

Flouting of Maxim by Indian-American and American Characters in the *Never Have I Ever* Series

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Abstract

Successful communication requires adherence to conversational implicatures. Failure to observe maxims can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts, particularly in intercultural settings. Hence, to address these issues, it is critical to improve public understanding of Grice's conversational implicatures theory. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to compare the use of Grice's conversational implicatures theory by two main characters from distinct cultural backgrounds who are Indian-American and American in the series: *Never Have I Ever*. This research used a qualitative methodology and utilises Grice's conversational implicatures to analyse the implicatures by the Indian-American character and the American character in the series: *Never Have I Ever*. The data was analysed using content analysis. The study found that the Indian-American character flouted a total of 18 maxims, encompassing all four types: (1) maxim of quality, (2) quantity, (3) manner, and (4) relation. In contrast, the American character flouted 6 maxims, involving three types: (1) maxim of quality, (2) manner, and (3) relation. Furthermore, the research identified cultural influences, including low and high context cultures, power distance, and individualism versus collectivism, as contributing factors to the usage of flouting maxims. This research aims to improve intercultural interactions and foster inclusivity by assisting intercultural students in understanding communication differences and raising public awareness of cross-cultural communication dynamics. Future research opportunities were also discussed, such as exploring a wider range of literary compositions, incorporating diverse cultural perspectives, and utilising alternative methodologies.

Keywords: conversational implicatures, maxims, flouting of maxim, Indian-American, American

Introduction

Researchers have been looking Conversational implicature is a fundamental concept in communication, particularly in pragmatics. It refers to the indirect meaning that is implied in an utterance, beyond the literal meaning of the words used. This phenomenon is deeply rooted in Grice's cooperative principle and its maxims, which govern effective communication (Blome-Tillmann, 2013). Conversational implicatures have been categorised into different types, such as generalised implicatures, particularised implicatures, and conventional implicatures, each with its distinct characteristics and functions in communication (Sofyan et al., 2022). Moreover, conversational implicature has been found to be closely tied to the specific features of the context in which it occurs, highlighting its sensitivity to the elements of communication (Anggrarini, 2017). Conversational implicature plays a significant role in various contexts, such as informal conversations, instructional communication, and even in literary works like song lyrics and movie scripts. It has been observed to contribute to the smooth flow of interaction and the accurate delivery of messages between speak-

ers and listeners (Nanda et al., 2012; Kultsum et al., 2023). Furthermore, the study of conversational implicature has extended to various domains, including drama, movies, and self-mockery, demonstrating its relevance and applicability in diverse communicative settings (Suryadi & Muslim, 2019; Wen & Chen, 2017).

Cultural differences in conversational implicatures usage may impact the effectiveness of communication. Samaie and Ariyanmanesh (2018) stated that the ability of second language learners to understand implicatures depends on a number of factors, including their own cultural background, the amount of time they have spent exposed to the target language, the type of implicature being studied, and their overall level of proficiency in the target language. Kavetska (2021) also believed that implicatures may interfere with cross-cultural interactions and create a pressing problem, especially for English language learners. They might not be able to interpret implicatures the same way as English speakers do. Therefore, recognising and addressing these cultural allows for more effective and meaningful communication between individuals with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

According to Grice (1975), meaningful communication can be established by adhering to the maxims rule. However, failure to observe a maxim can cause misunderstanding and conflict between communicators and interlocutors. In an intercultural context, cultural influences may also impede the success of a conversation. It is because different cultures have different ways of interaction. For example, most Asian people are indirect communicators, which means that they express intended meaning in an ambiguous and implicit way (Zhang, 2008). Hence, they tend to breach a maxim of quality (truthfulness) to save the other party's face and feelings. On the other hand, Westerners, who are typically forthright communicators, may misinterpret this and form a bad opinion of the other party.

Hence, without a comprehensive understanding of cultures, a maxim will be easily flouted or violated, and this could further worsen the interaction between the participants involved. Therefore, to resolve this issue, an effort must be put forward to improve understanding of Grice's conversational implicatures theory in an intercultural setting. Thus, the purpose of this study is to identify and compare the flouting of maxim based on Grice's conversational implicatures theory made by two main characters from distinct cultural backgrounds who are Indian-American and American in the series: *Never Have I Ever*. By applying the Grice's theory in this context, it is hoped that the society would be able to increase their knowledge about the different usage of maxims between the Indian and American communities.

Literature Review

Culture and Conversational Implicature

The relationship between conversational implicature maxim and culture is evident in the influence of cultural norms and values on the generation, interpretation, and translation of implicatures. Cultural differences

play a significant role in shaping conversational implicatures, and understanding these differences is crucial for effective communication across diverse cultural contexts. Cultural differences can influence the interpretation and application of conversational implicatures, as these implicatures are shaped by the norms and values of a particular culture (Kamal et al., 2023). According to Grice's Cooperative Principle, conversational implicatures are derived from the violation of conversational maxims, which are not universal and can vary across cultures (Kamal et al., 2023). This implies that the translation of conversational implicatures poses a cultural challenge to translators, as they need to consider the cultural context in order to accurately convey the implicatures from the source text to the target language (Kamal et al., 2023). Furthermore, studies have shown that conversational implicatures can be influenced by cultural conceptualisations, enabling members of a cultural group to think in a collective manner (Sharifian, 2003).

Moreover, the application of conversational implicatures in different cultural contexts has been investigated in various settings, such as instructional communication in English classrooms (Kultsum et al., 2023), psychological consultation in Iran (Sobhani & Saghebi, 2014), and interactions between students and teachers at an Islamic boarding school (Sofyan et al., 2022). These studies have highlighted the significance of considering cultural norms and values when analysing conversational implicatures, as they can impact the way implicatures are formulated and interpreted in specific cultural settings.

Additionally, the type and frequency of conversational implicatures, whether generalised or particularised, are plausibly influenced by cultural factors (Rachmah et al., 2022). Thus, recognition and understanding of conversational implicatures are essential for comprehending non-cooperative attitudes and the violation of conversational maxims in different cultural contexts (Sobhani & Saghebi, 2014). For instance, a comparison study between Indonesian and American humor emphasised the cultural differences in the perception of flouting maxims, where cultural norms influenced the interpretation of flouted maxims as dishonest or hypocritical by Westerners (Puspasari & Ariyanti, 2019). Therefore, the analysis of conversational implicatures in various cultural settings provides valuable insights into the impact of culture on the generation, interpretation, and application of implicatures in communication.

Relationship between Conversational Implicature and Maxim Flouting

Conversational implicature is closely related to maxim flouting, as evidenced by several studies in the field of linguistics and pragmatics (Ikawati, 2022; Muñoz, 2019). Grice's Cooperative Principle and its associated maxims play a crucial role in understanding conversational implicature. The violation of these maxims, known as maxim flouting, is a key mechanism for generating conversational implicatures. The process of implicature generation is often linked to flouting a maxim, where speakers intentionally violate the maxims to convey additional meaning beyond the literal interpretation of their utterances. Furthermore, the recogni-

tion of conversational implicature is deemed essential for understanding non-cooperative attitudes and the underlying implicatures resulting from the violation of maxims (Sobhani & Saghebi, 2014).

Various studies emphasise that the generation of conversational implicatures through maxim flouting is context-dependent and can serve various functions, such as providing comprehensive explanations, convincing the hearer, criticising someone's actions, or creating humorous situations (Maulida et al., 2022; Fitri & Qodriani, 2019). Moreover, the recognition of conversational implicatures resulting from maxim flouting is crucial for effective communication, as it allows the hearer to infer the implied meaning beyond the explicit content of the utterance (Sobhani & Saghebi, 2014; Williyan, 2018; Muñoz, 2019; Gamage & Makangila, 2019). In conclusion, the relationship between conversational implicature and maxim flouting is well-established in the literature, with numerous studies highlighting the significance of maxim flouting in generating conversational implicatures across diverse linguistic contexts.

Theoretical Framework

Grice's theory of implicature and the Cooperative Principle (CP) are fundamental concepts in pragmatics. The CP, proposed by Grice, consists of four maxims: the maxim of quantity, quality, relation, and manner. These maxims serve as guidelines for effective communication, aiming for cooperation and informativeness in conversation (Hadi, 2013). Grice's theory emphasises that in cooperative communication, speakers are expected to adhere to these maxims, and conversational implicatures arise when these maxims are deliberately flouted or violated (Hadi, 2013). Furthermore, Grice's 'what is said' and implicature are central to understanding utterance meaning, as they distinguish between the explicit content of an utterance and the additional meaning derived from implicatures (Wu, 2022). This distinction is crucial in understanding how speakers convey meaning beyond the literal interpretation of their words, contributing to the richness and efficiency of communication. Grice's theory, including the Cooperative Principle and implicature, provides a framework for understanding the principles of cooperative communication and the generation of implicatures through deliberate flouting of maxims.

In his 1975 book *Logic and Conversation*, Grice explored cooperation in terms of four maxims: (1) maxim of quantity, (2) maxim of quality, (3) maxim of relation and (4) maxim of manner. Speakers should provide sufficient but not excessive information if they wish to adhere to the maxim of quantity; they should be genuine and sincere, speaking the truth or facts if they wish to adhere to the maxim of quality; utterances should be relevant to the context of the speech if they wish to adhere to the maxim of relation; and they should present meaning clearly and concisely, avoiding ambiguity if they wish to adhere to the maxim of manner.

This intentional flouting of maxims, in accordance with Grice cooperative principle, is observed in various contexts, such as talk shows (Marlisa & Hidayat, 2020), movies (Hamani & Puluhalawa, 2019),

novels (Fitri & Qodriani, 2019), and everyday conversations (Williyan, 2018). For instance, an analysis of flouting maxims in the "UP!" movie, revealing instances of flouting maxims of relation (Gustary & Anggraini, 2021). These studies collectively contribute to a comprehensive understanding of maxim flouting, emphasising its diverse functions, implications, and contextual variations. The findings underscore the significance of analysing maxim flouting in different linguistic and cultural contexts to enrich the understanding of conversational implicature and cooperative communication. Moreover, this framework relates to the purpose of the study, which is to analyse the varied communication styles of two individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

Methodology

Research Sample and Data Collection

This qualitative study employed a purposive sampling approach. In this study, the sample was the usage of Grice's conversational implicatures between the Indian-American character and the American character in the series *Never Have I Ever*. The TV series had four seasons in total, but only five episodes of the first season were examined. This sample size was justified because a regular television season consisted of 10 episodes, each of which ran for 30–40 minutes. Therefore, a single season was sufficient for this analysis to investigate how the two main characters' application of Grice's conversational implicature differed.

The utterances of the two main characters from the series *Never Have I Ever* were retrieved from Netflix. The television series consisted of four seasons; however, the focus of this investigation was limited to the analysis of only five episodes from Season 1. This sample size was appropriate given that a typical television season consisted of 10 episodes, with each episode lasting between 30 and 40 minutes. In addition, the transcripts of the five episodes were obtained from OpenSubtitles.com. After downloading the entire transcription, the files must be extracted using Notepad. Then, Microsoft Word was used to compile them for the data analysis process. Subsequently, the text was cleaned by examining and removing duplicate entries, spaces, and unrecognisable characters. Next, the utterances were stratified and categorised in accordance with the study's purpose, which was to identify the types of conversational implicatures used by the two main characters.

Data Analysis

The researchers developed a coding guideline to explore the needed processes in data analysis and coding. Based on Paul Herbert Grice's (1975) theory, the data evaluated was sorted into its relevant domains using distinct color indications to represent the different types of conversational implicatures used by the Indian-American and American characters in the series *Never Have I Ever*. Grice's (1975) theory on conversational

implicature was applied in this study because it provided a comprehensive understanding behind an implicit and indirect speech of a speaker in conversation. The coding scheme that was applied in the study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Coding Scheme based on Grice's Conversational Implicatures Theory (1975)

Conversational Implicatures	Coding Scheme
Maxim of Quality	M1
Maxim of Quantity	M2
Maxim of Manner	M3
Maxim of Relation	M4

Findings and Discussion

Research Objective 1

The first research objective of this study is to examine the flouting of maxim by the Indian-American character, Devi in the *Never Have I Ever* television series.

Table 2: Flouting of Maxim Quality by Deci (Excerpt 1)

Nalini	What was that? What happened to the window?
Devi	A bird hit it.

The act of flouting the maxim of quality occurs when an individual utters information that is incongruent with reality or lacks clear and tangible evidence to support it (Wahyuni et al., 2019). Devi's mother, Nalini, is questioning Devi about what happened after hearing noises coming from Devi's room and seeing the broken window. Instead of confessing that she is the one who breaks the window, she shifts the blame on a bird. In this instance, she is flouting the maxim of quality as she is giving an untruthful statement to her mother. She lies because she does not want to get into trouble as she breaks the window using the book that has been blessed by God. She is also lying because she is distraught and does not wish to deal with her mother's nagging.

Table 3: Flouting of Maxim Quality by Devi (Excerpt 2)

Paxton	Bye. Sorry. That was my grandpa. Can I get you a drink?
Devi	Sure. Do you have any chocolate-- Ah. Beer. You read my mind.

This specific interaction demonstrates the flouting of maxim quality which Grice (1975) defines as a circumstance in which a speaker utters a statement that is either untrue or imprecise. Devi flouts the maxim of quality by creating a false statement. When Paxton offers her a drink, she considers requesting chocolate-flavoured beverages. Hence, she is shocked when Paxton gives her a bottle of beer because she has never consumed alcohol before. Since Devi never drinks alcohol, her claim that "you read my mind" was a lie. Devi accepts the drink despite her personal preference to abstain from alcohol, as she wishes to avoid any potential social discomfort that may arise from disclosing her abstinence. Furthermore, it can be inferred that the reason for her acceptance of the drink is to establish a shared interest with Paxton.

Table 4: Flouting of Maxim Quality by Devi (Excerpt 3)

Ben	You shouldn't wear so much makeup. It'll collect on your moustache.
Devi	At least I can grow a moustache.

The utilisation of metaphor, irony, banter, and sarcasm are common tactics employed by speakers who intentionally flouts the maxim of quality (Tasyarasita & Wibowo 2002). Thomas (1995) suggests that when a speaker makes a statement that is untrue or contains inaccuracies, they are said to be flouting the maxim of quality. Irony, as defined by Cutting (2002), is an expression that initially appears to be friendly and hospitable, but it is offensive. In this case, Ben is making an implicit derogatory remark towards Devi's facial hair, even though it is a prevalent characteristic among women in Asian cultures. Devi appears to be deeply offended by Ben's comments, which is evident from the first episode where she displays a sense of insecurity regarding that aspect of herself. Therefore, when someone highlights the insecurity, particularly in the context of Ben being Devi's nemesis, it incites her anger. As a result, Devi responds to the statement with irony, remarking on Ben's apparent lack of facial hair even though he is a man.

Table 5: Flouting of Maxim Quantity by Devi (Excerpt 1)

Dr Ryan	I do. Why don't you sit down? So, you're back up on your feet. That's gotta feel good.
Devi	Yeah. That part was good. It was so nice not to be in a wheelchair, but people were still staring at me. They all think I was faking being paralyzed. Why would I fake that? Because it's such a cool look to have your cousin help you onto the toilet?

Tasyarasita and Wibowo (2022) claim that the employment of overstatement and understatement tactics can serve as a means of flouting the maxim of quantity. The speaker will commonly employ these strategies to flout the maxim of quantity by providing an insufficient or excessive amount of information. Moreover, the term "overstatement" was introduced by Grundy (2000) to denote the occurrence of a speaker furnishing an excess of information beyond what is deemed necessary. During the course of this conversation, Dr. Ryan inquires about Devi's emotional state after her recovery from her immobility condition. Rather than providing a concise affirmative or negative response, Devi goes on to explain about people's reactions regarding her paralysis. She is flouting the maxim of quantity because she provides an information that is more necessary than needed and this strategy is called as an overstatement. Devi answers Dr Ryan's question in a lengthy manner because she wants Dr Ryan to understand that she is upset with the idea of people thinking that she is faking having a mobility issue because she suffers a lot from it.

Table 6: Flouting of Maxim Quantity by Devi (Excerpt 2)

Dr Ryan	Devi, the reason I was enlisted by your doctors and your mother is to delve into some of the major events that have happened in your life over this last year. Now, we've been seeing each other for months, and you still don't want to talk about your father.
Devi	What's there to talk about? He's dead. It made me sad. Now I want to talk about a major event that could happen this week! Popping my cherry, Doc.

Grundy (2002) suggests that the use of understatement can be interpreted as a flouting of the maxim of quantity. This occurs when a speaker intentionally provides insufficient information to the listener, de-

spite the listener's need for more detailed or complete information. In the given scenario, Dr. Ryan is requesting Devi to express her emotions pertaining to the demise of her father. Instead of responding to Dr. Ryan's inquiry, Devi posed a counter- question, stating that there was no further topic to discuss. In this particular scenario, Devi is flouting the maxim of quantity by offering inadequate information concerning her emotional response to her father's death. Based on Leech (1983), the flouting of the maxim of quantity occurs when a speaker provides an inadequate or excessive amount of information beyond what is necessary. This strategy is referred to as an understatement, as Devi refrains from providing further elaboration on her emotions to Dr. Ryan.

Table 7: Flouting of Maxim Manner by Devi (Excerpt 1)

Nalini	Then every year, I can go leave flowers on the part of the highway where you died in a horrible accident.
Devi	But it's Dad's. He wouldn't want you to sell it to a discount Luke Wilson .

Devi's mother, Nalini, attempts to sell her husband's motorcycle to their neighbour. Devi promptly declines as she is aware of her father's fondness for the bike. Consequently, she initiates verbal abuse towards their neighbour by referring to him as a "discount of Luke Wilson". As per the definition provided by Cambridge University Press (n.d.), the term "discount" denotes the action of disregarding or undervaluing something or someone, leading to their dismissal or lack of attention. Luke Wilson is a well-known figure in the American entertainment industry, having established himself as an accomplished actor, producer, and director.

Thus, in this particular context, Devi is insulting her neighbour by comparing his appearance to a substandard rendition of the well-known performer. Devi's statements directed towards her neighbour are being misconstrued as expressions of praise, even though they actually convey a negative sentiment. In this scenario, Devi is flouting the maxim of manner by using an ambiguous term, called discount. Suraya (2018) suggests that when individuals flout the manner maxim, they tend to communicate with a lack of clarity, conciseness, and transparency in their intentions. It may be deduced that Devi's intention behind delivering the insult was to dissuade her neighbour from purchasing the bike. However, her attempt was ultimately unsuccessful.

Table 8: Flouting of Maxim Manner by Devi (Excerpt 2)

Ben	You wish you were cool enough for intravenous drugs.
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Devi	Oh. Drugs are, like, cool now? I didn't realize you were a hillbilly twaker . I guess you're skinny enough.
Ben	Uh, I'm not skinny. I'm jacked.
Devi	Hmph, for now, until you morph into your big fat dad.

Suraya (2018) mentioned that the maxim of manner is flouted when a speaker's response to other party(ies) is disorderly, vague, ambiguous, or wordy. Flouting the manner maxim typically entails a lack of clarity, conciseness, and transparency in communicative intentions. This phenomenon is intentional and produces an implicature, which is a supplementary meaning rather than the literal meaning conveyed. In this example, Devi is flouting the maxim of manner because she uses a phrase that is not concise which is hillbilly twaker. Hillbilly can be referred to as an individual from the rural mountains of the United States, who lives a simple life and is thought to be mildly foolish by city dwellers. Meanwhile twaker is a US slang that means a person who often indulges in recreational meth use. In this dialogue, Devi used the phrase "hillbilly twaker" as an indirect insult to call Ben skinny and unintelligent. Additionally, Devi also flouts the maxim of manner by exhibiting disorganisation in her sentence structure. She initially discusses drugs, but subsequently links this topic to Ben's father in order to exacerbate their argument.

Table 9: Flouting of Maxim Relation by Devi (Excerpt 1)

Devi	No, man. We're watching Riverdale. Buckle up for some steamy teen romance.
Kamala	These are high schoolers? And their parents are okay with them taking showers together in their homes?
Devi	Yeah, Kamala. Welcome to American teen soaps. The actors are also older than Mom. Can I ask you a question?

In this instance, Devi's statement flouts the maxim of relation, which refers to a speaker's tendency to discuss topics that are not relevant to the current conversation (Cutting, 2002). Kamala and Devi are having a movie night together. Kamala recommends a 10-hour-long Bollywood movie, while Devi suggests watching Riverdale, a highly popular American teen show on Netflix. Initially, Devi discusses the age of the actors in the show, noting that they are older than her mother. However, she subsequently shifts the conversation to a different unrelated topic.

Research Objective 2

The second research objective of this study is to examine the flouting of maxim by the American character, Ben in the Never Have I Ever television series.

Table 10: Flouting of Quality by Ben (Excerpt 1)

Ben	Do you know when you can't use your legs for no medical reason, it's called psychosomatic? Which, my dad says, means fake.
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Tasyarasita and Wibowo (2002) refer to sarcasm as a commonly employed strategy by speakers who intentionally flout the quality maxim. Cutting (2002) defines sarcasm as an aggressive type of irony used to insult or humiliate another person. Sarcasm is typically used to convey the opposite of what is intended. In the example, Ben flouts a maxim of quality by employing the sarcasm tactic. The act of flouting the maxim of quality occurs when a speaker utters a statement that is either untrue or contains inaccuracies (Thomas, 1995). Ben appears to be sincere when he initiates a conversation with Devi, but he intends to make a sarcastic remark about Devi's prior mobility problem. Ben, who is Devi's long-time nemesis, appears to be unwilling to acknowledge the validity of the mobility issue. This is due to the belief that Devi is seeking attention rather than experiencing a genuine problem.

Table 11: Flouting of Quality by Ben (Excerpt 2)

Ben	Man, David, watching you flirt with Jonah was just about the saddest thing I've ever seen, and I saw my dad run over our cat. You know he's gay, right?
Devi	Your cat? No, I didn't. That's so cool.

In accordance with Thomas (1995), when a speaker makes a statement that is untrue or contains inaccuracies, they are considered to be flouting the maxim of quality. In this dialogue, Ben employs two flouting maxim of quality strategies called metaphor and sarcasm. Metaphor is a maxim flouting strategy that involves comparing an object or action to something with similar characteristics, but not entirely accurate, to aid in the explanation of a concept (Cutting, 2002). Ben is comparing how sorry he feels towards Devi who is pining over their friend who is known to be gay and the accident where he saw his dad run over his cat. In this case, Ben flouts the maxim of quality to make Devi feels pathetic for being desperate to be in a relationship with someone even though the person has a different sexual orientation.

Table 12: Flouting of Manner by Ben (Excerpt 3)

Devi	Ben, I'm really sorry. I don't want Nazis to kill you. It's okay.
Ben	I could tell something bigger was bothering you. Besides being pawned by your intellectual superior. I'm assuming the date didn't go well? Everyone thinks Shira and I are this perfect power couple going to fundraisers at restaurants owned by Lisa Vanderpump. She's one of my dad's clients.
Devi	Yeah, that comes up a weird amount.

Following her summons to the principal's office, Devi offers another apology to Ben for expressing her wish for his demise at the hands of the Nazis. Ben provides Devi with reassurance by acknowledging that she is currently facing a more significant issue. Consequently, Ben presumes that the date disclosed by Devi, which occurred the day prior, was unsuccessful. Subsequently, Ben proceeds to tell her about his relationship with Shira, which is not entirely rosy. Devi exhibits a lack of understanding regarding the correlation between her unfavourable romantic encounter and Ben's relationship. In this scenario, it can be observed that Ben is flouting the maxim of manner by failing to provide lucid details regarding his intended message. Grice (1975) indicates that disobeying the rule of the maxim of manner can be inferred from a failure to provide clear, unambiguous, and orderly contributions.

Table 13: Flouting of Relation by Ben (Excerpt 4)

Ben	You shouldn't wear so much makeup. It'll collect on your moustache.
Devi	At least I can grow a moustache.
Ben	At My doctor says any day now. Who are you trying to impress?

Based on Grice (1975), the maxim of relation is flouted when the speaker's utterance lacks relevance to the topic under discussion. The dialogue begins with Ben employing sarcasm to suggest to Devi that she should reduce her makeup usage, as it may accumulate in her facial hair. Following an ironic remark from Devi regarding his lack of facial hair despite his gender, he swiftly transitions the topic of conversation from

cosmetics to an inquiry regarding the person towards whom she is attempting to create a good impression. In this particular scenario, it can be observed that Ben is flouting the principle of relevance, also known as the maxim of relation.

Research Objective 3

Cultures play a significant role in shaping the understanding of implicature. Neymark (1981) highlighted how culture influences the interpretation of text based on societal norms and behaviors. Additionally, cultural dimensions, such as Hall's (1976) and Hofstede's (2011) frameworks, can influence the flouting of the maxim. Therefore, the third research objective of this study is to compare the flouting of maxims made by the Indian-American Character (Devi) and American character (Ben) in the *Never Have I Ever* series. In the context of the series *Never Have I Ever*, the examination of the act of flouting the maxims offers significant observations regarding the communication dynamics that exist between the primary protagonists, Devi Vishwakumar (Indian-American character) and Ben Gross (American character). As the narrative progresses, it becomes apparent that the individuals' varied cultural heritages exert an influence on their modes of communication and their tendencies to flout the principles of quality, quantity, manner, and relation (Samaie and Ariyanmanesh, 2018).

Devi, being of Indian American descent, exemplifies a communication style that is congruent with cultures characterised by high-context communication patterns. High-context communication is distinguished by its reliance on implicit meaning, non-verbal cues, and shared cultural references (Hall, 1976). This places a considerable responsibility on the recipient to decipher the intended message. Devi's inclination to flout all four maxims serves as an indication of her indirect style of communication. For example, the person may use rhetorical devices such as irony or sarcasm to effectively communicate their emotions or intentions, leaving their messages open to multiple interpretations. Scroope (2018) backs up this claim by stating that an Indian frequently engages in social exchanges that include tacit allusions to established cultural conventions and societal standards, necessitating the ability of the listener to decipher the underlying significance.

In contrast, Ben Gross exemplifies the communication style commonly observed in low-context cultures due to his American background. Low-context communication emphasises clear, direct, and explicit transmission of information, minimising the use of contextual cues or implicit interpretations (Hall, 1976). Ben's inclination to flout the maxim of quantity, manner, and relation reflects his direct and clear communication style. Americans often use sarcasm, humour, or metaphor to express their thoughts or emotions in a straightforward manner (Evason, 2022). This straightforward approach minimises ambiguity and facilitates well-defined exchanges of information (Puspasari & Ariyanti, 2019). Americans are generally assertive in

expressing their desires, considering assertiveness a favourable trait in their society. They openly express disagreements, even with authority figures like teachers, reflecting their strong belief in freedom of speech.

Another potential explanation for the disparity in the utilisation of flouting the maxim between Devi Vishwakumar and Ben Gross may be attributed to the two cultural dimensions proposed by Hofstede, namely power distance, and individualism dimensions. Christie et al. (2003) mentioned that there are notable disparities in each of the indices between the United States and India. Specifically, India exhibits a power distance score that is twice as high as that of the United States, while the United States demonstrates a score in individualism that is twice as high as that of India. Devi Vishwakumar's upbringing in a cultural context marked by a significant power distance and a predominantly collectivist orientation, as exemplified in Indian culture, may potentially shape her tendency to employ flouting maxims. The notion of power distance, as defined by Hofstede (2011), pertains to the extent to which individuals recognise and embrace hierarchical power differentials among individuals occupying different positions of authority. In a societal context characterised by a notable power distance, such as India, individuals tend to display a heightened propensity to recognise and display respect for hierarchical relationships and figures of authority (Kumar & Sethi, 2005). The hierarchical structure of Indian society is influenced by several factors, most notably the caste system, which significantly impacts various aspects, including the organisation and functioning of the family unit. In this framework, Devi may exhibit a heightened inclination to adhere to hierarchical communication norms, using the practice of flouting maxims as a strategy to subtly express her thoughts and avoid direct confrontation with individuals of higher social status, such as her parents or elders. Additionally, Hofstede (2011) argued that India exhibits a collectivist cultural orientation, prioritising familial obligations and group cohesion. Devi's communication style may be influenced by this collectivist perspective, leading her to employ the strategy of flouting maxims to uphold social harmony and prioritise the collective needs of the family over individual assertiveness.

Factors such as the rigid social structure and historical influences, like the caste system, may further strengthen her commitment to societal norms and hierarchical communication patterns, shaping her application of flouting maxims (Sekhar, 1995). In a specific instance from the TV series *Never Have I Ever*, Devi's mother, Nalini, questions her about the broken window in her room after hearing noises. Instead of confessing, Devi blames it on a bird. She flouted the maxim of quality by giving an untruthful statement. She lies to avoid trouble as she used a book blessed by God to break the window. Additionally, she lies to avoid her mother's nagging and because she is distraught. On another occasion, Devi flouts the maxim of manner when she indirectly insults their neighbor. Nalini tries to sell her husband's motorbike to the neighbor, but Devi objects knowing her father's attachment to it. Devi then calls the neighbor a "discount of Luke Wilson," comparing him to a poor impersonation of the famous actor. Devi's criticism is misinterpreted as praise, and she flouts the maxim of manner by using the ambiguous term "discount".

Moreover, according to Korac-Kakabadse et al. (2001), the prominent individualistic perspective within American culture fosters self-sufficiency and values personal objectives, prioritising individual preferences over group interests. This orientation may impact Ben's communication style, leading him to employ flouting maxims to assert his opinions and challenge established norms. Ben's upbringing in a culture with lower power distance and a strong individualistic orientation, as seen in American society, may further influence his direct and assertive communication style, using flouting maxims to openly express his thoughts without excessive regard for social hierarchies (Hofstede, 2011). The devaluation of social hierarchy in American society fosters a tendency among individuals to prioritise honesty, results, and individual decision-making over reputation and interpersonal relationships. In this context, Ben Gross is likely to exhibit a greater propensity for direct and assertive communication, employing flouting maxims to openly articulate his thoughts without excessive regard for upholding social hierarchies.

Conclusion

The research on the flouting of maxims between Indian-American and American individuals has noteworthy implications. The findings of this study may have practical implications for supporting intercultural students in developing an in-depth understanding of the disparities in communication styles between the cultural groups. Through an examination of how the flouting of conversational maxims is utilised in these specific contexts, educators and intercultural trainers have the opportunity to create focused resources and interventions aimed at assisting students in effectively navigating intercultural communication. This phenomenon has the potential to enhance intercultural competence and facilitate greater success in cross-cultural interactions.

Furthermore, this research has the potential to enhance the general public's comprehension of the complexities involved in cross-cultural communication. An extensive understanding of intercultural communication can be achieved through the sharing of research findings and insights pertaining to the flouting of conversational maxims by individuals of Indian-American and American. The acquisition of additional knowledge has the potential to cultivate cultural sensitivity, stimulate empathy, and enhance interpersonal communication and comprehension between individuals of varying cultural origins. Consequently, by recognising and respecting each other's cultural norms and values, individuals can build stronger connections and foster meaningful relationships, promoting harmony and mutual understanding in diverse communities.

On the other hand, the investigation into maxim flouting among Indian-Americans and Americans may have implications for fostering cultural appreciation and reducing stereotypes. By conducting an in-depth examination of communication styles and the subtle use of flouting maxims within different cultural groups, this research has the potential to challenge preconceived notions and stereotypes about Indian-Americans and Americans. The analysis can provide a more in-depth understanding of their communication

patterns while also highlighting the diversity within these communities. Therefore, this study has the potential to significantly contribute to the development of a more inclusive and culturally sensitive society.

This study proposes several recommendations for future research to advance the knowledge and comprehension of flouting maxims. First, this study primarily examined the analysis of flouting maxims within a particular TV series. It is suggested that future research endeavours explore the occurrence and consequences of flouting maxims in other literary compositions, such as novels or plays. This line of research would be able to entail the investigation of the use of flouting maxims by characters in literary works. Moreover, this type of investigation has the potential to yield significant insights concerning the implementation of flouting maxims in various literary genres.

The next suggestion is to incorporate a wide range of cultural perspectives into the study. In order to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of flouting maxims, it is advisable to undertake research that surpasses the limitations of solely investigating two cultures, as was the scope of the present study. Future research should aim to compare the use of flouting maxims in a wider range of cultural contexts. Multiple cultural perspectives enable researchers to identify potential variations, similarities, and cultural nuances in the application of flouting maxims. This will result in new perspectives and insights, allowing for a more in-depth understanding of this linguistic phenomenon and its broader implications.

Author contributions

Conceptualisation, data collection and analysis; A. A. N.; article draft preparation, writing, review and editing, N.A. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Data availability statement

The data that supports the findings of this study are available on public domain.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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