

Exploring Scriptwriter's Intention of Maxim Flouting in "Barbie: A Fashion Fairy Tale" Movie

Nanda Tsalitsa Syifa' Indana^{1✉}, Suhandoko²
Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya^{1,2}
✉ nandanlq1@gmail.com

Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the flouting maxim of the main character, Barbie, in the dialogue in the movie transcript of "Barbie: A Fashion Fairy Tale", which is an animated movie released in 2010, while also discussing the purpose of the movie script writer in flouting maxims. The study is based on Grice's (1975) theory of Cooperative Principle which consists of four conversational maxims, namely quantity, quality, relation, and manner. The method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method. The data in this study are selected dialogues from the transcript that contain flouting maxims in the movie. The researcher observed, transcribed, then analyzed the utterances based on the guidelines by Grice (1975). The findings show that the main character, Barbie, flouted all four types of maxims throughout the movie. These maxim floutings were intentionally written by the scriptwriter to build humor and narrative conflict that support the storyline. The use of indirect language, irony, and mild sarcasm functions as a communicative strategy to show the character's personality and make the story more interesting, while still maintaining appropriateness for children and family audiences. Therefore, this study concludes that even children's animated movies can be analyzed to understand how meanings and character expressions can also have a deep context that can be analyzed as pragmatic studies and can contribute to understand language use and implied meaning in cinematic discourse.

Keywords: animated movie; Barbie: A Fashion Fairy Tale; cooperative principle; flouting maxim; scriptwriter's intention.

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pelanggaran maksim tokoh utama, Barbie, dalam dialog transkrip film "Barbie: A Fashion Fairy Tale", sebuah film animasi yang dirilis pada tahun 2010, sekaligus membahas tujuan penulis naskah film dalam pelanggaran maksim. Penelitian ini didasarkan pada teori Prinsip Kooperatif dari Grice (1975) yang terdiri dari empat maksim percakapan, yaitu kuantitas, kualitas, relasi, dan cara. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode deskriptif kualitatif. Data dalam penelitian ini berupa dialog-dialog terpilih dari transkrip yang mengandung pelanggaran maksim dalam film. Peneliti mengamati, mentranskripsi, kemudian menganalisis tuturan berdasarkan pedoman yang dikemukakan oleh Grice (1975). Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tokoh utama, Barbie, melanggar keempat jenis maksim di sepanjang film. Pelanggaran maksim ini sengaja ditulis oleh penulis naskah untuk membangun humor dan konflik naratif yang mendukung alur cerita. Penggunaan bahasa tidak langsung, ironi, dan sarkasme ringan berfungsi sebagai strategi komunikatif untuk menunjukkan kepribadian tokoh dan membuat cerita lebih menarik, sekaligus tetap sesuai untuk penonton anak-anak dan keluarga. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa film animasi anak-anak pun dapat dianalisis untuk memahami bagaimana makna dan ekspresi tokoh juga dapat memiliki konteks yang mendalam yang dapat dianalisis sebagai studi pragmatik dan dapat berkontribusi untuk memahami penggunaan bahasa dan makna tersirat dalam wacana sinematik.

Kata kunci: film animasi; Barbie: A Fashion Fairy Tale; prinsip kooperatif; pelanggaran maksim; tujuan penulis naskah.



INTRODUCTION

Scriptwriters often manipulate or fabricate communication in a movie to fulfill a certain purpose. According to Grice (1975), cooperative principles can find out how people exchange information in a conversation. Grice said there are 4 types called maxims. Those maxims are maxim of quality, maxim of quantity of manner, and maxim of relationship. Each maxim has different characteristics and purposes. However, in everyday conversation, maxims can be flouted either intentionally or unintentionally. The occurrence of flouting maxims in a movie is certainly an intentional flouting of maxims. This aligns with Davidson & Woods (2020), who stated that the scriptwriter determines how a character behaves in a story. This is also supported by Hanmakyugh (2024) who describes a scriptwriter as a crucial role in organizing the plot, dialogue, and message of a movie. Deng (2025) also revealed in the research that dialogue not only conveys the story but also reveals a character's emotions and character. This is certainly useful for scriptwriters in highlighting the character traits they create in a story. Therefore, it is important to understand the reasons why the movie scriptwriters use flouting maxims in their scripts, whether to create humor, satire, or misunderstandings for the sake of the story flow.

Previous research on flouting maxims used novels, social media, interview, and speeches as research materials. There is also research on flouting maxims in movie dialogues. However, research on flouting maxims in animated movie whose target audience is children still get a limited attention. Research on cartoon movies by Arifah et al. (2024) is research on cartoon movie that focuses on the behavior and visualizations shown in the movie. This research does not focus on dialogue or character speech. In addition, several studies on the new movie "Barbie 2023" had received attention from researchers such as research conducted by El-Mengdad & Chakroune (2025) and research by Abdelwahed (2025) which focuses on women's power and challenges patriarchy. Research on the Barbie movie 2023 does not focus on dialogue and linguistic research. Considering that Barbie movies have been around for a long time with very diverse stories, there is one animated Barbie movie, which has a conflict due to misunderstanding which is suitable for flouting maxim research. Therefore, this study uses the movie "Barbie: A Fashion Fairy Tale" to be analyzed so that it can be found whether animated movie also contain flouting maxims and what the actual purpose of the movie script writer.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on Grice (1975) theory, the maxim of quality has a type where this maxim provides information according to the reality. Of course, this maxim requires factual answers and the answer must be based on the actual information, even, if necessary, people who give the information must already know the evidence and then provide sufficient information. This is because the maxim of quality requires honesty, which prohibits providing untruthful information. People often intentionally flouted the maxim of quality for humorous or sarcastic purposes, or even to conceal the true information. So, in the maxim of quality, users or speakers are prohibited from making statements that the speaker themselves does not have proof of the truth, especially if it involves a lie, because this certainly flout the maxim of quality.

The maxim of quantity is a maxim that requires providing appropriate information in an answer that is neither too long nor too short. Thomas (Lamarque, 2010) in the book “Concise Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Language”, advises that in the maxim of quantity speakers must contribute to exchanging information as informatively as possible based on the portion required. The amount of explanation provided must be appropriate to the information requested. Providing too few statements will create ambiguity, especially for the information seeker. Furthermore, providing too much information will make the conversation less efficient. Therefore, answers or information must be sufficient to avoid flouting this maxim.

Maxim of manner requires users to speak or exchange information in a structured and clear manner. This Maxim also does not allow speakers to provide information with confusing words. For example, when someone asks about the steps to watch a concert, they answer with the correct steps and are not confusing. According to Grice (1975), it is also clear that the maxim of manner focuses more on the way the speaker provides answers or information rather than the meaning of the information. This maxim requires clear and orderly conversation but also not long-winded so that the meaning of the explanation can be easily understood because the way it is delivered is clear and structured. This maxim is flouted when for example, someone is asked about a step to do something or to get somewhere but he or she answers it in a very convoluted way that confuses the information seeker.

As the name suggest, the maxim of relation relates to the relationship or relevance of an information. Actually, just like the other maxim, this maxim requires the speaker to



exchange information that is relevant to the topic that being discussed. Thomas (Lamarque, 2010) explained that the flow of the conversation in maxim of relation must remain on the topic that being discussed from the beginning so that it could reach the end point of the communication goal clearly and the other person would not also get confused. The type of person who is easily distracted in a conversation will usually often flouts this maxim because this maxim of relation is usually flouted when the conversation starts to lead to things that should not be the topic of discussion.

Flouting maxims has been a topic of considerable research by several previous researchers through various media, such as movies, talk shows, novels, and online messaging. Wahyuni et al., (2019) in their study analyzed flouting maxims in the main character's dialogue and explained the reasons briefly and straight to the point in the discussion section. Furthermore, Marlisa and Hidayat (2020) in their study examined flouting maxims performed by Jackie Chan in an interview session. They explained the reasons for flouting clearly, but because the data came from spontaneous and unstructured interviews, the context is different from movies where the dialogue has been written and arranged by the scriptwriter.

In addition, Risnanda (2023) used the novel as a research medium. Just like movies, dialogues in novels are also the result of the author's intention, so the flouting maxims must have their own purpose. The researcher focused on identifying dialogues containing flouting maxims and provided a brief explanation of the reasons. Meanwhile, Wening et al., (2024) in their study found that the maxim that was least often flouted was the maxim of quality, because without nonverbal expressions or context, flouting of truth were difficult to detect in text-based communication. Another study by Purba and Ayomi (2022) explained in detail the context, types of flouting, and the reasons why an utterance is included in the flouting maxim. However, the study has not discussed further the reasons or intentions of the scriptwriter in presenting the flouting maxim in the movie dialogue.

Based on several studies, it can be concluded that research on flouting maxim is still limited to animated movies whose audiences are mostly children. Therefore, this study focuses on the analysis of flouting maxim in the "Barbie: A Fashion Fairy Tale". The old Barbie movies seem to have received less attention from researchers to be studied. In addition, this movie 2010 movie has a storyline about the importance of communication which is in line with the purpose or function of maxims. The researcher wants to know

how the movie scriptwriter creates and resolves conflicts through the script written and what is the purpose of the scriptwriter deliberately presenting maxim floutings as a means to convey implied meanings and certain communicative purposes.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method to provide a detail analysis of utterances in textual form. The data source was obtained from the animated movie *Barbie: A Fashion Fairy Tale* that released in 2010, accessed through the YouTube platform. The data consisted of movie transcripts, which were extracted and converted into written text for analysis. The researcher acted as the primary instrument, collected data through several steps: watching the movie repeatedly to understand the context, transcribing the dialogues, matching the transcript with the movie, selecting utterances that potentially contain maxim flouting, and grouping them into four categories based on Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle: maxim of quality, quantity, relation, and manner. The analysis was conducted using Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975) to identify the type of maxim quantity, quality, relation, or manner flouted in the dialogues. Each selected utterance is interpreted by the researcher in the context of the conversation to determine the type of maxim flouting and the scriptwriter purpose behind it.

FINDINGS

Barbie: A Fashion Fairy Tale (2010) movie found to flout all the four types of maxims. This shows that Barbie, as the main character, uses exaggeration and indirect language styles to express her thoughts and emotions, which also reflects the scriptwriter's intention to make the dialogues more humorous and emotionally engaging for the audience.

Maxim of Quality

Barbie: *"I don't need Ken, I just need to book a flight. Want to go to Paris, girl?"*

This utterance flouts the maxim of quality because Barbie's words do not reflect her true emotional state. Although she says she does not need Ken, the context of the movie clearly shows that she is still upset about the breakup and misses him deeply. According to Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle, the maxim of quality requires speakers to only say what they believe to be true or have sufficient evidence for. By saying something contrary to her real feelings, Barbie intentionally flouts this maxim to convey

emotional irony. The scriptwriter uses this flouting to portray Barbie's inner conflict between sadness and pride. Rather than openly expressing heartbreak, Barbie hides her pain behind humor and confidence. This approach fits the tone of a children's animated movie, avoiding overt negativity or emotional breakdowns, and instead promoting a message of independence and optimism even after disappointment.

Maxim of Quantity

Teresa: *"Is that a store in Hawaii?"*

Barbie: *"No. my aunt Millis she sent me these flowers she's a designer in Paris with her own fashion house oh I loved visiting it when I was little, tons of people and energy and fabric and dresses and Aunt Millis on right in the middle of it all..."*

Barbie's response floutes the maxim of quantity because she provides for more information than is necessary to answer the question. Instead of simply explaining that the flowers came from her aunt in Paris, Barbie adds a lengthy, nostalgic description of her aunt's fashion house and her childhood memories. According to Grice's (1975) theory, the maxim of quantity requires the speaker to provide sufficient but not excessive information. By providing an overly detailed response, the scriptwriter intentionally made Barbie floute this maxim. The scriptwriter likely used this flouting to highlight Barbie's enthusiastic personality and emotional connection to fashion and as a start to introduce her aunt character. The long descriptive speech serves to establish background information for the audience and reflects Barbie's excitement about creativity and Paris, fitting with the movie's playful and imaginative tone for younger audiences.

Maxim of Manner

Barbie: *"it's magical! it really is. let's rock this party"*

This utterance floutes the maxim of manner because Barbie's description is intentionally vague. The word "magical" doesn't provide clear or structured information about what will happen or how the fashion show will work. Instead, she uses the word "magic" to convince her aunt and Alice also to inspire confidence and optimism. According to Grice (1975), the maxim of manner requires speakers to avoid ambiguity and vagueness of expression. By flouting this maxim, Barbie shifts the focus from literal clarity to emotional motivation. The scriptwriter intentionally uses this flouting to reinforce Barbie's role as a hopeful positive energy rather than logical reasoning. This aligns with Thomas's (1995) interpretation that maxim flouting can serve both interpersonal and affective functions. In this scene, Barbie's vibrant language helps maintain the movie's playful and

imaginative tone, in keeping with its purpose as a children's movie that values encouragement and creativity.

Maxim of Relation

Aunt Millicent: *"so tell me everything what's happening with you and that boyfriend of yours um Ken"*

Barbie: *"uh-uh so not going there"*

This utterance flouts the maxim of relation because Barbie deliberately refuses to provide a relevant answer to the question. Instead of responding with information about Ken, she abruptly closes the topic. "so tell me everything what's happening with you and that boyfriend of yours um Ken uh-uh so not going there" According to Grice (1975), the maxim of relation requires speakers to make their contributions relevant to the ongoing topic. Barbie's refusal to engage clearly flouts this rule, as she avoids the conversation away from the subject of her relationship. However, this flouting carries a clear implicature Barbie's emotional discomfort and desire to avoid revisiting a painful issue. The scriptwriter intentionally employs this maxim flouting to reveal Barbie's feeling without using emotional dialogue. By doing so, the character maintains the situation while cover the fact that she also confused with her relationship with Ken. In a children's animated movie context, this approach ensures that sensitive emotional themes like heartbreak are expressed in a soft, age-appropriate way through implication rather than direct confrontation.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, Barbie flouts all four conversational maxims throughout the movie. The maxim of quality is the most frequently flouted, often through sarcasm to express emotion and humor. Maxim of Quantity with exaggeration to create drama. The maxim of relation is used to shift or soften uncomfortable topics, while the maxim of manner is flouted to create poetic and imaginative expression consistent with the movie's fantasy tone. The frequent use of exaggeration, and indirect expressions supports the cooperative principle in a creative way that fits the nature of animated movie for children and family audiences.

These results align with previous research, such as Wahyuni et al. (2019) who found that flouting maxims in La La Land were used to build humor and character dynamics, and Risnanda (2023) who observed that authors in written works like novels also intentionally flouted maxims to enrich emotional feelings and narrative meaning.

However, this study extends those findings by focusing on an animated movie, a genre that has received limited attention in pragmatic studies. Compared to live action movie, animated movie use maxim flouting not only for realism but also to emphasize exaggerated emotions and moral messages suitable for younger audiences.

The study also complements Marlisa and Hidayat (2020), who analyzed flouting in unscripted interviews and found spontaneous flouting of maxims. Unlike that, Barbie's maxim flouting is intentional and designed by the scriptwriter to achieve narrative goals especially to display Barbie's optimistic personality, to solve conflicts, and to make moral lessons more accessible to children. However, this study was limited to Barbie's utterances and did not analyze other characters who also flout maxims. Future research could also broaden the scope by examining the meaning of all figures of speech or exaggerated substitute sentences used in animated movies.

CONCLUSION(S)

This study aims to analyze the types and purposes of flouting maxims done by Barbie, the main character in *Barbie: A Fashion Fairy Tale* (2010), and to interpret the scriptwriter's intentions behind these floutings. Using Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975) as the primary theoretical framework, this study reveals that Barbie flouted all four types of conversational maxims: quality, quantity, relation, and manner. The frequent floutings in Barbie's dialogue indicate that the scriptwriter deliberately designed her speech to create a playful but meaningful communication style with a moral message for an animated movie.

In conclusion, the presence of flouting maxims in children's animated films demonstrates that this medium can also contain unusual pragmatic elements, suggesting that the scriptwriter plays a crucial role in creating imaginative scripts that still achieve the film's objectives. This research contributes to understanding how language in script dialogue can express emotion, personality, and humor. For future research, researchers can obtain studies by analyzing other characters in this movie and also discussing further about the types of figures of speech used for exaggeration carried out by the characters in this movie.

REFERENCES

Abdelwahed, N. K. (2025). *Beyond Pink and Plastic: A Critical Analysis of Barbie (2023) Through the Lens of Gender Performativity, Intersectionality, and Diverse Cultural*

- Perspectives. *The Undergraduate Research Journal*, 10(5), 1–13.
<https://fount.aucegypt.edu/urje>
- Arifah, A., Ashidiq, A. R., & Wismadi, M. T. (2024). Happy Tree Friends: Analysis of Violent Content in the Cartoon Series. *KOMUNIKASIA: Journal of Islamic Communication and Broadcasting*, 4(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.32923/kpi.v4i1.4459>
- Davidson, P., & Woods, P. (2020). *Scriptwriters: The Foundation of the Future*.
- Deng, Y. (2025). A Brief Analysis of the Literariness of Film and Television Script Creation. *Communications in Humanities Research*, 66(1), 95–99. <https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7064/2025.23033>
- El-Mengad, A., & Chakroune, S. (2025). She's Everything, He's just Ken: Comprehensive Analysis of Barbie (2023). *Journal of Gender, Culture and Society*, 5(1), 01–11. <https://doi.org/10.32996/jgcs.2025.5.1.1>
- Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and conversation. *Syntax and Semantics*, 3: Speech Acts, eds Cole P, Morgan JL. *New York: Academic Press*, 3, 41–58. <http://www.sfu.ca/~jeffpell/Cogs300/GriceLogicConvers75.pdf>
- Hanmakyugh, T. T. (2024). *Producing the Documentary Film: The Role of a Scriptwriter*. University of Jo.
- Lamarque, P. V. (2010). *Concise Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Language and Linguistics*. New York. Pergamon.
- Marlisa, R., & Hidayat, D. N. (2020). the Analysis of Flouting Maxim in Good Morning America (GMA) Talkshow. *Englisia: Journal of Language, Education, and Humanities*, 7(2), 137. <https://doi.org/10.22373/ej.v7i2.6630>
- Purba, W. M., & Ayomi, P. N. (2022). A Pragmatic Analysis of Flouting Maxim Found in Friends Movie. *PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)*, 5(4), 723–731.
- Risnanda. (2023). An Analysis of Maxim Flouting Uttered by the Characters in It Ends with Us Novel. *Conference on English Language Teaching (CELT)*, 3, 916–927.
- Wahyuni, M., Arifin, M. B., & Lubis, I. S. (2019). An analysis of flouting maxims in La La Land movie. *Literary Criticism Journal*, 1(2), 10–15.
- Wening, A., Sabat, Y., & Prasetyo, Y. (2024). Flouting Maxim Found in WhatsApp Group Chat: Pragmatics Analysis. *Jurnal of English Development*, 4(01), 169–181. <https://journal.iaimnumetrolampung.ac.id/index.php/jed/article/view/4138>