

Research Article

Maxim Flouting in *Turning Red* Movie

*¹Amanda Nurul Hidayah, ¹Eusabinus Bunau, ¹Luwandi Suhartono

¹Universitas Tanjungpura, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: f1021201040@student.untan.ac.id

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Abstract

The research objective of this study was to identify the four maxims flouted in the movie *Turning Red*. A descriptive research design was employed to achieve this. Consequently, data was gathered by viewing the movie and writing down dialogues in which characters flouted the four maxims. Additionally, the types of maxims flouted, contexts, motivations, and implications were discovered. The results showed that four types of maxims were indeed flouted in the movie *Turning Red*, including quantity maxims with a percentage of 19.5 and a frequency of 7, quality maxims with a percentage of 33.3 and a frequency of 12, relevance maxims with a percentage of 33.3 and a frequency of 12, and manner maxims with a percentage of 13.9 and a frequency of 5. The flouting of the four maxims in the movie *Turning Red* has various reasons and contexts. For instance, flouting the quantity maxim served to express emotions or release frustration. In the context of the quality maxim, the characters were chosen to deceive others for personal gain. Additionally, the flouting of the relevance maxim occurred to protect personal secrets and divert attention from crucial matters. Finally, the characters flouted the manner maxim to mislead the audience and create surprises. The research findings highlighted how language was manipulated for specific purposes in everyday interactions, as depicted in the movie. Understanding the reasons and contexts behind the flouting of maxims can provide deeper insights into human communication and social behavior. Moreover, the research findings indicated the potentiality of the movie as a medium for students to learn about pragmatics, especially the flouting of the four maxims.

Keywords

The four maxims; flouting; *Turning Red* movie

Introduction

Language is a necessary tool for people to connect in everyday speech, as they cannot survive alone. According to Aluya (2023), language allows people to share their ideas with others and create meaning. Language and pragmatics are inseparable. Yule (1996) stated that pragmatics is the study of meaning in communication between the speaker and the hearer. It is the study of what speakers mean beyond what is said. Pragmatics studies the relationship between an utterance's components (such as sentence structure and tone) and its underlying meaning (Slugan, 2022). It is necessary to comprehend the meaning of the words spoken by the other person to establish effective communication.

People communicate with one another to share information about numerous topics. In different cultures, some rules and standards help people understand one another, and these rules apply not only to how language is used but also to how a conversation should be addressed. Grice (1975) introduced a set of rules defining successful discourse among interlocutors, known as conversational maxims. He identified four maxims in communication such as the maxims of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. Firstly, the quantity maxim requires the speaker to provide as much information as needed, but no more or less. Therefore, the quantity maxim is flouted when the speakers talk more or less when presenting the information. Secondly, the quality maxim requires the speaker to speak truthfully. Thus, the quality maxim is flouted when the speakers say something that is believed to be untrue. Thirdly, the relevance maxim requires the speaker to stay on topic during the conversation. When the speakers say something irrelevant to the topic of the conversation, they flout the relevance maxim. Lastly, the manner maxim requires the speaker to be clear and avoid ambiguity when conveying information. When the speakers say something obscure, they flout the manner maxim. To fulfill the purpose of communication, the speakers typically adhere to these maxims. However, there are instances when speakers may deviate from these maxims, resulting in special conversational meanings (Zhou, 2022).

In line with the description above, the researcher aimed to discover the four maxims being flouted in a movie. According to Hutajulu and Herman (2019), a movie has a motion image that is mainly intended to be entertaining. A movie tells a tale using a visual medium in literature and frequently combines conversation, sound effects, and moving visuals to deliver a story or make a point. It is a literary adaptation for the screen or an original work, especially for the moving image (Fussalam, 2019). In this research, the researcher analyzed the movie *Turning Red*. The story portrays 13-year-old Mei Lee as she transforms into a gigantic red panda when experiencing intense emotions like worry or enthusiasm. It centers on Mei Lee, the main character, as she attempts to find a balance between her desires, who she is, and how she fits into her family and surroundings while dealing with the challenging circumstances and obstacles that come with growing up (Ditriwan et al., 2023).

Furthermore, at least two previous studies have identified the flouting of maxims in animated movies. First, the research by Ramadhanisya and Hartati (2021) aimed to find instances when the maxims were being flouted in the movie “The Spongebob Movie: Sponge on the Run.” The findings showed there were 41 instances of the maxims being flouted there, such as maxims of quality (6 data), quantity (16 data), relevance (15 data), and manner (9 data).

Another previous study was conducted by Gustary and Anggraini (2021) to examine instances where characters in the movie “UP!” flouted maxims. The findings showed that the movie flouted four categories of maxims: quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. The movie also used ten maxim strategies, such as being irrelevant, sarcastic, shifting the topic, being cryptic, metaphor, hyperbole, banter, irony, and offering too little and too much information.

However, despite the prevalence of research regarding the flouting of maxims, there needs to be more exploration into analyzing the four maxims being flouted in the movie *Turning Red*. To fill the gaps in research concerning the analysis of flouting the four maxims in the movie *Turning Red*, the researcher intended to conduct this study. Another reason why the researcher chose this topic is to deepen students’ understanding of how language functions in different circumstances, broaden their understanding of human interaction, and learn more about how people communicate. The significance of the movie *Turning Red* to be studied is that it features many characters with rich dynamics and addresses coming-of-age themes that relate to teenagers today. The movie resonates with the daily lives of people because it explores self-acceptance, the complexities of family relationships, and the ups and downs of growing up. The movie blends humor and emotion, presenting a variety of conversational situations that can be evaluated for the flouting of the four maxims.



Finally, based on the elaboration above, the research questions are, “What are the types of maxims being flouted in the movie *Turning Red*?” and “What is the frequency of each maxim being flouted?” The research objectives are to discover the types of maxims being flouted in the movie *Turning Red* and determine the frequency of each maxim being flouted. By achieving these objectives, the research assists people in gaining a better understanding of how maxims are utilized in today’s movies.

Method

The descriptive research design was utilized in this study. Siedlecki (2020) argued that descriptive research aims to identify people, situations, or events as they naturally occur. Descriptive studies generally involve observations, comparisons, contrasts, and analyses, in addition to developing conceptual knowledge and providing solutions to significant problems. They constantly attempt to explain the why, how, and what behind a problem or phenomenon. The researcher chose this design because a descriptive research design provides the flexibility and depth needed to thoroughly analyze the four maxims being flouted in the movie *Turning Red*. It allowed the researcher to explore the communication nuances, context, and implications, offering a comprehensive understanding of this specific aspect of the film.

The movie *Turning Red* itself served as the main source of data. The analysis entailed looking at scenes and subtitles of the movie to find instances where the characters flout the four maxims. In this research, the researcher accessed the movie with English subtitles on a streaming website. By reading the subtitles, the researcher sought out and wrote down examples where the characters flout the four maxims.

This research adapted the content analysis technique suggested by Barelson (1952) as the data collection technique. Gheyle and Jacobs (2017) described content analysis as a research technique for interpreting the content of messages using words, photos, audio files, or symbols. In collecting the data, the research was conducted as follows: (1) Watching the movie *Turning Red*. (2) Seeking out and writing down examples in subsequent viewings of the movie *Turning Red*, where the characters flout the four maxims by reading the subtitles. (3) Creating categories for each maxim being flouted and determining criteria for identifying the flouting. This applies to situations where the characters talk too much, lie, go off-topic, or use ambiguous language. (4) Counting every time a character flouts the maxims based on the categories and writing down the contexts and reasons for the maxim flouted, dialogue exchanges, and any relevant details contributing to understanding the four maxims’ flouting. (5) Arranging methodically the notes and any other pertinent data. This organization ensured that the data was readily available and retrievable during the research process.

In this study, the researcher employed Miles and Huberman’s (1994) procedures for data analysis. There are three steps, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusions. The analysis procedure was outlined as follows: (1) Data reduction aims to decrease data while retaining as much information as possible. The researcher chose the data that contained the flouting of the four maxims and then deleted the data that did not. (2) Data display involves organizing, compressing, and assembling information. As a result, the researcher organized the data for analysis in narrative form, detailing the types of maxims being flouted, the motivations of the characters to flout the maxims, the contexts, and the implicatures. (3) Finally, the researcher drew conclusions based on the analysis.



Results and Discussion

The table below shows the maxims flouted in the movie *Turning Red* and their distribution frequency.

Table 1. *The types of maxims flouted in the movie Turning Red and the frequency*

No	The type of maxims being flouted	Frequency	Percentage
1	Quantity	7	19.5
2	Quality	12	33.33
3	Relevance	12	33.33
4	Manner	5	13.9
	Total	36	100

From the table above, it can be seen that the maxims flouted most in the movie *Turning Red* are those of quality and relevance, each with a frequency of 12 and a percentage of 33.3. Following these is the flouting of the quantity maxim, with a frequency of 7 and a percentage of 19.5. The flouting of the manner maxim is the least frequent, with a frequency of 5 and a percentage of 13.9.

This section presented some excerpts of the four maxims being flouted in the movie *Turning Red* and the analysis. The deliberate transgression or departure from the conversational rules outlined by linguist Grice (1975) is called “flouting.” When conversational maxims are disregarded, speakers purposefully stray from the accepted conventions of communication, frequently with a goal in mind. Providing the appropriate amount of information in a conversation is relevant to the maxim of quantity (Dwiyanti & Ambalegin, 2022). Speakers conveyed information without doing it excessively or insufficiently. When a speaker intentionally gives too little or too much information, they flout the quantity maxim (Ayunon, 2022).

Analysis of the Quantity Maxim Being Flouted in the Movie *Turning Red*

The researcher chose two examples for in-depth analysis of the collected data. The analysis of the flouting of the quantity maxim in the movie *Turning Red* consists of the contexts, the motivations behind the flouting of the quantity maxim, and the implicatures.

Excerpt 1: Miriam: “Calm down, Mei.”

Priya: “Dude, keep it together.”

Mei Lee: “I can’t. We need to see this concert. Why doesn’t my mom get that? I never ask for anything. My whole life I’ve been her perfect little Mei-Mei. Temple duties, grade...”

Abby: “Violin!”

Priya: “Tap dancing.”

Mei Lee: “Yeah. We’ve been so good. If they don’t trust us anyway, then what’s the point?”

Mei Lee got kicked out during sports class because she threw the ball too hard, hitting the classroom window. Later, when her friends told her to calm down, she ranted about her mother’s decision not to let her go to her favorite boy band concert despite always being a good daughter. In her rants, Mei Lee flouted the quantity maxim to express her disappointment with her mother’s decision. Her friends inferred that Mei Lee felt upset with her mother.

Excerpt 2: Mei Lee: “I’m not your little Mei-Mei anymore! I lied, Mom!”

Ming Lee: “What?!”

Mei Lee: “It was my idea to hustle the panda. My idea to go to Tyler’s party! It was all me! I like boys! I like loud music! I like gyrating! I’m 13! Deal with it!”

Mei Lee and Ming Lee, her mother, had a heated argument. Mei Lee finally confessed the truth to her mother about the things she had hidden from her, thereby flouting the quantity maxim by revealing



everything she had been concealing all this time. Her mother inferred that Mei Lee had been lying to her all along and, as a result, became even angrier with her.

Furthermore, the maxim of quality focuses on the veracity and accuracy of the information presented. Erdayani and Ambalegin (2022) stated that speakers should not tell lies in their utterances that will cause them to be false. Thus, flouting the maxim of quality entails willful deception, exaggeration, understatement, or the provision of incomplete or unreliable information (Ibrahim, 2018).

Analysis of the Quality Maxim Being Flouted in the Movie *Turning Red*

The researcher chose two examples for in-depth analysis of the collected data. The analysis of the flouting of the quality maxim in the movie *Turning Red* consists of the contexts, the motivations behind the flouting of the quality maxim, and the implicatures.

Excerpt 1: Ming Lee: “Who are these hip-hoppers? And why are they called “4-Town” if there are five of them?”

Mei Lee: “Uh... I don’t know. Some of the kids at school like them.”

Ming Lee saw 4-Town, the boy band Mei Lee and her friends like on TV, and she asked about them. Mei Lee, a fan of the band, lied to her mother, claiming not to know about 4-Town. Mei Lee flouted the quality maxim because she did not want her mother to know about her interest in a boy band, knowing her mother’s disapproval of such things. Ming Lee inferred that Mei Lee was telling the truth because her daughter, whom she “knew,” would neither know nor like such things, just like herself.

Excerpt 2: Miriam: “Hey, Mei.”

Mei Lee: “Hey, girlfriends. What is up?”

Miriam: “Uh, what’s with the tuque?”

Mei Lee: “Uh... Bad hair day.”

Mei Lee arrived at her school and met her friends. Miriam then asked why she wore a tuque. Mei Lee lied and said that she had a bad hair day when, in fact, it was because her hair color had changed from black to orange due to her panda transformation earlier that day. Mei Lee flouted the quality maxim because she did not want her friends to learn about her transformation. Her friends believed her response because they thought it was the possible reason for Mei Lee wearing a tuque at school.

Next, according to Setiawan and Haryani (2020), the relevance maxim entails the listener or interlocutor replying relevantly regarding the conversation’s topic. The relevance and coherence of conversation are at the center of the relevance maxim. To flout it, one must use non-sequiturs, digressions, or off-topic conversations (Wahyuni, 2019).

Analysis of the Relevance Maxim Being Flouted in the Movie *Turning Red*

The researcher chose two examples for in-depth analysis of the collected data. The analysis of the flouting of the relevance maxim in the movie *Turning Red* consists of the contexts, the motivations behind the flouting of the relevance maxim, and the implicatures.

Excerpt 1: Mei Lee’s family: (chanting in Cantonese)

Mei Lee: “What are they saying?”

Mr. Gao: “The door will open only if we sing from our hearts. It doesn’t matter what. I like Tony Bennett, but your grandma, uh, she’s from old school. Now, focus on their voices. Let them guide you.”

Mei Lee and her family performed a ritual to remove the panda from Mei Lee’s body. During the ritual, when her family began chanting in Cantonese, Mei Lee asked about the meaning. Instead of answering her, Mr. Gao, her neighbor who led the ritual, said something unrelated, expressing his liking for Tony Bennett and commenting about Mei Lee’s grandmother’s old-fashioned ways. Mr. Gao flouted the relevance maxim to emphasize the importance of singing from the heart and highlight the differences



between his music taste and Mei Lee's grandmother's. From Mr. Gao's response, Mei Lee inferred that the specific song did not matter in the ritual as long as the singing came from the heart.

Excerpt 2: Miriam: "What are you doing here?"

Mei Lee: "I couldn't do it. The panda's a part of me, and you guys are too."

Miriam: "Mei, you threw us under the bus."

Mei Lee: "I know and I'm sorry. I've been like obsessed with my mom's approval and my whole life. I couldn't take losing it, but losing you guys feels even worse."

Mei Lee fled from the ritual and joined her friends at the 4-Town concert. When Miriam asked what she was doing at the concert, Mei Lee explained that she could not go through with the ritual because she did not want to be separated from her panda form and her friends. Mei Lee's response to Miriam's question was irrelevant, thus flouting the relevance maxim to emphasize the importance of her friends to her, especially after their recent fight. Mei Lee also apologized for being overly fixated on gaining her mother's approval. Based on Mei Lee's responses, her friends inferred that she was genuinely sorry for her actions.

Then, according to Putri and Apsari (2020), the maxim of manner refers to the appropriateness and intelligibility of language use. It requires communication that is clear, concise, orderly, and straightforward. Therefore, flouting the maxim of manner means using wordplay, obscurity, or intentional ambiguity in a conversation (Andy & Ambalegin, 2019).

Analysis of the Manner Maxim Being Flouted in the Movie *Turning Red*

The researcher chose two examples for in-depth analysis of the collected data. The analysis of the flouting of the manner maxim in the movie *Turning Red* consists of the contexts, the motivations behind the flouting of the manner maxim, and the implicatures.

Excerpt 1: Ming Lee: "Sweetie, it's okay. Mommy is here."

Mei Lee: "What's happening to me?"

Jin Lee: "What is it... What... What... It's happened already?"

Mei Lee: "What did you say?"

Jin Lee: "Ming? It's time."

Mei Lee cried in her room, transforming into a giant red panda, and asked her mother what was happening to her. Jin Lee, her father, who had just returned from work, was initially surprised upon seeing his daughter transform into a giant red panda, but he quickly calmed himself and asked, "*It's happened already?*" This left Mei Lee confused about the meaning of his words. However, instead of answering Mei Lee's question, he turned to his wife, Ming Lee, and said it was time. His response was vague as he flouted the manner maxim to indicate that it was time to tell Mei Lee the secret about her transformation. Mei Lee inferred that her parents already knew something about her panda transformation.

Excerpt 2: Miriam: "Mei, what happened?"

Mei Lee: "It's just some, you know, inconvenient, uh, genetic thingy I got from my mom. I mean... it'll go away. Eventually. Maybe."

Mei Lee's friends also learned about her transformation when they visited her house and saw Mei Lee in her giant red panda form. They asked about what happened to her. Mei Lee gave them unclear information about her transformation. She only explained that it was a genetic trait from her mother when, in fact, to be clear, it was inherited from her ancestor thousands of years ago. She flouted the manner maxim because she did not want her friends to know more about her family's secret. Her friends did not have the time to infer what Mei Lee said because she cried after that, and they tried to calm her.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has identified the flouting of four maxims in the movie *Turning Red*, such as the maxims of quantity with a percentage of 19.5 and a frequency of 7, quality with a percentage of 33.3 and a frequency of 12, relevance with a percentage of 33.3 and a frequency of 12, and manner with a percentage of 13.9 and a frequency of 5. The findings suggest that these maxims are flouted in various ways with different frequencies and percentages. While the study has limitations such as individual variations in understanding and analyzing the flouting of maxims, it provides valuable insights into the communicative dynamics of storytelling. Despite of these limitations, future studies could consider incorporating comparative analyses of multiple films or literary works to reveal patterns or variations in the flouting of maxims across different genres, cultural contexts, or periods. This study aims to benefit students interested in understanding more about the flouting of the four maxims, particularly those studying pragmatics, and hopes to serve as a valuable reference for readers and other researchers exploring similar topics.

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