



Nobita's Conversational Strategies: A Pragmatic Analysis of Flouting Maxims in Stand by Me Doraemon 2

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-08-09 Revised: 2026-08-27 Accepted: 2026-10-10 Keywords: <i>flouting maxims;</i> <i>Grice's cooperative principle;</i> <i>pragmatics;</i> <i>conversational implicature</i> DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i2.12225 Corresponding Author: I Pande Komang Ari Wangsa ariwangsa31@gmail.com Department of English Literature, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar	<i>Maxim flouting enables speakers to convey implied meanings without expressing them directly. This study investigates how Nobita, the main character in Stand By Me Doraemon 2 (2020), flouts Grice's (1975) conversational maxims and the implicatures generated by those utterances.. This happens because conversation is guided by an implicit agreement to cooperate, a concept introduced by Grice (1975) in his Cooperative Principle. When a speaker openly breaks one of the four maxims under this principle, quantity, quality, relation, or manner, while still expecting to be understood, the utterance is said to flout the maxim and produce an additional meaning known as implicature. This paper looks at how Nobita, the main character of Stand By Me Doraemon 2 (2020), flouts these maxims throughout the film. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed. Data consisted of Nobita's utterances in the film, which were identified, transcribed, classified according to Grice's four maxims, and analyzed in their conversational contexts.. Relation was the most frequently flouted maxim, accounting for 8 of the 14 cases (57.14%), followed by manner (3 cases, 21.43%), quality (2 cases, 14.29%), and quantity (1 case, 7.14%). This study examines how Nobita flouts Grice's conversational maxims and explores the conversational implicatures generated by those utterances rather than lying outright or staying silent, which points to topic-shifting as his main coping mechanism when he feels cornered. This study contributes to pragmatic research on flouting maxims by examining an animated family film, a type of text that has received comparatively less scholarly attention than live-action productions.</i>

1. Introduction

Every conversation depends on more than the words being said. Two people talking do not just trade sentences back and forth; they assume, without saying so, that both sides are trying to be understood. That assumption is what lets a listener catch a hidden joke, read sarcasm, or figure out why someone suddenly changes the subject. Take that assumption away and even a simple conversation between two family members can turn confusing. Grice (1975) called this shared assumption the Cooperative Principle.

Speakers, according to Grice, are expected to contribute to a conversation in a way that fits its accepted purpose, and this expectation is broken down into four maxims. The maxim of quantity addresses how much information a speaker provides; quality addresses whether that information is truthful; relation addresses whether it remains relevant to the topic; and manner addresses whether it is expressed clearly. A speaker who openly departs from one of these maxims, while still expecting the listener to understand, is described as flouting the maxim, and the listener is left to work out an unstated meaning, or implicature, from the gap between what is said and what should have been said.

This gap between what is said and what is meant does not indicate a failure of communication. For example, a speaker who remarks, "Lovely weather we're having," during a heavy storm is not attempting to deceive the listener. Instead, the utterance is understood as sarcasm, with both participants recognizing the intended meaning. The same phenomenon is frequently found in scripted dialogue, where writers employ maxim flouting to reveal characters' emotions, intentions, and interpersonal relationships without expressing them explicitly.

This is exactly why dialogue from film, television, and other scripted media has become a common source of data for pragmatic research, and the scope of that research has grown fairly wide in recent years. Several studies have examined both the communicative functions and distribution of maxim flouting across different film genres. Holifatunnisa and Wuryandari (2023) found that maxim flouting in *The Adam Project* was closely related to the protagonist's attempt to conceal information from his younger self, while Wulantari and Maharani (2023) reported that flouting in *A Man Called Otto* reflected the protagonist's reluctance to express his emotions. Nela and Putri (2024), writing for this same journal, studied *Me Before You* and found that flouting often appeared at moments of emotional tension between the two leads, and Putri and Marantika (2023) reported a similar function in *Her*, where the protagonist flouted relevance to avoid an uncomfortable truth about his relationship.

Taken together, these findings indicate that maxim flouting in film dialogue is rarely accidental; it consistently marks the exact moments where a character is emotionally exposed, whether through concealment, discomfort, tension, or avoidance. Quantitative patterns also vary by genre: Saputri and Sari (2022) found that quantity was flouted most often in the animated comedy *Zootopia*, while Lestari and Firdaus (2021) traced a similar pattern of quantity flouting across *Detective Pikachu*. In a very different setting, Ishaq and Putra (2023) showed that flouting relevance in *Taxi Driver* tracked the protagonist's isolation rather than comic misdirection, suggesting that the same surface pattern can carry very different emotional weight depending on the story.

Flouting has also been documented outside scripted film. Yustika, Setiawan, and Retnaningdyah (2022) used flouted maxims in *The Hundred-Foot Journey* as a teaching tool for intercultural literacy, while Kurniawan and Indriani (2023) traced flouting relevance through an unscripted political debate between Hillary Clinton and her opponent, showing that the same pragmatic pattern holds outside fiction. Saefudin, Mulyadi, and Santosa (2023) even identified flouting maxims in a comic strip, @Pepekomik, and Amelia, Musfiroh, and Waly (2025) connected maxim flouting with politeness strategies in the Indonesian heist film *Mencuri Raden Saleh*. Taken together, these studies suggest that flouting functions as a flexible narrative device that is not limited to any single genre or medium.

Animation in particular has started to draw more attention within this line of research, though the coverage is still uneven across titles. Sitinjak, Saragi, and Manurung (2024) examined *The Emperor's New Groove* and found flouting used mainly to build comic misdirection between characters, while Firdaus and Simatupang (2024) traced a similar pattern in *Inside Out*, where flouting quality and manner were tied to the characters' competitive dynamics. Sagheer, Nadeem, and Nasir (2024) found a fairly even spread across all four maxims in *The Magician's Elephant*, and Amelia and Hendar (2024) looked at a case where a character opts out of the conversation altogether in *Kung Fu Panda 2*, a related but distinct move from flouting since no implicature is meant to be recovered.

Closer to the present study in method, Sari and Satwika (2025) examined the first episode of *BoJack Horseman* and found that its main character flouted relation and quality most often, using topic shifts and exaggeration to avoid accountability and express denial, a pattern the authors linked directly to the character's psychology rather than treating it as a purely comedic device. These studies confirm that animated productions are a viable source of pragmatic data, but the coverage so far leans toward Western productions, leaving long-running non-Western franchises such as *Doraemon* largely unexamined.

Stand By Me Doraemon 2 (2020), based on Fujiko F. Fujio's long-running *Doraemon* franchise, follows Nobita, a boy who is constantly scolded, doubted, and pushed into situations beyond his control. Throughout the film, Nobita appears to respond to conversational pressure by changing the subject, exaggerating, or producing incomplete utterances, making his dialogue particularly suitable for an analysis of maxim flouting. Existing research on the *Doraemon* franchise has mostly looked at the comic strips, leaving the spoken dialogue in this particular film largely untouched. That gap is where this study begins.

Based on this background, the study sets out to identify the maxims Nobita flouts throughout *Stand By Me Doraemon 2* and to explain the implicature produced by each instance within its context. It is hoped that the findings can add a character-centered perspective to pragmatic research on flouting maxims, particularly in animated film, a genre that remains underrepresented compared to its live-action counterpart.

2. Method

A descriptive qualitative method was chosen for this study since the object being examined is meaning rather than measurable data. This approach makes it possible to look closely at each utterance within the scene it belongs to instead of reducing it to a number.

The data for this study came from *Stand By Me Doraemon 2* (2020), a Japanese animated film directed by Ryuichi Yagi and Takashi Yamazaki. Only Nobita's utterances were selected as the primary data because the study focuses on his individual communication patterns. The utterances of other characters were included solely to provide conversational context.

Data collection began with watching the film several times to get a full picture of the plot and the situation surrounding each scene. Every utterance in which Nobita appeared to flout a maxim was transcribed together with its timestamp and the line that triggered it, and the transcription was checked against the film's English subtitles to keep it accurate.

Each transcribed utterance was compared against Grice's (1975) four maxims to see whether it flouted one of them. To keep the classification reliable, the initial set of candidate utterances was then reviewed together with an expert in pragmatics; any utterance whose maxim classification could not be clearly justified, or whose implicature overlapped too closely with another example already accounted for, was excluded from the data. This process narrowed the initial candidates down to 14 utterances, which were grouped by the maxim flouted and interpreted according to the implicature each one generated in context.

3. Result

Distribution of Flouting Maxims in Nobita's Utterances

Nobita's utterances throughout *Stand By Me Doraemon 2* were reviewed for classification reliability, which narrowed the initial candidates down to 14 confirmed cases of flouting across Grice's (1975) four maxims. These were grouped into flouting of relation, manner, quality, and quantity, with the breakdown shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Flouting Maxims in Nobita's Utterances

Maxim Flouted	Frequency	Percentage
Relation	8	57.14%
Manner	3	21.43%
Quality	2	14.29%
Quantity	1	7.14%
Total	14	100%

Relation accounts for more than half of the total data at 57.14%, well ahead of manner (21.43%), quality (14.29%), and quantity, which appears only once (7.14%). These findings indicate that flouting of the maxim of relation occurred more frequently than the other types identified in the data. Given how uneven this distribution is, the number of utterances discussed in the next section is scaled to match it: four excerpts are examined under relation, two under manner, and one each under quality and quantity, the latter being discussed in full since only one confirmed instance was found. The following section explains why each utterance was classified the way it was and what implicature it carries.

4. Discussion

The following discussion explains why each utterance was classified as maxim flouting and examines the conversational implicature generated in its context. Four representative utterances are discussed under relation, two under manner, and one each under quality and quantity, starting with why each utterance counts as flouting and followed by the implicature it produces.

Before turning to the analysis, Table 2 introduces the characters referred to throughout the excerpts. The discussion then examines each utterance in terms of its maxim classification, conversational implicature, and contextual function

Table 2. Characters Referred to in the Data

Character	Description
Nobita Nobi	The main character examined in this study; an elementary school boy known for being clumsy, easily scolded, and quick to react emotionally when criticized.
Nobita's Mother	Nobita's mother, who is strict about his study habits and frequently confronts him over his school performance.
Doraemon	A robotic cat sent from the future to help Nobita; his closest companion and the addressee of most of the utterances examined in this study.
Nobita's Grandmother	Nobita's late grandmother, remembered fondly for her warmth; referenced by Nobita rather than appearing as a direct speaker in the data discussed here.

A. Flouting the Maxim of Relation

Data 1 (00:03:35)

Mother: "I found this in your desk drawer."

Nobita: "Can we talk about this later?"

Analysis

This exchange takes place early in the film, not long after Nobita's mother discovers his failed exam paper, which he had hidden in his desk drawer. According to Grice (1975), the maxim of relation requires speakers to make contributions that are relevant to the ongoing conversation. In this exchange, the maxim of relation is flouted when Nobita responds to his mother's discovery by asking, "Can we talk about this later?" His mother's statement implicitly raises the issue of his failed exam and, given the situation, creates an expectation that Nobita will explain the paper or account for why it was hidden.

Instead, Nobita offers no explanation, does not acknowledge his failure, and does not address the concern his mother has implicitly raised; he simply asks to postpone the conversation. Although his response is not entirely unrelated to the topic at hand, it avoids

direct engagement with the issue his mother has raised. This apparent non-compliance with the maxim invites the hearer to look beyond the literal meaning of Nobita's request and infer why he is unwilling to discuss the matter at that moment.

The utterance implies that Nobita wants to avoid discussing his failed exam and is not yet ready to face his mother's concern. His request to postpone the conversation functions as an indirect avoidance strategy, allowing him to delay an uncomfortable interaction without explicitly refusing to address it. This interpretation is supported by the context: the exam paper had deliberately been hidden in his desk drawer, indicating that Nobita had already attempted to keep his mother from finding out about his poor result. His request to discuss the matter later is consistent with this earlier effort at concealment.

Nobita does not openly deny responsibility or argue with his mother; instead, he uses postponement to ease the immediate pressure of the situation. The flouting of the maxim of relation therefore serves a communicative function: it allows Nobita to avoid direct confrontation while indirectly signaling his reluctance to discuss a topic that makes him uncomfortable.

Data 2 (00:08:42)

Doraemon: "Rather than that, wouldn't it be easier if you studied?"

Nobita: "You are very talkative."

Analysis

After being scolded for his exam results, Nobita is offered a straightforward piece of advice by Doraemon: "Wouldn't it be easier if you studied?" This advice creates an expectation that Nobita will respond to its content, whether by agreeing, disagreeing, or explaining why he does not intend to follow it. Instead, Nobita flouts the maxim of relation by commenting on Doraemon's manner of speaking, "You are very talkative," which has nothing to do with the substance of the advice itself. The response shifts the focus away from Nobita's own behavior, the subject Doraemon's advice was meant to address, and redirects it toward Doraemon's behavior instead.

This shift implies that Nobita does not want to hear the advice, however reasonable it may be. By attacking the messenger rather than engaging with the message, Nobita is able to dismiss the advice without directly admitting that it is valid, and without taking on the responsibility of explaining why he continues to perform poorly. The flouting of relation here functions to help Nobita avoid responsibility: rather than confronting the fact that studying harder would solve his problem, he deflects attention onto Doraemon.

This interpretation is supported by the context: the advice comes right after Nobita has just been scolded over his exam results, meaning any suggestion to study touches directly on the same failure he is still trying to avoid. Doraemon's actual manner of speaking in this exchange gives no real grounds for being called "talkative"; the accusation is disproportionate to anything Doraemon has done, which suggests it functions as a deflection rather than a genuine complaint.

Data 3 (00:04:04)

Doraemon: "Nothing can be done, right? Because you're the one at fault."

Nobita: "But this is my birthday."

Analysis

Doraemon criticizes Nobita's sense of responsibility directly, pointing out that nothing can be done because Nobita is the one at fault. This criticism creates an expectation that Nobita will respond to the question of fault, whether by accepting it, disputing it, or defending himself. Instead, Nobita mentions that today is his birthday, an utterance with no logical connection to the issue of responsibility being discussed. This apparent departure from the topic invites the hearer to look for an implicature beyond the literal content of the utterance.

The implicature generated is roughly: "my birthday should make you more sympathetic toward me." Rather than directly addressing his fault, Nobita shifts attention from the question of responsibility to an emotional circumstance, his birthday, that might elicit sympathy instead of judgment. The function of this flouting is to redirect the conversation away from an accusation he cannot easily defend against and toward a circumstance designed to soften Doraemon's response, appealing to sentiment rather than logic. This interpretation is supported by the context: the remark occurs in the same scolding scene as Data 1, immediately after Doraemon has placed the blame squarely on Nobita, with no room left for him to argue his way out logically. That it genuinely is his birthday makes the appeal harder to dismiss outright, which is precisely why this deflection, rather than another, is reached for at this specific moment: it turns an indefensible position into an emotional one.

Data 4 (00:11:19)

Doraemon: "So you've been whiny and spoiled from then on, huh?"

Nobita: "What I want to talk about is grandma's kindness and warmth! Listen carefully, please."

Analysis

Doraemon criticizes Nobita's character directly, remarking, "So you've been whiny and spoiled from then on, huh?" This criticism creates an expectation that Nobita will respond to it in one of several ways: by accepting the characterization, rejecting it, defending himself, or explaining his behavior. Instead, Nobita responds by insisting on talking about "grandma's kindness and warmth," a topic Doraemon never raised. This constitutes an apparent departure from relevance, since the topic of his grandmother bears no direct connection to the criticism of his character.

The implicature this generates is that Nobita does not want to engage with the criticism at all. This interpretation is supported by the contextual association of his grandmother with kindness, warmth, and emotional comfort, qualities that stand in direct contrast to the "whiny and spoiled" label just placed on him. Rather than contesting the accusation, Nobita shifts the conversation from a threatening, critical topic to one that feels emotionally safer. Communicatively, this flouting functions as a strategy for avoiding direct confrontation while seeking emotional comfort, allowing Nobita to escape an uncomfortable characterization without having to argue against it.

Comparison of Data 1 to Data 4

Data 1 through 4 show that Nobita repeatedly flouts the maxim of relation when faced with criticism, advice, responsibility, or other conversational pressures that make him uncomfortable. Rather than confronting these issues directly, he either postpones the discussion or redirects attention to another topic, often one that reduces emotional pressure or invites sympathy. Yet the four instances are not identical in function: in Data 1, Nobita postpones an uncomfortable discussion; in Data 2, he redirects attention away from unwanted advice; in Data 3, he shifts attention from responsibility to his birthday in order to elicit sympathy; and in Data 4, he shifts attention from criticism to an emotionally comforting memory. Describing this pattern simply as Nobita "often giving irrelevant answers" would understate what is actually happening: each flouting of relevance is tailored to the specific pressure he faces.

B. Flouting the Maxim of Quality**Data 5 (00:04:22)**

Nobita: "They must have picked me up from somewhere."

Doraemon: "Hahaha."

Analysis

Immediately after being scolded by his mother for hiding his failed exam paper, Nobita utters a statement that is obviously untrue: "They must have picked me up from somewhere. This flouts the maxim of quality, since Nobita is unmistakably his parents' biological child, a fact never in question elsewhere in the story. Doraemon recognizes that Nobita does not mean this literally; rather than treating the statement seriously or attempting to correct it, he simply laughs. This reaction confirms that the statement is not intended to deceive Doraemon.

The implicature generated is that Nobita feels hurt, rejected, or unwanted by his family. He arrives at this meaning by exaggerating his feelings through a statement he knows to be untrue, rather than stating his emotions directly. The function of this flouting is to express his sadness and disappointment indirectly. This interpretation is supported by the context: the outburst comes directly on the heels of being scolded, at a moment when Nobita has no real grounds to defend himself and little else with which to respond. Reaching for an exaggerated claim about his own parentage, rather than simply staying silent or arguing back, suggests this is less a reasoned statement than a raw expression of feeling undervalued in that instant.

C. Flouting the Maxim of Manner**Data 6 (00:05:41)**

Doraemon: "Instead of that, you'd better study harder, so you don't need to get another zero score."

Nobita: "How... can I..." (trails off while holding up several exam papers marked zero)

Analysis

Doraemon tells Nobita that he should study harder so that he will not get another zero score, creating an expectation that Nobita will respond to this advice in a complete and orderly way. Instead, Nobita begins a sentence but does not finish it, "How... can I...", and shows his stack of failed exam papers instead of completing his thought. His words alone do not provide a full explanation; it is the exam papers, held up wordlessly, that help Doraemon understand what he means. Because the utterance is left vague and incomplete rather than clearly expressed, this flouts the maxim of manner.

The implicature is that Nobita feels helpless and finds it genuinely difficult to improve his grades, communicated by leaving his sentence unfinished and letting the exam papers speak for him. The function of this flouting is to express helplessness indirectly: it allows Nobita to respond to Doraemon's advice without directly arguing against it, using the visible evidence of his failure to communicate a defeat that words alone would make him say aloud. This interpretation is supported by the context: the papers he holds up are not a single failing grade but a stack of them, visual evidence of a pattern of repeated failure rather than a one-time slip, which makes "I don't know how" a more plausible reading of his silence than simple embarrassment over one bad score.

Data 7 (00:17:33)

Nobita's mother (in the past): "What are you doing? Why are you teasing my son?" Nobita (from the future): "Um, er... all of this has a reason."

Analysis

Nobita's mother catches future-Nobita hitting young Nobita and demands a clear explanation for his behavior, asking directly what he is doing and why. This creates an expectation that future-Nobita will explain why he is doing it. Instead, he hesitates, "Um, er...", and gives only a vague explanation, "All of this has a reason," without stating what the actual reason is. Because this response is unclear and evasive rather than orderly and direct, it flouts the maxim of manner.

The implicature is that future-Nobita is uncomfortable and finds it difficult to explain the situation he is in, communicated through hesitation and a vague statement rather than a clear account of his actions. The function of this flouting is to respond to his mother's question without directly explaining a situation that is, in reality, far too complicated to reveal: that he is disciplining his own younger self.

Comparison of Data 6 and Data 7

Both instances flout manner through incomplete or evasive speech, but the source of that incompleteness differs. In Data 1, Nobita's unfinished sentence stems from emotional defeat, he cannot bring himself to say "I failed" out loud, and the exam papers speak in his place. In Data 2, future-Nobita's hesitation stems from the impossibility of the situation itself: he cannot explain that he is scolding his own younger self without revealing something far stranger than the moment can hold. In both cases, the vagueness is not a failure to communicate but a way of communicating something the speaker is not yet ready to say directly.

D. Flouting the Maxim of Quantity

Data 8 (00:08:24)

Doraemon: "Looks like something happened somewhere."

Nobita: "Yeah, but now I'm here, so no problem, right?"

Analysis

Doraemon notices that something has happened, remarking, "Looks like something happened somewhere," which creates an expectation that Nobita will explain what occurred. Nobita acknowledges the remark, "Yeah...", but does not explain the actual event; instead, he offers only a brief reassurance, "...but now I'm here, so no problem, right?" The information he provides is markedly less than what the situation appears to require, which flouts the maxim of quantity.

The utterance suggests that Nobita is reluctant to explain what happened and prefers not to elaborate on the incident. The function of this flouting is to avoid further questions and a more detailed discussion, allowing Nobita to move the conversation past a confusing experience without having to revisit or explain it in full. This interpretation is supported by the context: the event Nobita is glossing over is a confusing, disorienting time-travel incident, one he likely does not fully understand himself. Giving a vague reassurance rather than an explanation is consistent with someone who would rather move past a bewildering experience than attempt to make sense of it out loud, especially to a listener who would likely ask follow-up questions that Nobita may not yet be able to answer.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the utterances of Nobita in *Stand By Me Doraemon 2* (2020) to identify how he flouts Grice's (1975) conversational maxims and what implicatures those utterances generate. Of the 14 utterances confirmed through the classification review, relation was flouted most often, followed by manner, quality, and quantity. Rather than being scattered at random, this distribution points to a fairly consistent habit: Nobita shifts the topic of conversation whenever he is confronted or criticized, exaggerates reality when he feels overwhelmed, breaks off into fragmented speech when a moment feels too difficult to put into words, and withholds an explanation when he chooses not to give one rather than when he genuinely cannot. Taken together, these findings suggest that flouting maxims in this film functions less as a source of comedy and more as a way of portraying how a child character responds, emotionally, to pressure, criticism, and confusion.

This study is limited to a single film and to the utterances of one character, so the patterns identified here should not be generalized to the Doraemon franchise as a whole or to animated films in general. Future research could examine flouting maxims produced by other characters within the same film to see whether similar emotional patterns emerge, or compare Nobita's speech across different Doraemon films to observe whether his communicative tendencies remain consistent over time. A comparative study between animated and live-action family films, or between Nobita and characters from other animated productions such as those examined by Firdaus and Simatupang (2024) in *Inside Out*, may also help clarify whether the patterns found in this study are specific to

this character or apply more broadly to how flouting is used to portray emotional states in animated storytelling.

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