understand the intended meaning through conversational implicatures. In literary discourse, the flouting of maxim relations helps authors reveal characters' emotions, attitudes, and interpersonal relationships indirectly, thereby enhancing characterization and narrative meaning (Mey, 2001). The following five dialogues illustrate instances of flouting the maxim of relation.

Santiago: *"The Yankees cannot lose."*  
Manolin: *"But I fear the Indians of Cleveland."*  
Santiago: *"Have faith in the Yankees, my son. Think of the great DiMaggio."*  
(Hemingway, 1952, p. 18)

Instead of directly facing Manolin's concerns about the Cleveland Indians, Santiago changed the topic of the conversation toward DiMaggio. Although his response seemed unrelated, it implied that Santiago wanted to say that DiMaggio embodied confidence and perseverance, which he believed would lead the Yankees to victory. Therefore, this utterance flouts the maxim of relation because its relevance must be inferred rather than interpreted literally.

Santiago: *"But you are your father's and your mother's and you are in a lucky boat."*  
Manolin: *"May I get the sardines? I know where I can get four baits too."*  
(Hemingway, 1952, p. 13)

Manolin immediately changed the subject by offering to get the sardines and bait in response to Santiago's statement about staying on the lucky boat. His response seemed unrelated to what had been said earlier, but it demonstrated his determination to continue helping Santiago even though he had been ordered to stay with the other fishing boats. Thus, the flouting functions to demonstrate affection, loyalty, and concern.

Manolin: *"He sent two beers."*  
Santiago: *"I like the beer in cans best."*  
(Hemingway, 1952, p. 22)

Instead of appreciating other people's kindness in sending the beers, Santiago instead said about his personal preference for canned beer. This response is irrelevant to

Manolin's statement and thus flouted the maxim of relation. Its implicature, however, suggests that Santiago wants to avoid highlighting his reliance on others' kindness. His indirect response reflected humility and preserved his dignity even as he accepted help from others.

Manolin: *"They lost today."*  
Santiago: *"That means nothing. The great DiMaggio is himself again."*  
(Hemingway, 1952, p. 23)

Santiago quickly shifts the topic to DiMaggio rather than discussing the team's loss. Although seemingly irrelevant, the response implies that a single defeat does not determine future success, as long as DiMaggio has regained his form. Additionally, Santiago silently expresses his optimism that a person's worth is not defined by a temporary failure. Therefore, the utterance flouts the maxim of relation.

Manolin: *"Do you want coffee?"*  
Santiago: *"We'll put the gear in the boat and then get some."*  
(Hemingway, 1952, p. 29)

Instead of simply answering the question with "yes," Santiago first talked about preparing his fishing gear before drinking coffee. Although his answer was not directly related to the question, it implied that finishing his work was his priority. The utterance, therefore, flouts the maxim of relation because the intended meaning can only be understood through contextual interpretation.

The last type of conversational maxim that is flouted is the maxim of manner. According to Grice (1989), speakers must communicate themselves succinctly, clearly, and systematically while avoiding ambiguity and vagueness. However, speakers may

deliberately flout this maxim by using figurative, indirect, or ambiguous expressions to encourage the audience to infer meaning. Rather than creating confusion, these statements are communication strategies that enhance interpersonal meaning and literary interpretation. (Cutting, 2002). In literary discourse, ambiguity and indirectness can enhance characterization and narrative depth because readers are encouraged to actively construct meaning (Black, 2006; Chapman, 2011; Short, 1996; Toolan, 2001). The three examples of flouting the maxim of manner are listed below.

Manolin: *"Keep warm, old man. Remember we are in September."*  
Santiago: *"The month when the great fish come. Anyone can be a fisherman in May."*  
(Hemingway, 1952, p. 19)

Instead of responding directly to Manolin's reminder about the season, Santiago replied by comparing September and May. His statement is not clear because he does not explicitly explain the information. Readers must infer that September represents the season when catching large fish requires greater experience and perseverance, whereas fishing in May is easier. Thus, the utterance flouts the maxim of manner because the intended meaning is conveyed indirectly rather than explicitly.

Santiago: *"You bought me a beer."*  
Manolin: *"You are already a man."*  
(Hemingway, 1952, p. 12)

Rather than confirming to Santiago that he bought a beer, Manolin responds with an ambiguous reply that seems unconnected to the earlier statement. Referring to himself as "already a man" implies that he is now mature enough to care for Santiago and take

responsibility for him. Because the intended meaning is conveyed through implication rather than explicit explanation, the statement flouts the maxim of manner.

Manolin: *"You're my alarm clock."*  
Santiago: *"Age is my alarm clock."*  
(Hemingway, 1952, p. 26)

Santiago's response is clearly metaphorical because age cannot literally function as an alarm clock. Instead, he suggests that elderly individuals naturally get up early and don't require a reminder from an external source. This figurative expression requires interpretation beyond its literal meaning and therefore flouts the maxim of manner.

After identifying the maxims that are flouted and their purposes, the studies revealed that all four of Grice's conversational maxims, which are quantity, quality, relation, and manner, are purposefully flouted throughout the dialogues. But each maxim has a different frequency of occurrence. The most frequent flouting is the flouting of the maxim of quantity, followed by the maxim of relation, while the maxims of quality and manner are less frequent. This suggests that Hemingway tends to construct indirect meaning by providing more information than is necessary or by offering responses whose intended meaning must be inferred from the conversational context. Given that audiences are expected to lend inferential implicit meaning through conversational implicatures, these results give support to Grice's (1989) argument that speakers may deliberately flout conversational rules while maintaining the cooperative principle. Levinson (1983), Thomas (1995), Cutting (2002), Yule (1996), and Mey (2001) have all made similar observations and argue that flouting of conversational principles serves as

a communicative strategy rather than a communication interruption.

The dominance of the maxim of quantity suggests that Hemingway often uses additional information as a narrative device. The characters often elaborate on their responses rather than giving straightforward, brief answers, so readers can discern the feelings and interpersonal meanings underlying the literal words. These details deepen our understanding of Santiago's persistence, generosity, independence, and emotional ties to Manolin without explicit narration. This finding aligns with Black's (2006) argument that literary dialogue often employs pragmatic deviations to represent fictional speakers' characters. In the same way, Short (1996) and Toolan (2001) draw attention to the fact that fictional dialogue is often expertly constructed to convey several levels of meaning at once rather than being an exact replica of everyday speech. The flouting of the maxim of relation also contributes to the interaction between Santiago and Manolin. Characters will often change what they are talking about while still staying contextually relevant, rather than directly answering or responding to questions or statements. These indirect replies usually convey encouragement, affection, optimism, or emotional support. Leech (1983) argues that because meaning is communicated implicitly rather than formally, indirect speech frequently improves interpersonal communication. In a similar vein, Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that indirect statements can serve as a politeness tactic, enabling speakers to preserve a favorable perception of both themselves and other people. These indirect responses serve to illustrate the strong emotional connection between Santiago and Manolin in Hemingway's novel without directly expressing their emotions.

Although less frequent, the flouting of the maxims of quality and manner plays an important role in shaping the story's emotional and symbolic aspects. Phrases such as "They beat me" and "Age is my alarm clock" are not meant to be interpreted literally. Instead, they use metaphorical language to allow readers to infer Santiago's emotional condition, life experience, and acceptance of aging. As Leech (1983) and Semino (2004) have pointed out, figurative language enables literary works to convey meanings that go beyond literal meaning. Also, Black (2006) argues that pragmatic stylistics provides a helpful framework to explain how readers interpret the implied meanings created through conversational differences. As a result, Hemingway's dialogues gain depth since a significant amount of their meaning is hidden beneath the spoken words. The frequent occurrence of maxim flouting, therefore, complements Hemingway's narrative technique, as the implied meanings created through the conversational implicature encourage readers to become active participants in interpreting the story.

The results of this study are in line with earlier research on the violation and flouting of maxims in fictional discourse. Conversational maxims are purposefully broken to produce implicatures, reveal the speaker's intention, and strengthen characterization, according to Kurniati and Hanidar (2018), Ibrahim et al. (2018), Fatmawati (2015), Nurfarida and Wulansari (2022), and Dwi Suryani et al. (2025). However, unlike most previous studies that have mainly focused on identifying types of maxim violations or analyzing cinematic discourse, this study specifically focused on Hemingway's novel, *The Old Man and the Sea*, and gave special attention to the communicative function of maxim flouting in

literary dialogue. Thus, the findings build on previous research by showing that conversational implicatures in Hemingway's novel contribute not only to characterization but also to the development of perseverance, hope, emotional intimacy, and existential struggle.

## CONCLUSION

This study examines the flouting of Grice's conversational maxims in Ernest Hemingway's novel *The Old Man and the Sea*, focusing on the dialogues between characters. The results demonstrate that the novel flouted all four conversational principles. The most common of these four principles is the principle of quantity, which is followed by the concept of relation. The principles of quality and manner are less common. These results suggest that Hemingway frequently conveys meaning beyond the literal level of the dialogue through conversational implicatures and indirect communication.

Additionally, the analysis shows how conversational principles are flouted for a variety of narrative and communication purposes. The characters use these floutings to convey encouragement, emotional support, hope, endurance, responsibility, and acceptance of adversity. Readers are urged to infer the characters' motivations, feelings, and interpersonal connections from the context by using these indirect phrases. As a result, flouting conversational principles helps develop the story and create conversational implicatures. Since this study is limited to an analysis of dialogue in *The Old Man and the Sea*, future research could examine other pragmatic phenomena, such as politeness strategies, speech acts, or deictics, or compare the use of maxim violations across different

literary works by Ernest Hemingway or other authors. Therefore, such research yields a more comprehensive understanding of how pragmatic elements influence characterization and story development in literary discourse.

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