



Flouting the Maxim of Quality in American Boy Marcello Hernandez's Stand-Up Comedy Video: A Pragmatic Analysis

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-04-07 Revised: 2026-05-19 Accepted: 2026-09-23 Keywords: <i>pragmatics; flouting; maxim; quality; humor</i> DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i2.11875 Corresponding Author: I Putu Raditha Arta Wiguna Iputuradithaartawiguna@gmail.com Department of English Literature, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Universitas of Mahasarakswati Denpasar	<i>Humorous discourse often conveys meanings that differ from the literal interpretation of an utterance, making the flouting of conversational maxims a significant topic in pragmatic studies. However, previous studies have generally examined multiple conversational maxims, while focused analysis of the flouting of the maxim of quality in stand-up comedy, particularly through context-of-situation analysis, remains limited. This study investigates how the flouting of the maxim of quality is employed in American Boy: Marcello Hernandez's stand-up comedy performance and explains how humorous meanings are constructed through the context of situation. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed by using Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle as the primary analytical framework and Halliday and Hasan's (1989) theory of context of situation as the supporting framework. The data consisted of 16 utterances identified as instances of flouting the maxim of quality, which were collected through observation and documentation techniques. The findings indicate that the comedian realizes the flouting of the maxim of quality through hyperbole, metaphor, and irony, with hyperbole accounting for 12 utterances (75%), while metaphor and irony each account for two utterances (12.5%). Rather than functioning merely as humorous expressions, these mechanisms encourage interpretation beyond the literal meaning while reflecting Marcello's childhood and family experiences. The analysis also shows that the interpretation of conversational implicatures is closely related to the interaction of field, tenor, and mode, which provides the contextual basis for understanding the</i>

intended humor. Overall, the findings suggest that humorous meaning in stand-up comedy emerges from the interaction of linguistic choices, situational context, and personal experience, while the integration of Grice's Cooperative Principle with Halliday and Hasan's context of situation provides a contextual perspective for analyzing quality-maxim flouting.

1. Introduction

In communication, speakers may convey meanings that extend beyond the literal interpretation of their utterances. Understanding such meanings requires attention to both linguistic expressions and the context in which they are produced. This relationship between meaning, context, and implied meaning is central to pragmatics, particularly in the study of conversational implicature (Yule, 1996)

A central concept in pragmatics is Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle, which proposes that successful communication is achieved when speakers and hearers cooperate throughout a conversation. To explain this cooperation, Grice introduced four conversational maxims: quantity, quality, relation, and manner. In actual communication, however, speakers do not always observe these maxims. They may intentionally flout one or more of them to communicate meanings indirectly, expecting hearers to infer the intended message through conversational implicature. Among the four maxims, the maxim of quality is particularly relevant to this study because it requires speakers to avoid saying what they believe to be false and to provide information for which they have adequate evidence. When this maxim is deliberately flouted, speakers may produce utterances that appear false, exaggerated, ironic, or otherwise non-literal, while allowing hearers to infer meanings beyond the literal expression. Such departures from the maxim are particularly relevant in humorous discourse, where non-literal expressions can contribute to the construction of implied meanings.

The interpretation of conversational implicature is closely related to the context in which an utterance occurs. Halliday and Hasan (1989) explain that meaning is shaped by the context of situation, which consists of three interrelated components: field, referring to the activity or topic being discussed; tenor, referring to the social relationship between the participants; and mode, referring to the role and channel of language in communication. These three contextual dimensions provide a basis for interpreting utterances whose literal meanings may appear false, exaggerated, or otherwise non-literal. Therefore, in this study, Grice's Cooperative Principle is used to identify the flouting of the maxim of quality, while Halliday and Hasan's context of situation is used to examine how field, tenor, and mode support the interpretation of the resulting conversational implicatures.

Stand-up comedy is a form of spoken performance in which comedians use humor to present stories, observations, and personal experiences to an audience.

The performance commonly involves the use of language to create humorous effects through exaggeration, irony, metaphor, and other non-literal expressions. Because stand-up comedy is delivered as a performance to an audience, the meaning of an utterance may depend not only on its literal form but also on the context of the performance and the relationship between the comedian and the audience. Therefore, stand-up comedy provides a relevant context for examining the flouting of the maxim of quality and the conversational implicatures that arise from non-literal expressions.

Previous studies on maxim flouting can be grouped into several related themes. First, a number of studies have examined the flouting of all four conversational maxims in audiovisual media. Lasiana and Mubarak (2020), Ardianti et al. (2022), and Napitupulu et al. (2025), for example, identified the use of different types of maxim flouting in *Ruby Sparks*, *Onward*, and *The Little Mermaid*, respectively. These studies demonstrate that speakers or characters may flout conversational maxims to communicate meanings beyond literal expressions, with the interpretation of such utterances depending on the surrounding conversational context. This body of research establishes the importance of examining maxim flouting as a pragmatic strategy, but it generally treats the four maxims together rather than focusing on one maxim in depth.

Second, other studies have highlighted the relationship between maxim flouting, humor, and other communicative purposes. Hadzik et al. (2025) found that flouting the conversational maxims contributed to humor in *The Ellen DeGeneres Talk Show*, while Yulia Sari and Satwika (2025) showed that sarcasm and hyperbole in *BoJack Horseman* supported both humorous effects and the representation of the protagonist's psychological condition. Studies have also shown that maxim flouting may serve purposes beyond humor. Luthfiah and Rosalinah (2025) emphasized the role of conversational implicature and context in *Purple Hearts*, while Dayabhi and Candra (2025) demonstrated that flouting the maxim of relevance in *Inside Out 2* contributed to emotional expression and character development. Taken together, these studies indicate that maxim flouting can perform diverse communicative functions and that contextual interpretation is important for understanding the meanings conveyed through non-literal utterances.

Despite these contributions, several aspects remain underexplored. First, many previous studies examine all four conversational maxims together, which leaves the pragmatic realization of the maxim of quality less fully examined as an individual phenomenon. Second, although stand-up comedy has begun to receive attention in pragmatic research, focused analysis of the flouting of the maxim of quality in stand-up performance remains limited. Third, relatively few studies have combined Grice's Cooperative Principle with Halliday and Hasan's context of situation to explain how field, tenor, and mode contribute to the interpretation of flouted utterances. These gaps indicate the need for an analysis that considers both

the pragmatic departure from the maxim of quality and the situational context through which its implied meaning is understood.

This study addresses these gaps by examining the flouting of the maxim of quality in *American Boy: Marcello Hernandez's* stand-up comedy performance, with particular attention to how non-literal expressions generate humorous meanings. Grice's Cooperative Principle is used as the primary framework to identify the flouting of the maxim of quality, while Halliday and Hasan's context of situation is employed to examine how field, tenor, and mode support the interpretation of conversational implicatures. Rather than treating stand-up comedy simply as a different research object, this study focuses on the relationship between linguistic choices, situational context, and implied meaning in humorous discourse. The novelty of the study therefore lies primarily in the integration of these two theoretical perspectives to provide a contextual interpretation of quality-maxim flouting.

Based on these gaps, this study seeks to answer the following research question: How is the flouting of the maxim of quality employed in *American Boy: Marcello Hernandez's* stand-up comedy performance to construct humorous meaning? Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the realization of the flouting of the maxim of quality and explain how humorous meanings are constructed through conversational implicature by considering Halliday and Hasan's context of situation.

2. Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design to investigate the flouting of the maxim of quality in *American Boy: Marcello Hernandez's* stand-up comedy performance. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study focused on interpreting the implied meanings conveyed through the comedian's utterances rather than measuring linguistic phenomena quantitatively. The analysis was grounded in Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle, particularly the concept of flouting the maxim of quality, and was complemented by Halliday and Hasan's (1989) theory of context of situation. Through the concepts of field, tenor, and mode, the study examined how situational context supported the interpretation of conversational implicatures and contributed to the construction of humorous meaning.

The data source of this study was *American Boy*, a stand-up comedy performance by Marcello Hernandez released in 2025 and available on Netflix. The performance has a total duration of approximately 1 hour and 4 minutes. The data consisted of utterances identified as instances of flouting the maxim of quality throughout the performance. Since this study focused exclusively on the maxim of quality, utterances representing the maxims of quantity, relation, and manner were excluded from the analysis. The researcher served as the primary research instrument by observing, collecting, selecting, classifying, and interpreting the data. The analysis was supported by the video recording, a manually prepared transcript,

and a data classification sheet developed based on Grice's (1975) concept of flouting the maxim of quality and Halliday and Hasan's (1989) context of situation, including field, tenor, and mode.

The data were collected through observation and documentation techniques. The researcher repeatedly watched the performance to identify utterances that potentially flouted the maxim of quality and manually transcribed the relevant utterances. The transcript was then compared with the original video to ensure accuracy. An utterance was selected as data when it deliberately departed from the expectation of providing truthful and adequately supported information, while the departure was sufficiently recognizable for the audience to infer a meaning beyond the literal interpretation. In this study, non-literal expressions such as hyperbole, metaphor, and irony were treated as mechanisms of quality-maxim flouting when their literal meanings were incompatible with the context and prompted the audience to infer the comedian's intended meaning. Utterances that did not clearly demonstrate such a departure were excluded from the analysis.

For the classification of the identified utterances, three linguistic mechanisms were distinguished deductively based on their established characteristics as forms of non-literal expression: hyperbole, metaphor, and irony. Hyperbole was identified when an utterance deliberately presented an exaggerated or minimized degree of a situation beyond what could reasonably be interpreted literally. Metaphor was identified when an utterance described one entity or experience through a figurative comparison with another entity that could not be understood literally. Irony was identified when the expressed statement deliberately contrasted with an established expectation or the speaker's apparent intended meaning. These criteria were used to distinguish the mechanisms from one another while maintaining the primary focus on their function as instances of flouting the maxim of quality.

After identifying and classifying all instances of flouting the maxim of quality, the researcher identified 16 utterances as the research data. Four representative utterances were then selected for detailed qualitative analysis. The selection was based on their ability to clearly illustrate the mechanisms identified in the data and to provide sufficient contextual information for the analysis of field, tenor, and mode. The four selected utterances were also chosen to represent the different mechanisms found in the data, namely hyperbole, metaphor, and irony. This selection allowed the study to provide an in-depth interpretation of representative cases while presenting the overall distribution of the identified mechanisms through the data classification table.

The data were analyzed through several stages. First, the researcher classified the identified utterances based on the mechanisms used to flout the maxim of quality, namely hyperbole, metaphor, and irony. Second, each selected utterance was examined according to Halliday and Hasan's (1989) context of situation, consisting of field, tenor, and mode. Field was analyzed by identifying the activity or topic

being discussed, tenor by examining the relationship between the comedian and the audience or the participants represented in the story, and mode by considering the role and channel of language in the stand-up performance. Third, the researcher interpreted the conversational implicature of each utterance by considering the relationship between the apparent departure from literal truth and the situational context. Finally, the researcher explained how the implied meaning contributed to the humorous effect of the performance.

3. Result

The analysis identified 16 utterances that flouted the maxim of quality in *American Boy: Marcello Hernandez's* stand-up comedy performance. These utterances were classified according to the linguistic mechanisms through which the maxim of quality was flouted, namely hyperbole, metaphor, and irony. Hyperbole was the most frequently identified mechanism, accounting for 12 utterances (75%), while metaphor and irony each occurred in 2 utterances (12.5%). These frequencies and percentages are presented as descriptive summaries of the identified dataset rather than as inferential statistical results. The distribution of the identified mechanisms is presented in the following table.

Table 1. Distribution of Flouting the Maxim of Quality Based on Mechanism

No.	Mechanism	Frequency	Percentage
1	Hyperbole	12	75%
2	Metaphor	2	12.5%
3	Irony	2	12.5%
Total		16	100%

The distribution shows a strong dominance of hyperbole, which accounts for 75% of the identified utterances. This finding suggests that exaggeration is the comedian's primary mechanism for creating non-literal humorous meanings in the performance. By presenting statements that are deliberately more extreme than their literal interpretation, hyperbole creates a recognizable departure from factual meaning that supports the interpretation of the intended humorous message. Metaphor and irony occurred less frequently, but they also contributed to the construction of non-literal meanings in the performance.

Table 2. Classification of Flouting the Maxim of Quality

No.	Contextual Utterance	Maxim	Mechanism
1	"Eat the cockroach, bro, please I'm like what he's like eat it. Just eat it right now. Nothing's gonna happen to you. Just eat it I've done it before just eat the cockroach"	Quality	Hyperbole

2	"I Said mommy I have ADD and she goes, ah you want ADD I can give you ADD right now and in that moment, I decided to focus. And it's sad because I wanted the pills."	Quality	Hyperbole
3	"Nothing that you think is yours is yours. Everything is mine. That's my TV. That's my Xbox. That's my bed. That's my sheets. That's my underwear. That's my clothes. The door is mine. The air is mine. Don't touch the air. "	Quality	Hyperbole
4	"Feels like a family party in this place right now. That's how our family parties were though, you have to dance. You have to dance or you have to find a new family, that's the rule. I had to dance, ever since I was a kid I had to dance."	Quality	Hyperbole
5	"How many girls are gonna be there? There can be no guys. There can only be girls the party tonight is gonna be 700 girls and us four. That's how we like to party."	Quality	Hyperbole
6	"Cuz in Miami you dance and You have to dance in Miami. The music is making you dance. You don't have a choice in the matter in Miami. It doesn't matter what status you are socially."	Quality	Hyperbole
7	"We don't do sad. We don't do depression. It's hard for us to do depression. Me and my sister, we tried to get depression. When we were little, we tried to get it. We were like, Mommy, I'm depressed."	Quality	Hyperbole
8	"And when I was 12 years old, I had to leave my country because the government took my house. And I had to work 27 different jobs. And I had to go to sleep in a washing machine and wake up in a dryer. And I didn't have any friends."	Quality	Hyperbole
9	"And I can talk about skinny kids because I was one. I might have been one of the skinniest kids of all time. And I did some skinny stuff. I did."	Quality	Hyperbole

10	"And those two weeks felt like an eternity. And after those two weeks, my parents sat me down. We had a conversation. And they were like, Marcelo, your father quit drinking a long time ago."	Quality	Hyperbole
11	"The blood speaks through me. Like oh my god, and the blood has Bluetooth. Did you know that? Because if three of you get together you pair device."	Quality	Hyperbole
12	"Think about it now. She has to go through a week of torture. She has to pay all these different people to do all these horrible things to her body rip it rip it out."	Quality	Hyperbole
13	"I'm going to tell you exactly how Latino I am. My mom used to hit me in the women's bathroom at the mall. I'm a real veteran, dog. To a lot of people, that was just a bathroom. To us, it was the Coliseum. "	Quality	Metaphor
14	"A woman getting ready to leave the house is one of the most violent scenes I have ever seen in my entire life. They are able to turn their bathroom into Dexter's laboratory. There are potions and serums and creams."	Quality	Metaphor
15	"I'm going to stop the cycle. I'm going to stop the cycle of violence. And I want to say to you tonight, Miami..." "I am going to continue the cycle."	Quality	Irony
16	"And then DJ goes, so, safe to say I can't go to the party on Friday? And I'm like, this bitch. And Bob Saget goes, safe to say. When I saw that, I wanted to record it and present it to my mom."	Quality	Irony

Four representative utterances were selected for detailed qualitative analysis: two examples of hyperbole, one example of metaphor, and one example of irony. The selection reflects the distribution of the dataset, in which hyperbole occurred most frequently, while metaphor and irony were represented by fewer instances. The selected utterances were also chosen because they clearly demonstrate the respective mechanisms and provide sufficient contextual information for analyzing field, tenor, and mode.

4. Discussion

The analysis identified 16 instances of Maxim of Quality flouting in Marcello Hernandez's *American Boy*, consisting of 12 instances of hyperbole (75%), two instances of metaphor (12.5%), and two instances of irony (12.5%). The findings indicate that these mechanisms produce non-literal meaning through different pragmatic processes. Hyperbole manipulates the degree of a proposition through extreme exaggeration or minimization, metaphor constructs meaning through figurative comparison, and irony creates meaning through contradiction and expectation reversal. Across the data, the interpretation of these utterances depends on their surrounding context, including the field, tenor, and mode of the stand-up performance.

Data 1

"Eat the cockroach, bro, please I'm like what he's like eat it. Just eat it right now. Nothing's gonna happen to you. Just eat it I've done it before just eat the cockroach."
(This utterance occurs during Marcello's childhood at a family party. Believing they were drunk after drinking Coca-Cola, he jokingly told his cousin to eat a cockroach.)
(*American Boy*: Marcello Hernandez, 00:04:21)

The analysis focuses on the utterance "Nothing's gonna happen to you," which is categorized as flouting the Maxim of Quality because it intentionally presents information that is clearly inconsistent with reality. The hyperbolic element lies in the speaker's extreme minimization of the possible consequences. By using the absolute expression "nothing," the speaker presents complete certainty that eating the cockroach will have no consequences. Such certainty is not reasonably supported by the situation, making the statement an exaggerated form of reassurance rather than a literal prediction. Instead, the expression "nothing's gonna happen to you" uses an absolute statement to minimize the possible consequences of eating the cockroach.

The use of "nothing" presents the situation as having no possible negative consequence, even though such certainty cannot reasonably be supported. The exaggeration therefore lies not in increasing the seriousness of the situation, but in reducing the possible consequences to an absolute minimum. This deliberate departure from a realistic interpretation supports an interpretation of the utterance as a non-literal expression and invites an inference that Marcello is humorously portraying the reckless attitude expressed in the childhood story. Rather than functioning as a literal prediction, the exaggerated claim invites an inference about the intended meaning behind the utterance. The utterance can therefore be interpreted as a playful encouragement that deliberately treats an unreasonable act as harmless. The humorous effect arises from the contrast between the absolute reassurance and the unreasonable situation being described.

Based on Halliday and Hasan's (1989) perspective, the field of this utterance

concerns Marcello's childhood experience at a family gathering, particularly the playful and reckless interaction involving his cousin and the cockroach. The tenor involves Marcello as the comedian recounting a personal childhood experience while reenacting the interaction between family members. This creates an informal relationship between the performer and the audience. The mode is a spoken stand-up comedy performance in which storytelling, reenactment, and exaggerated expression are used to construct humor. These contextual elements support an interpretation of the utterance as an exaggerated form of reassurance rather than a factual prediction.

Data 2

"Nothing that you think is yours is yours. Everything is mine. That's my TV. That's my Xbox. That's my bed. That's my sheets. That's my underwear. That's my clothes. The door is mine. The air is mine. Don't touch the air."

(This utterance occurs when Marcello recalls his childhood birthday. His mother jokingly reminded him that everything in the house belonged to her, not to him.)

(American Boy: Marcello Hernandez, 00:47:42)

The analysis focuses on the utterance *"The air is mine. Don't touch the air,"* which is categorized as flouting the Maxim of Quality because it deliberately expresses an impossible claim. Although parents often claim ownership of household belongings, extending that ownership to the air is clearly unrealistic and cannot be interpreted literally. Marcello employs hyperbole to exaggerate his mother's authority, illustrating how parents sometimes express their dominance through excessive statements rather than factual ones. The contextual configuration supports an interpretation of the statement as an exaggeration of parental authority rather than an actual claim of ownership. The humorous effect can be interpreted as arising from the contrast between the literal meaning of the utterance and the impossibility of treating air as personal property.

The hyperbole becomes more apparent when the entire sequence is considered. The statement moves from objects that can plausibly be owned, such as a television, Xbox, bed, and clothes, to "the air," which cannot reasonably be treated as personal property. This escalation pushes the claim beyond its literal limits and intensifies the representation of parental authority. The conversational implicature is that the mother's authority is portrayed as extending to every aspect of the child's environment.

Based on Halliday and Hasan's (1989) context of situation, the field of this utterance concerns Marcello's childhood memories of family life, particularly the way his mother asserted authority over everything within the household. The tenor involves Marcello as the storyteller reenacting his mother's speech while interacting directly with the audience in an informal and humorous setting. The

mode is a spoken stand-up performance in which repetition and escalation contribute to the development of the joke. These contextual features support an interpretation of "The air is mine" as an intentionally impossible extension of parental authority rather than a literal ownership claim.

Data 2 differs from Data 1 in the direction of its exaggeration. While Data 1 minimizes possible consequences by reducing them to "nothing," Data 2 escalates a claim of authority until it reaches an impossible object. Both utterances flout the Maxim of Quality, but they demonstrate that hyperbole can generate humorous meaning through different forms of deviation from literal meaning.

This distinction is important because it shows why hyperbole dominates the dataset. Hyperbole provides Marcello with a flexible way of turning ordinary family experiences into extreme statements while keeping those statements connected to the personal narrative.

Data 3

"I'm going to tell you exactly how Latino I am. My mom used to hit me in the women's bathroom at the mall.

I'm a real veteran, dog. To a lot of people, that was just a bathroom. To us, it was the Coliseum."

(This utterance occurs when Marcello recalls being punished by his Latino mother in a mall restroom. He humorously compares the restroom to the Coliseum, where gladiators fought in ancient Rome.)

(American Boy: Marcello Hernandez, 00:47:42)

The analysis focuses on the utterance *"To a lot of people, that was just a bathroom. To us, it was the Coliseum,"* which is categorized as flouting the Maxim of Quality because Marcello intentionally compares a bathroom to the Coliseum, a comparison that is clearly not intended to be interpreted literally. Rather than describing the bathroom as an actual historical arena, he uses metaphor to represent the fear, tension, and anticipation of punishment that he experienced as a child. By replacing the literal description with a figurative comparison, Marcello encourages the audience to infer the intended meaning behind the utterance. The humorous effect can be interpreted as arising from the contrast between the ordinary function of the bathroom and its figurative representation as the Coliseum, which intensifies the emotional experience of childhood discipline.

Based on Halliday and Hasan's (1989) context of situation, the field of this utterance concerns Marcello's childhood memories of being disciplined by his mother in a public place, specifically the women's bathroom at a shopping mall. The tenor involves Marcello as the comedian sharing a personal experience with a live audience while reconstructing the perspective of his younger self. The mode is a spoken stand-up performance in which the metaphor is embedded within

personal storytelling. In this context, "the Coliseum" provides a figurative frame through which the intensity of the childhood experience can be interpreted. The utterance invites an inference that the bathroom was experienced as a place of confrontation and fear rather than simply as an ordinary restroom.

This finding supports previous studies indicating that metaphor is one of the mechanisms through which speakers flout the Maxim of Quality to communicate meanings beyond literal interpretation. Lasiana and Mubarak (2020) explain that figurative expressions encourage listeners to interpret implied meanings by considering the surrounding context rather than relying solely on the literal wording. However, metaphor should not automatically be treated as Maxim of Quality flouting simply because it is figurative. In this case, the flouting arises because the literal comparison between the bathroom and the Coliseum is incompatible with the situation, requiring contextual inference to recover the intended meaning. Unlike the hyperbolic data, which modify the degree of a proposition, the metaphor in Data 3 changes the conceptual frame through which the experience is understood.

Data 4

"I'm going to stop the cycle. I'm going to stop the cycle of violence. And I want to say to you tonight, Miami..."

"I am going to continue the cycle."

(This utterance occurs when Marcello talks about breaking the cycle of the harsh parenting style practiced by his Latino mother.)

(American Boy: Marcello Hernandez, 00:56:46)

The analysis focuses on the utterance *"I am going to continue the cycle,"* which is categorized as flouting the Maxim of Quality because Marcello deliberately states something that contradicts the expectation he has just established. At the beginning of the statement, he appears to express his intention to end the cycle of violence in parenting, establishing an expectation that the pattern will be broken. However, he immediately reverses this expectation by announcing that he will continue the cycle instead. This ironic expression is not intended to be interpreted literally but serves to humorously reflect the strict parenting style that he experienced during childhood. The humorous effect can be interpreted as arising from the contrast between the established expectation and the ironic conclusion that follows.

Based on Halliday and Hasan's (1989) perspective, the field of this utterance concerns Marcello's reflection on parenting practices after recounting a series of childhood experiences involving strict discipline. The tenor involves Marcello as the comedian directly addressing the audience while shifting from personal storytelling to humorous self-reflection. The mode is a spoken stand-up comedy performance and is particularly relevant in this example because the ironic

reversal depends on the delivery of the preceding and following statements. The contrast between “stop” and “continue” can be strengthened through timing, pause, and intonation, while the reenactment of the earlier statement establishes the expectation that the second statement deliberately reverses.

Rather than treating audience response as directly observed evidence, the contextual configuration supports an interpretation of the final statement as an ironic conclusion. The utterance invites the audience to infer a humorous comment on the parenting pattern described in the story rather than a literal intention to continue violence.

This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that irony is frequently employed to flout the Maxim of Quality by communicating meanings that differ from the literal expression. Lasiana and Mubarak (2020) argue that speakers often produce utterances that are intentionally inconsistent with reality in order to encourage listeners to infer the intended message through context. Likewise, studies on humorous discourse suggest that irony functions by creating a contrast between what is explicitly stated and what is actually meant. In the present data, however, the ironic effect is closely connected to the performance structure of stand-up comedy. The reversal occurs immediately after an apparently serious statement, allowing the contrast itself to function as the source of humor.

Across the four representatives data, the flouting of the Maxim of Quality follows a common pattern: a recognizable departure from literal truth is interpreted through the context of the situation, leading to conversational implicature and humorous meaning. However, the three mechanisms produce this departure in different ways. Hyperbole changes the degree of a proposition, either through extreme minimization in Data 1 or escalation in Data 2. Metaphor changes the conceptual frame of an experience, as shown by the comparison between the bathroom and the Coliseum in Data 3, while irony creates humor through contradiction and expectation reversal in Data 4. Thus, Quality-maxim flouting in the performance does not operate through a single linguistic process.

Hyperbole accounts for 12 of the 16 identified instances (75%), making it the dominant mechanism in the data. Its frequency may be related to its flexibility in presenting personal experiences through exaggerated or minimized expressions while maintaining a connection to the events being narrated. In contrast, metaphor and irony appear less frequently but perform more specific functions: metaphor reframes an experience through figurative comparison, whereas irony relies on a reversal between expectation and statement. The interpretation of these forms is further supported by field, tenor, and mode, particularly the spoken and performative nature of stand-up comedy. Timing, pause, intonation, and delivery can strengthen contrasts such as the reversal in Data 4, although audience responses were not systematically examined in this study.

These findings are comparable with previous studies showing that maxim flouting contributes to humor and implied meaning in entertainment discourse,

although the dominant maxim and communicative purpose vary across contexts. Dwitama et al. (2026), for example, also found the Maxim of Quality to be dominant in stand-up comedy, with hyperbole and irony functioning as prominent strategies, but their study primarily examined implicature as social criticism of Asian-American stereotypes. The present study instead highlights how different non-literal mechanisms construct humor from Hernandez's personal and family experiences. Studies of scripted film and television also demonstrate the humorous potential of maxim flouting, but stand-up comedy adds a stronger performative dimension because meaning is shaped through the comedian's delivery and timing.

This study has several limitations. First, the analysis focuses on a single comedian and one stand-up comedy performance, which limits the extent to which the findings can be generalized to other comedians or performances. Second, although 16 instances of flouting the maxim of quality were identified, only four representative data were examined in detail. Third, the interpretation of conversational implicature and contextual meaning was conducted by the researcher and did not involve a second coder or independent audience evaluation. Therefore, the interpretation of humorous meaning is based on textual, contextual, and performative analysis rather than direct audience reception. Finally, the cultural aspects discussed in this study are limited to Marcello Hernandez's performed representation of his personal and family experiences and should not be generalized to Latino communities as a whole.

5. Conclusion

This study examined how the flouting of the maxim of quality is employed in American Boy: Marcello Hernandez's stand-up comedy performance by applying Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle and Halliday and Hasan's (1989) context of situation. The findings demonstrate that the flouting of the Maxim of Quality is realized through various pragmatic mechanisms, including hyperbole, metaphor, and irony, which enable the comedian to convey meanings beyond the literal interpretation of his utterances. Rather than functioning solely as humorous expressions, these mechanisms reflect Marcello's childhood and family experiences, with their implied meanings interpreted through contextual and situational knowledge.

The study also highlights that understanding conversational implicatures depends on the context in which they are produced, as field, tenor, and mode support the interpretation of implied meanings. Therefore, this study contributes to pragmatic research by showing that humor in stand-up comedy is constructed through the interplay between linguistic choices, contextual factors, and personal experiences, while also demonstrating the value of integrating Grice's Cooperative Principle with Halliday and Hasan's context of situation in the analysis of humorous discourse. Future research is encouraged to investigate other types of flouting maxims or explore stand-up comedy performances from different cultural

backgrounds to provide a broader understanding of conversational implicatures in humorous communication.

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