

## Hyperbole and Non-observance of Grice's Maxims in The

### British Sitcom *Not Going Out*

Husam Mohammed Iz-el-Deen al-Houri,

(MA Student)

Prof. Hussein M. Kadhim Al-Nasrawi (PhD),

Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of  
Kerbala

### Abstract

In this paper, the researcher tries to show the pragmatic link between the phenomenon of hyperbole and non-fulfilment of Grice's cooperative principle (maxims). Hyperbole as a pragmatic aspect can be defined as a deliberately made endeavour by the speaker to deliver a meaning that is absurd or inflated beyond the literal sense of their words and contrasts sharply with the actual context. Actually, hyperbolic utterances are rife in everyday English conversation. It is a regular feature of informal talk that speakers may exaggerate whatever they tackle to portray it as literally impossible or absurd. However, Grice's (1975) held crucial that speakers be guided by some maxims insofar as the communication is successful and purposeful, helping the interlocutors have their needs met. Given that people usually converse and exchange thoughts without abiding by such cooperative maxims, these maxims are liable to be neglected (not observed) by speakers intentionally or unintentionally. Moreover, the forms or ways of such non-observance of Grice's maxims surpass the commonly and alternatively used terms of flouting and violating. Actually, there are five forms of non-fulfilment of those maxims. This paper is concerned, then, with highlighting each and every form of non-observance when the phenomenon of hyperbole unfolds triggering implicatures or additional hidden meaning and consequently making clear the difference among them, especially between flouting and violating, both being wrongly used as synonymous with each other. The data selected for the analysis are extracted from ten episodes of one of the greatest and most popular shows in Britain, viz., the sitcom *Not Going out* (2006-present). The episodes are three from each of the seasons (2019, 2021, 2022) as well as 2020 'Special' episode.

**Key words:** hyperbole, non-observance, cooperative maxims, flouting, violating, implicature

### Introduction

Naturally, people can be direct in their expressions and reactions; they are usually subtle or indirect for one reason or another though. The choice of indirectness might

stem in the form of figurative language which incorporates a lot of forms, metaphorical language being tackled first and foremost. Traditionally, rhetorical techniques have been linked to persuasive speeches creation prior to being deployed in aesthetics and literature. In reality, it was not until recently that the study of figurative language was dragged into the realm of common, daily varieties of English language. Hence, hyperbolic language, among other things, deserve a due attention and scrutiny in such informal varieties and colloquialisms from a pragmatic angle. This paper is devoted to linking hyperbole to Grice's conversational cooperative maxims—their non-observance (whatever the way or form of it) as a pragmatic strategy of the phenomenon in British sitcoms. Consequently, the aims of the study are detecting the cooperative maxims that are flouted or violated by the participants in British sitcoms due to hyperbole and highlighting the ways that could indicate the non-observance of those maxims in addition to flouting and violating.

It is hypothesised that all Grice's cooperative maxims would be equally not observed (whatever the form of non-observance) to make hyperbolic utterances in British sitcoms, and that the non-observance of the maxims could be read and classified probably differently and subjectively. So, flouting a maxim, for instance, could be analysed as violating or infringing.

## Review of Literature

### Hyperbole

Leech (1983) stated that *hyperbole* is a common feature of everyday language use. It has an important affective component which is describing, understanding, and evaluating an experience. Such definitions focus on the subjective nature of hyperbole that is used to make evaluations.

McCarthy and Carter (2004) defined *hyperbole* as "a kind of joint activity" (p. 161). Their definition is one which discusses the interactive nature of hyperbole. In this regard, hyperbole is described as a process of interaction between the speaker and the listener, where they negotiate some aspects of their communication.

From a general view, Abrams and Harphman (2009) defined it as "the extravagant exaggeration of fact or of possibility" (p. 166). This definition focuses on the high intensity that hyperbole carries in the process of presenting things or events. Also, Claridge (2011) illustrated that hyperbole is the more of the thing introduced.

Figurative language traditionally referred to language which is different from everyday language, i.e., "nonliterary" usage. Figures were seen as a stylistic and literary framework which writers use to embellish the "ordinary" language and hence to add a persuasive taste to it (Gibble, 2005). However, researchers were more concerned with metaphor which represents the paradigm trope including simile, metonymy, personification and hyperbole (Dascal & Gross, 1999). For Kreuz et al. (1993), the most common trope used by writers, after metaphor, is the trope of hyperbole.

Hyperbole is one of the rhetorical figures that is widely utilised in language for particular aesthetic and persuasive reasons, and it has a long history in rhetoric and literature. Instead than taking into account its decorative features, linguistic studies of hyperbole concentrate on its formal structure and functional components. When presented together, these various research will paint a complete and accurate picture of the history of hyperbole.

### **Hyperbole in Linguistic Studies**

In comparison to the long and detailed history of hyperbole in rhetoric, the linguistic study of hyperbole is more recent. The study of hyperbole from grammatical perspectives was related mainly to the study of intensification and gradability (Cano Mora, 2006). Bolinger's study (1972) entitled 'Degree Words' represented a detailed study of intensification. It tackled hyperbole as one of the figurative ways to gain intensification.

She's dying to see you = She desperately wants to see you

Furthermore, Bolinger (1972) noted that hyperbole can be made through the use of boosters which are "hyperbolic; they are forceful, and to the best of the speaker's ability, relatively unexpected" (p. 265). Also, Bolinger listed a number of adverbs that can work as 'hyperbolic intensifiers'. This list includes adverbs of manner that are categorised according to the meanings of 'size, strength, impact, abandonment, tangibility, consistency, evaluation, irremediability, singularity, purity and veracity'.

Semantic studies of hyperbole also focus on its formal side. One of earliest studies is Spitzbardt's (1963; as cited in Claridge, 2011, p. 46), in which the author provided a collection of forms that are needed to make hyperbolic expressions. Although this study has been adopted in many semantic studies of hyperbole such as Norrick (2004) and Cano Mora (2006), but it was not accepted by Claridge (2011). Claridge (2011) is a book-length study of hyperbole which covers its semantic and pragmatic sides. Claridge based her study on corpus taken from the BNC (British National Corpus), SBC (Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English) and newspaper data. However, Claridge did not depend on Spitzbardt's classification in her study. She believed that his classification is "hypothetical because it doesn't have any extensive textual basis and is not based on a corpus" (Claridge, 2011, p. 47).

### **Grice's Theory of Conversational Implicature**

Grice (1975) pinpointed some standards of communication and demonstrated how they contribute to the reasoning that enables utterances to convey considerably more than what is explicitly encoded in the underlying sentences. Language users save time, energy, and breath by producing utterances that absolutely rely on context, enabling receivers to infer information beyond what is explicitly stated.

The hearer effortlessly and unconsciously extrapolates the literal meaning of what the speaker said in order to construct a message that most plausibly corresponds to what the speaker intended to convey. In contrast, the speaker's message delivery facilitates the listener's ability to derive the appropriate inferences. Consequently, Grice proposed four maxims or rules as the foundation for cooperative communication (Griffiths, 2006).

Below are Grice's (1975) maxims of conversation:

Quality: providing truthful, sound information

Quantity: providing the right amount of information

Relation: being specific and direct (to the point)

Manner: being perspicuous/clear and orderly

### **Observance of the maxims**

Grice (1975) held following the cooperative principle maxims as critical for those with major conversational goals because they are designed to give participants an incentive to participate and talk.

### **Non-observance of the conversational maxims**

According to Thomas (1995), non-observance of the CM can unfold through the following five ways:

***Flouting a maxim*** A speaker who flouts a maxim does not mean to mislead the listener; instead, they urge the listener to hunt for the conversational implicature. As a result, the hearer is prepared to search for a hint in the utterance to aid in the interpretation of the speaker's utterance.

***Violating a maxim*** As a matter of fact, many commentators incorrectly use the term 'violate' for all forms of non-observance of the maxims. In his first published paper on conversational cooperation though, Grice (1975) defines '*violation*' very specifically as the unostentatious non-observance of a maxim. If a speaker violates a maxim, (s)he 'will be liable to mislead'. Simply another way, contrary to flouting, while violating a maxim, the speaker is deliberately trying to deceive listeners; there is no overt indication of this in the statement.

***Infringing a maxim*** When the speaker infringes a maxim, he unintentionally deceives or fails to observe the maxim. The speaker does this with no intention of generating an implicature. In other words, neither the speaker intends to produce an implicature, nor does he wish to deceive the hearer(s). This form of non-observance might spark due to several factors like the speaker's own linguistic or cognitive impairment; such conditions akin to inconsistency or irrationality erecting because of, inter alia,

excitement and drunkenness; besides, the usually-happening errors (or mistakes) of non-native speakers of English (Cutting, 2002).

**Opting out of a maxim** Refusing to cooperate and divulge any additional information, the speaker chooses to opt out of a maxim. The speaker states that they have made the decision not to follow the maxim.

**Suspending a maxim** Suspending a maxim can implicate that what is being said is not totally accurate or that there are some things the speaker should circumvent like taboo words. A speaker's suspension of a maxim may be attributable to cultural variations or the uniqueness of particular occasions or circumstances (Thomas, 1995). Since everyone involved is aware that the maxims are suspended, this non-observance does not give rise to any implicatures.

## Methodology

Mixed methods research incorporating both qualitative and quantitative analyses is employed to analyse the data.

Qualitative research, on the one hand, addresses attitudes, behaviors, and experiences (Dawson, 2009). When conducting qualitative research, the focus is on some naturally occurring phenomena. Data are not given in a numerical format (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Its methods primarily focus on presenting people's depth-subjective meanings in the context of their experiences.

Quantitative research, on the other hand, according to Leavy (2017), is "a top-down process" (p. 87), where an evaluation is needed for statistical description and generalisability centered on objectivity. Data quantification and numerical analysis are two processes that are used in some types of quantitative research.

## Data analysis

### Extract One: Series 10, Episode 1 'Parachute'

#### The Analysis:

Trying his utmost to disguise his fear and shun doing the jump, Geoffrey uses hyperbole to duck the embarrassment when saying: "*In fact, Wendy is the bravest one among you*". He violates the maxim of quantity by using the pronoun 'you' to indicate that he is not scared like the rest, while in fact he is. Later on, trying to show the others his overcoming any misgivings—with the same rich show of humbuggery he has accused the others of, he again uses hyperbole proclaiming "*Officially we didn't exist*". Actually, Geoffrey violates the maxim of quality because he tries to mislead and convince the others that he has had such experience(s) of aircraft transport, and thus having nothing to fear or to prove, which is fabricated and untrue. Doing so, he violates the maxim of manner as well, for not being perspicuous (clear and brief).



On the part of Geoffrey's constant rival, Frank, he makes a hyperbolic opinion of Geoffrey's story, as “*A load of nonsense about pervert operations*”. Frank does flout both maxims of quality and relation by implicating that Geoffrey is sexually strange or deviant; the former because he speaks without evidence and the latter because sexuality has nothing to do with parachuting.

#### **Extract Two: Series 10, Episode 2 'Holiday Share'**

##### **The Analysis:**

Lucy harshly chastises her friend, Anna, as comparing being with her to “*Airbnb-being in Hitler's bunker*” is evidently hyperbolic. Hence, Lucy flouts the maxim of quality because being 'pushy sometimes' is not adequate evidence to equating Anna with Hitler. Subsequently, Lucy portrays Toby, Anna's husband, as 'Siri' for doing whatever Anna wants. Hyperbole is there due to the comparison Lucy holds between Toby and the software programme 'Siri' which is totally controlled by (human) users. Again, implicating that Toby is quite timid or submissive to his wife, Lucy flouts the maxim of quality for saying something lacking adequate evidence.

After the sudden presence of Toby at the couple's room window, and suspecting that he could have heard their harsh criticism about him and his wife, Lucy shockingly repeats the same description of Anna's character (the resemblance to Hitler). Lee, also, mentions the Toby – Siri comparison once again. Additionally, Lucy flouts two conversational maxims: that of quality firstly—associating Anna and Toby to a 'witch' and a 'poodle' respectively, as well as that of manner—for the unnecessary prolixity or repetition that, in its turn, brings about and reinforces hyperbole: “*If I'd called her a stuck-up witch married to a neutered poodle?*”.

#### **Extract Three: Series 10, Episode 5 'Memory'**

##### **The Analysis:**

Lee says: “*I can't believe I can't remember... It's annoying, isn't it?*” to show his annoyance about being unable to remember an actor's name who appears in '*loads of things*'. Lee flouts the maxim of manner for not being brief, clear and orderly: '*He was in that other one that we watched with her that used to be coronation street...don't...what she called. It's annoying, isn't it?*'. This could wrongly generate an implicature of him having dementia, hence the hyperbole.

Lucy reacts: “*It's bloody infuriating*” in response to the confusion Lee makes while she tries to enjoy watching her favourite TV show. Lucy's indignant reaction contains a pragmatic hyperbole which might implicate that she is more concerned with the show than with her husband. Actually, Lucy flouts the maxim of quantity for not being informative enough by using '*It*' rather than stating whether it is Lee's current condition—his inability to remember—that is 'infuriating' or the confusing comments

he makes while gatecrashing her favourite programme. Also, she flouts the maxim of quality for her unreal depiction of the situation as 'bloody'.

Also, by saying: "*The point I'm trying to make is that as you've gotten older you've subsequently watched loads more TV programmes and read hundreds more books*", Lucy flouts the maxim of quantity for saying something she hastily refrains from: "*All right you've watched loads more TV programmes!*"; i.e., Lee is not expected to be interested in reading books. Thus, hyperbole is pragmatically present because of the exaggeration Lucy shows trying to alleviate Lee's worry (about his memory) – depicting him as hungry for (hundreds of) books, the thing which ironically seems to be untrue and results in Lucy's flouting the maxim of quality, too.

#### **Extract Four: Series 11, Episode 2 'Pup Quiz'**

##### **The Analysis:**

Describing Toby as a secret weapon and stating why they all are going to win the memorial competition, Lucy says: "*And that is why we're going to win with our secret weapon, Toby*". Such a description is, obviously, hyperbolic and thus flouting the maxim of quality—a man being a weapon is something virtual and untrue.

Then, Lucy flouts the maxim of quality once again when justifying to Anna: "*Toby is the secret weapon but you're more of an obvious weapon like a...*". Also, being reluctant and not informative enough, Lucy flouts the maxim of quantity when she hesitates to exemplify for the hyperbole of Anna being '*an obvious weapon*'. Meanwhile, Toby's reply to her '*Weapon of mass destruction*', is similarly hyperbolic and it does flout the maxim of quality for being untrue. Although Toby's reply or example is just a phrase, it could easily be rendered and fathomed as a complete illocution '*Anna is like a weapon of mass destruction*'. Toby wants to implicate a subtle and elusive criticism, i.e., how harmful and wicked Anna might be.

After the separation of the group which creates two rivalries: Team Lucy (Lucy & Toby) VS. Team Lee (Lee & Anna), Lucy threatens Toby when she realises that he intentionally gives wrong answers to let Anna win. Lucy asks him whether he can imagine what she is going to do if he does not help her beat Lee. Actually, Toby's reply "*I suppose it's optimistic to think: take pity on a man who's clearly traumatized - help him go into hiding from his wife and get him enrolled in the witness protection scheme*" is quite hyperbolic. He flouts both maxims of quality and manner. As for quality, getting enrolled in the witness protection scheme implicates that Anna, Toby's spouse, is a criminal, which is untrue. Whereas flouting the maxim of manner unfolds because Toby's locution here is not perspicuous, with its unnecessary verbosity.

### Extract Five: Series 11, Episode 4 'Old Acquaintance'

#### The Analysis:

Initially, Lucy sardonically justifies why she invites Karen for the second time—*“it's hard work mocking him by myself all these years”*. Hence, Lee appears to be such a subject of mocking and bullying that Lucy needs another person to help her do so. Hyperbole is there because Lucy flouts the maxim of quality by claiming that her mocking of her husband for a number of years is hard work—something virtual and untrue.

The conversation continues and the ladies keep on targeting Lee. Karen, showing old photos of Lee's, portrays him as *“an absolute pillock”* trying to imitate a famous artist in the appearance (the hair cut). Lucy, being more sarcastic, likens him to Steffi Graff, once a prominent tennis female player: *“He looks more like Steffi Graff”*. Thus, Lucy flouts the maxim of quality because the resemblance between Lee and Steffi is quite unsound and untrue. Actually, it is inferred as a means to drastically belittle and mock Lee (as a quasi-lady), hence the hyperbole.

At the end of the discourse, and after the embarrassment Lee undergoes, especially by Karen for the mention of their previous engagement and some other concomitant details, Karen realises Lee's uneasy situation and says: *“I am killing him”*. As such, Karen flouts the maxim of quality because she does not kill anyone at all; she just implicates how highly embarrassed Lee feels then. Thus, her locution is hyperbolic. In her turn, Lucy flouts the maxim of quality, too. She replies to Karen positively as if Lee were dying (because of the virtual killing) and Lucy were waiting for her role in the crime. Via her locution *“Yeah. Leave me with something to do”*, Lucy, doubtless, transfers the hyperbolic, absurd meaning of killing Lee by Karen to the bitter, annoying and awkward memories that Karen discloses during the meeting.

### Extract Six: Series 11, Episode 5 'War'

#### The Analysis:

Having been trying to dodge the question of her real age, Wendy violates the maxim of quality for maintaining something untrue: *“A lot of people as we get a little older aren't entirely honest about our age”*. Moreover, she violates the maxim of quantity for referring to 'a lot of people' and 'we' rather than talking about herself in particular. Obviously, her statement is hyperbolic because she excuses her lie as a sort of expected and rife between the old—a tenet that could be easily refuted by the allusion to the conversation participants Geoffrey and Frank.

Frank, in his comment on Geoffrey's mentioning of his first meeting with Wendy—trying to upset Geoffrey as usual, flouts the maxim of quality in his hyperbolic locution *‘And realized she'd be better off adding a couple of decades’*. This is because he begrudges Geoffrey and usually tries to vex him especially before Wendy. Frank



intentionally makes the hearer generate the implicature of Wendy's being with Geoffrey is so miserable that it expedites her ageing process. Wendy, however, does not usually complain about Geoffrey, and hence the flouting of the maxim of quality for there is no evidence to support Frank's claim.

Then, Lee appears as ironically mitigating Lucy's shock about her mother's real age and that two years at her age is not that bad. Lee, immediately though, uses the idiom: "*It's a drop in the ocean*", which is quite hyperbolic and upsets Wendy. Lee flouts the maxim of relation once, for provocatively and absurdly comparing Wendy's age to the (colossal) ocean—two years as a drop, as if Wendy were overwhelmingly geriatric (over the hill); the maxim of quality once again, because the comparison is not true—Wendy is 62 years old, not surpassing the age of either Geoffrey or Frank at least.

Eventually, Lucy ironically and nervously wonders: "*So, that time I spent a fortune flying you to Rome for your 60th birthday, you were actually 62?*". So, Lucy does flout the maxim of quality when referring to the expenditure of flying her Mum (for her virtual 60<sup>th</sup> birthday) to Rome as a '*fortune*' as well as that of quantity for the unnecessary details; that is where hyperbole appears.

#### **Extract Seven: Series 12, Episode 1 'Painting'**

##### **The Analysis:**

This conversation has a great deal of hyperbole especially those acts made by Lee who finds no better way to get rid of Wendy's painting than fabricating a story full of exaggeration.

Justifying why he has moved the painting to Mollie's room, Lee says: "*She said she'd never had a piece of artwork connect with her before on such a visceral level. Didn't she, Lucy?*". Here, not only does Lee violate the maxim of quality for not being true, he also violates the maxim of manner because of the unnecessary verbosity which he resorts to trying to convince Wendy and Geoffrey why the painting is not in its 'pride of place'. Hence, hyperbole is quite evident and that is what Lucy immediately shows after the confirmation Lee seeks for by his tag question "*Didn't she, Lucy?*".

By her reply "*Yes. It was like she was suddenly 20 years older*", Lucy violates the maxim of quality for affirming Lee's lie. Actually, Mollie is just 10 years old and her indirect speech (fabricated by Lee) is much bigger than her age—suitable to a 30-year-old person.

"*And she looked at us and she asked, well, she begged, she said, "Mummy, Daddy, can I have Grandad Frank in my room with me?"*", Lee, keeping on his virtual tale, states how so much Mollie gets attracted to the portrait that she asks and begs to have it in her room. Apart from violating the maxim of quality, Lee also violates the maxim of manner because of the redundancy and repetition of the pronoun *she* and the verbs 'asked, begged, and said'. Doubtless, this is quite hyperbolic.

Additionally, Lee portrays Mollie as having the highest degree of sorrow and devastation following the departure of Frank: "*We've all been devastated by the loss of Dad, but I think Mollie was hit the hardest*". Likewise, Lee violates the maxim of quality for this fake allegation. The hyperbole is so evident that Lucy comments on Lee's illocution saying: '*For now*' which implicates that she is going to hit him much more hard for this fake, humiliating situation he puts them all in.

Moreover, Lee says: "*Although it did take me many, many years to get over the loss of my own grandfather*" generates the implicature that getting back the portrait from Mollie's room to its first place should take a long period of time. Lee refers to himself as having undergone the same situation and that only could he restore his usual condition after many, many years of losing his grandfather. So, until Mollie is ready—after getting over the loss of her grandfather, the portrait will not be put in its pride of place. Lee does violate the maxim of quality for being untrue and also violates the maxim of quantity for providing unnecessary information—a violation that similarly includes the maxim of manner for the excessive verbosity. As such, hyperbole here is two-fold.

#### **Extract Eight: Series 12, Episode 2 'Text'**

##### **The Analysis:**

The phrase "the all-clear" is used to indicate the culmination of some dangerous or difficult situation. As such, Lee uses the phrase wryly here in an allusion to Anna who has come and left (harmlessly). Hence, Lee does flout the maxim of quality for this untrue association between Anna and danger. In addition, he flouts the maxim of relation for not being specific (to the point). Actually, one can assure that hyperbole is present via Lucy's reply "*I've been to Morrisons, not to an STD clinic. What are you talking about?*". It also means that Lucy does not infer properly what Lee has implicated.

Talking about the message sent mistakenly to Anna (targeting Anna) by Lee, Lucy shows that [*It says, "You were right, Lucy, Anna is rude and snobby, and a little..."*]. Lucy, not completing Lee's description, suspends the maxim of quantity by refusing to utter a taboo about her friend Anna. Even when she asks Lee about the reason why he has written it, she says: "*Why did you write that last word?*". Actually, Lee's impression and words about Anna indicates hyperbole on the basis that his description of her is more vulgar than that of Lucy; the former contains an obscene word as a substitute for the less offensive 'curt' found in the latter.

#### **Extract Nine: Series 12, Episode 6 'Tent'**

##### **The Analysis:**

Tantalised by Toby, Anna asks about the facilities that should be available for their (virtual) glamping (which is more comfortable and luxurious than traditional camping).

Lee sarcastically comments: “*You mean the, uh, the hot yoga and the badminton courts?*”. Lee's remark indicates a negative answer and invites Anna to acquiesce to his humble arrangements. Lee flouts the maxim of quantity because instead of directly and specifically answering the question, he ironically makes that rhetorical question and thus providing no information. He also flouts the maxim of relation because his reply is not to the point. Hence, Lee's locution indicates hyperbole and implicates how he considers Anna as pompous and patronising.

Following that, seeing that the place lacking facilities and comforts, Anna asks Toby about 'glamping' that he has promised. Lee, a constant opponent to Anna, tries to justify on behalf of Toby, claiming “*I've been glamping. Full of glunts*”. Ironically, Lee is known to be spending most of his time at home; scarcely does he leave it for such a thing as glamping. So, he violates the maxim of quality for saying something untrue. His utterance has hyperbole so that he might portray 'glamping' as something unpalatable and abhorrent—full of glunts, which also implicates that anyone who likes glamping should be a glunt (someone who acts like a douchebag); it is a rude hint about Anna's character.

Having seen a bone, the group are quite nervous and scared. Anna proves the most terrified one. As Lee and Geoffrey suggest that it is just an animal bone like deer, Anna anxiously comments: “*Oh, yeah, maybe it was flying overhead on Christmas Eve and had a heart attack*”. Anna, nervous and bewildered, infringes the maxim of quality for proposing a deer flying. Furthermore, she infringes the maxim of manner in light of the redundancy of her previous reply: “*There are no deer in this forest. Has anyone seen a deer? I haven't seen a deer*”. Her reaction is hyperbolic and implicates that she is too uptight a person who is apt to easily panic and to dramatise things.

Meanwhile, Wendy, in her provoking remark about the rather long absence of Toby, holds the bone and says: “*Or maybe a little part of him is here*”. She flouts the maxim of quality for attributing the bone to the body of Toby who has gone to his car to bring some food. Her comment is hyperbolic and implicates her perception of Anna's characteristic restlessness .

Trying to reassure Anna, Lee says that she is safe and there is nothing to be afraid of. However, Anna replies: “*Oh, yes, perfectly safe behind this unreachable monster-proof sheet of thin nylon*”. Anna again, due to her nervousness, does infringe the maxim of quality following the contradictory, absurd description of the tent as unreachable, monster-proof and of thin nylon. Also, she infringes the maxim of manner due to the unnecessary verbosity. Hence, hyperbole unfolds.

## Extract Ten: New Year 2020 Special 'Resolutions'

### The Analysis:

In (1), Geoffrey, while contending with Lee, says: “*Well, it's so hard to tell nowadays*”. He defends himself by claiming that although he has heard of Taylor Swift,

it is so hard nowadays to discern whether one is male or female; that is why Geoffrey has mistaken 'her' for 'him'. On the one hand, Geoffrey could have actually heard of the singer Taylor Swift but he does not know her gender. As such, he flouts the maxim of quality because his claim is deprived of adequate evidence. On the other hand, supposing Lee's accusation is right, Geoffrey, then, violates the maxim of quality by the intentional misleading. Hyperbole is present, anyhow.

Actually, the latter supposition might be seconded by Geoffrey's decline to name a Taylor Swift's song. His reply to Lee "*I don't need to be cross-examined by you to prove my integrity!*" is either a means to dodge the question because he does not know the singer or her songs, which indicates that he violates the maxim of quantity; or he knows but refuses to name a song (refuses to co-operate) and thus opting out of the maxims of quantity and relation; integrity has nothing to do with (and cannot be proved or refuted by) naming a song or a singer. Put another way, integrity is a critical, profound principle and to have someone cross-examined for their integrity (as in a trial) is much far away from the guessing game the group play. Hence, hyperbole is present.

In (2), during the game, Anna—sceptical and uptight as usual—asks why Toby should choose Cruella de Vil for her. Lee intrudes and comments: "*Perhaps he couldn't spell Goebbels*". Lee, here, flouts the maxim of quality for claiming something lacking evidence; the maxim of relation because neither Anna (the real person) nor Cruella de Vil (a movie virtual heroine) is relevant to the propaganda minister in Nazi Germany, Goebbels. The only justification suitable to this linking is that Lee implicates Anna has a persona of that historical, ruthless character (well-known for executing the Jewish). Hence, hyperbole occurs.

Inferring that Toby gives a bad impression about her by associating her with Cruella de Vil, Anna again wonders if Toby hints that she is capable of killing dogs to use their skin as raiment. While Toby negates this bid, Lee again comments: "*Yeah, he knows you wouldn't bother killing them first*". By this snide remark, Lee flouts the maxim of quality for being untrue. It is just another hyperbole to implicate how callous Anna is.

When it comes to the character Anna has chosen for Toby, Anna's dark side drastically surges. She addresses Toby as follows: "*If I was trying to encapsulate your personality, I'd have left the paper blank*". Wendy, high-spirited, instantly and vulgarly replies: "*Oh, what a bitch!*". Being intoxicated, Wendy infringes the maxim of quality for this hyperbolic, offensive, and untrue remark which leaves all speechless.

In (3), Lucy expresses her annoyance about Lee's irritating, usual habits and describes choosing the worst one: "*It's like being asked to choose my least favourite child*". She flouts the maxim of quality because having a child as the least favourite one is virtual and not real. She also flouts the maxim of manner for not being brief and clear. Hence, her locution is hyperbolic.



Quite surprisingly though, in an unexpected reaction to Lucy's last comparison, the old woman directly names Charlie (as Lucy's least favourite kid). Because of intoxication, Wendy's locution infringes the maxim of quality for not being true or provable; the maxim of quantity for not being informative. Still, the drunk grandmother hastily refrains: "*You take a chill pill - it was just a joke*".

Frank, however, usually slapdash and naive, comments on Wendy's flat joke, saying: "*Yeah, she hates them all*". He hyperbolically does infringe both maxims of quality—for the lack of evidence; of quantity for not stating those who are hated.

In (4), Toby says: "*We've all been given resolutions and we've all accepted them*". Using the inclusive 'we', Toby flouts the maxim of quantity because neither he nor his wife, Anna, has given resolutions apart from accepting them. He flouts the maxim of quality as well because not all the attendants accept their resolutions (for the new year) genuinely and practically. Seemingly, Toby's hyperbolic locution triggers the implicature that he is afraid of his uptight wife's discourteous reaction when her turn comes (to confess and accept her shortcomings and accordingly to make resolutions), given that he is the one who has suggested this kind of game as a means to have fun that night.

In (5), the bitterest contention between Geoffrey and Frank takes place. Geoffrey, because of Frank's constant lewd remarks about Wendy, tries to condescend Frank—who appears to be feckless and lacking in the cognitive potentials and linguistic competence the others possess. So, when Frank says that he is not obliged to abide by his resolutions because the others do not, he refers to Geoffrey saying: "*And that pompous get isn't making no effort at all*". Provoked, Geoffrey reacts: "*No need to get fractious with me, you stupid little man*". Quite eccentrically, Frank replies to Geoffrey: "*You want to get fractures? I'll give you fractures*". As such, Frank does infringe the maxim of relation—basically because of his instinctive cognitive or linguistic impairment—as he misunderstands Geoffrey or misses the point of his locution. Actually, Frank's hyperbolic reaction is followed by another one said by Geoffrey who mockingly corrects Frank about the word "*Fractious! With an I-O-U*" and carries on: "*... that thing you use as payment at the working men's club*". Geoffrey, explaining the meaning of 'fractious', flouts both the maxim of quality (because of his incredible explanation); the maxim of relation for the irrelevance between the word and his mocking explanation. As such, the latter reinforces the implicature of Frank being disadvantaged and suffering a sort of cognitive impairment.

## The Findings and Discussion

### Cooperative Maxims Non-observance

The researcher aims to figure out the cooperative maxims that ignored or not observed most owing to the existence of hyperbole throughout the discourse. Here are the findings that demonstrate the non-fulfilment of those cooperative maxims:



What Table 1 and Figure 1 (pp. 20, 21) demonstrate is that the maxim of quality is mostly not observed when hyperbolic utterances are given by the participants. More than the total percentage of the other maxims, the maxim of quality appears to be ignored 38 times. Thus, the non-observance of quality maxim achieves a percent of 54% whereby speakers neglect truthfulness and claim what is deprived of adequate evidence. The maxim of quantity is not fulfilled 14 times with a percent of 20% due to either being more informative than required or not being informative at all. The non-fulfilment of the maxim of relation occurs eight times to achieve a percent of 11% which indicates the speaker's missing of the point or not being specific. As far as the maxim of manner is concerned, the non-observance has a ten-time-frequency with a percentage of 14% which is higher than that of the maxim of relation. This happens as a consequence of speakers choosing not to be perspicuous on account of vagueness, ambiguity, and pointless verbosity. To sum up, when making hyperbolic utterances, speakers usually overlook or do not observe the maxim of quality the most. Conversely, the least non-observed maxim is that of relation.

### Forms of Cooperative Maxims Non-observance

The researcher also endeavours to shed light on how non-observance of the cooperative maxims takes place; what forms can be set off to more identify the process.

As shown in Table 2 and Figure 2 (pp. 20, 21), flouting cooperative maxims is the most frequent form or way of their non-observance. It does occur 28 times with a percent reaching approximately 61%. By flouting some maxim(s), speakers are not apt to lie or mislead; they simply try to trigger an inference in the mind of the hearers surpassing the proposition of their utterance—extra, implicit meaning hidden behind the lexical one, viz., the so-called implicature. When it comes to violating cooperative maxims, this sort of non-observance appears 11 times with a percent of 24% in which case speakers deliberately try to mislead the hearers by means of lying, for example. Actually, this is why researcher should differentiate between flouting and violating cooperative maxims. Moreover, infringing cooperative maxims does happen five times with a percent of 11%. Intoxication, nervousness, and lacking linguistic competence are mostly what bring about this category of non-fulfilment. Last but not least, both opting out of and suspending some cooperative maxim(s) happen only once, achieving a percent of nearly 2% for each. Acquainted is that opting out of cooperative maxims occurs due to the speaker's reluctance or refusal to be cooperative enough, in which case (s)he prefers not to divulge or show some piece of information. Suspending cooperative maxims, in its turn, is said to be mainly culture-specific or a manifestation of euphemism. It should be taken into account that by making one and the same utterance, speakers might not observe or fulfil more than one maxim simultaneously. Throughout the analysis, the researcher has detected a number of locutions that bring about non-observance of cooperative maxims incarnated by two or even three of those five forms depended in the study, viz., flouting, violating, infringing, opting out, and suspending.

## Conclusions

1. Hyperbole occurs in British sitcoms by means of a number of strategies on top of which are pragmatic strategies like cooperative maxims non-observance.
2. The non-observance of cooperative maxims does not occur in the same proportion or equally. It has been proved that the maxim of quality is mainly not observed when speakers make hyperbolic utterances; the maxim of quantity comes second in descending order; the maxim of manner third; and that of relation last with the least rate of non-fulfilment.
3. A probable, subjective difference is expected in identifying a way or form of cooperative maxims non-observance rather than another inasmuch as the matter is related to the hidden intention of the speaker.

## References

- Abraham, M. H., & Harpham, G. (2012). *A glossary of literary terms*. Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Bolinger. (1972). *Degree words*. Mouton.
- Cano Mora, L. (2006). *'How to make a mountain out of a molehill': A corpus based pragmatic and conversational analysis study of hyperbole in interaction*. University of Valencia Press.
- Claridge, C. (2011). *Hyperbole in English: A corpus-based study of exaggeration*. Cambridge University Press.
- Cutting, J. (2002). *Pragmatics and discourse*. Routledge.
- Dascal, M., & Gross, A. G. (1999). The marriage of pragmatics and rhetoric. *Philosophy & rhetoric*, 32(2), 107-130.
- Dawson, C. (2009). Introduction to research methods. A practical guide
- Gibble, P. E. (2005). Eighteenth-century redware folk terms and vessel forms: a survey of utilitarian wares from southeastern Pennsylvania. *Historical Archaeology*, 39(2), 33-62.
- Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In *Speech acts* (pp. 41-58). Brill.
- Griffiths, P. (2006). *An introduction to English semantics and pragmatics*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Kreuz, R. J., & Roberts, R. M. (1993). The empirical study of figurative language in literature. *Poetics*, 22(1-2), 151-169.
- Leavy, P. (2017). *Research design: Quantitative, qualitative, mixed method, arts-based, and community-based participatory research approaches*. The Guilford Press.
- Leech, G. (1983). *Principles of pragmatics*. Longman.
- Mackey, A., & Gass, S.M. (2005). *Second language and research: Methodology and design*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- McCarthy, M., & Carter, R. (2004). 'There's millions of them': Hyperbole

- in everyday conversation. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 36(2), 149-184.
- Norrick, N. (2004). Hyperbole, extreme case formulation. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 36(9), 1727-1739.
- Spitzbardt, H. (1963). Overstatement and understatement in British and American English. *Philologica Pragensia*, 6(45), 277-286.
- Thomas, J. (1995). *Meaning in interaction: An introduction to Pragmatics*. Routledge.

### Television Series Episodes

- Mack, L. (Writer), Peak, D. (Writer), & Wood, N. (Director). (2019, April 15). Parachute (Season 10, Episode 1) [TV series episode]. In R. Allen-Turner, L. Mack, J. Thoday, & R. Aslett (Executive Producers), *Not going out*. Avalon Television.
- Mack, L. (Writer), Peak, D. (Writer), & Wood, N. (Director). (2019, April 22). Holiday share (Season 10, Episode 2) [TV series episode]. In R. Allen-Turner, L. Mack, J. Thoday, & R. Aslett (Executive Producers), *Not going out*. Avalon Television.
- Mack, L. (Writer), Peak, D. (Writer), & Wood, N. (Director). (2019, May 13). Memory (Season 10, Episode 5) [TV series episode]. In R. Allen-Turner, L. Mack, J. Thoday, & R. Aslett (Executive Producers), *Not going out*. Avalon Television.
- Mack, L. (Writer), Peak, D. (Writer), & Wood, N. (Director). (2020, December 30). Resolutions (Special) [TV series episode]. In R. Allen-Turner, L. Mack, J. Thoday, & R. Aslett (Executive Producers), *Not going out*. Avalon Television.
- Mack, L. (Writer), Morgan, S. (Writer), & Wood, N. (Director). (2021, January 15). Pub quiz (Season 11, Episode 2) [TV series episode]. In R. Allen-Turner, L. Mack, J. Thoday, & R. Aslett (Executive Producers), *Not going out*. Avalon Television.
- Mack, L. (Writer), Peak, D. (Writer), & Wood, N. (Director). (2021, January 29). Old acquaintance (Season 11, Episode 4) [TV series episode]. In R. Allen-Turner, L. Mack, J. Thoday, & R. Aslett (Executive Producers), *Not going out*. Avalon Television.
- Mack, L. (Writer), Peak, D. (Writer), & Wood, N. (Director). (2021, February 5). War (Season 11, Episode 5) [TV series episode]. In R. Allen-Turner, L. Mack, J. Thoday, & R. Aslett (Executive Producers), *Not going out*. Avalon Television.
- Mack, L. (Writer), Peak, D. (Writer), & Wood, N. (Director). (2022, March 25). Painting (Season 12, Episode 1) [TV series episode]. In R. Allen-Turner, L. Mack, J. Thoday, & R. Aslett (Executive Producers), *Not going out*. Avalon Television.
- Mack, L. (Writer), Peak, D. (Writer), & Wood, N. (Director). (2022, April 1). Text (Season 12, Episode 2) [TV series episode]. In R.

Allen-Turner, L. Mack, J. Thoday, & R. Aslett (Executive Producers),  
*Not going out*. Avalon Television.  
 Mack, L. (Writer), Peak, D. (Writer), & Wood, N. (Director). (2022,  
 April 29). Tent (Season 12, Episode 6) [TV series episode]. In R.  
 Allen-Turner, L. Mack, J. Thoday, & R. Aslett (Executive Producers),  
*Not going out*. Avalon Television.  
 Somerset entertainment. (2022, May 21). *Not going out* [Video]. You Tube.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-aCUhy7a0-U&list=PLwwOOEuX0fMJ9NASYTVRRReDkGSAYSloEG>

### الخلاصة

يتضمن هذا البحث محاولة لإظهار العلاقة التداولية بين ظاهرة المبالغة وعدم مراعاة مبدأ (Grice 1975) التعاوني. يمكن تعريف المبالغة تداولياً على أنها محاولة متعمدة من قبل المتحدث لتقديم معنى عثي أو مبالغ فيه يتعدى حدود المعنى الحرفي لكلماته ويتناقض بشكل واضح جداً مع السياق الفعلي. في الواقع ، تنتشر تعابير المبالغة في محادثات اللغة الإنجليزية اليومية ومن السمات المعتادة للحديث غير الرسمي أن المتحدثين يبالغون في بعض كلامهم مما يجعله يبدو عثياً أو مستحيلاً على أرض الواقع. ومع ذلك، رأى Grice أنه من الأهمية بمكان أن يسترشد المتحدثون ببعض المبادئ بقدر ما يكون الاتصال ناجحاً وهادفاً وملبياً لاحتياجاتهم. وبالنظر إلى أن الناس عادة ما يتحاورون ويتبادلون الأفكار دون التقيد بمثل هذه المبادئ التعاونية ، فإن هذه المبادئ يمكن أن يتم إهمالها (عدم ملاحظتها) من قبل المتحدثين عن قصد أو عن غير قصد. علاوة على ذلك ، فإن أشكال أو طرق عدم مراعاة مبادئ Grice تتجاوز المصطلحات الشائعة المستخدمة ترادفاً في الاستهزاء والانتهاك. في الواقع ، هناك خمسة أشكال من عدم مراعاة أو تحقيق هذه المبادئ. يُعنى هذا البحث ، إذن ، بتسليط الضوء على كل شكل من أشكال عدم المراعاة قد ينتج بسبب ظاهرة المبالغة مما يؤدي إلى وجود إشارات ضمنية أو معنى خفي إضافي؛ ومن ثم توضيح الفرق بين هذه الاشكال ، لا سيما بين الاستهزاء والانتهاك ، حيث يتم خطأ استخدام احدهما كبديل أو مرادف للآخر. يجدر الذكر ان البيانات المختارة للتحليل مأخوذة من عشر حلقات لواحد من أعظم العروض وأكثرها شعبية في بريطانيا، وهو المسلسل الهزلي Not Going Out والذي بدأ عرض أول مواسمه عام (2006). الحلقات هي ثلاثة من كل موسم من المواسم (2019 ، 2021 ، 2022) بالإضافة إلى الحلقة "الخاصة" بعام 2020.

**Table 1**

*Frequencies and Percentages of Cooperative Maxims Non-observance*

The Item		f	%
Cooperative Maxims	Quality	38	54.2
	Quantity	14	20
	Relation	8	11.4
	Manner	10	14.2

	Total	70	100
--	-------	----	-----

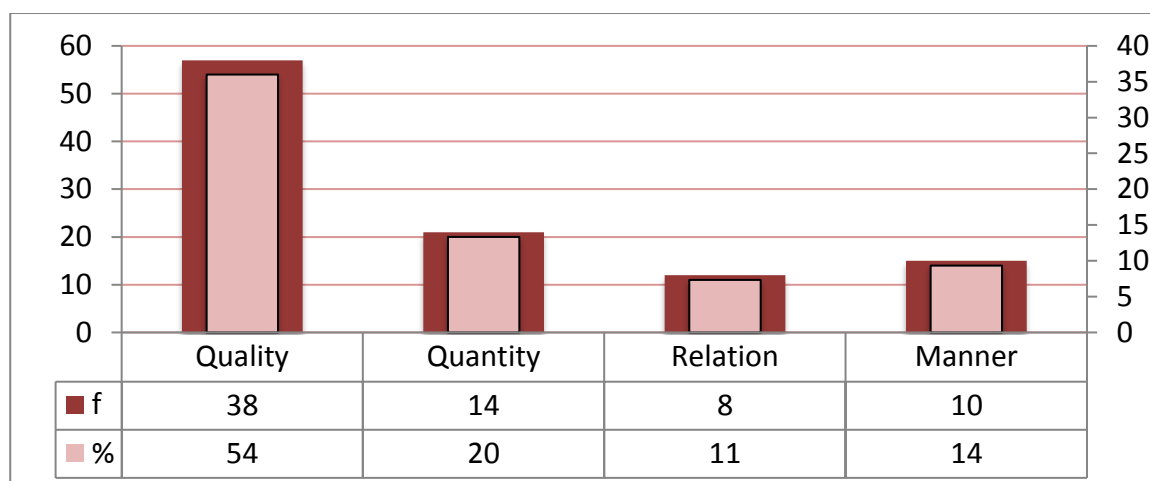
**Table 2**

*Frequencies and Percentages of Cooperative Maxims Non-observance Forms*

The Item		<i>f</i>	%
Cooperative Maxims Non-observance Forms	Flouting	28	60.8
	Violating	11	24
	Infringing	5	10.8
	Opting out	1	2.1
	Suspending	1	2.1
	Total	46	100

**Figure 1**

*Frequencies and Percentages of Cooperative Maxims Non-observance*





**Figure 2**

*Frequencies and Percentages of Cooperative Maxims Non-observance Forms*

