

Original Article

Rule-Breaking or Be(k)coming: Language and Identity in *Dogshow Divas*

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Abstract. Although SwardSpeak's morphology and lexical creativity have been sufficiently studied, the strategic competence with which it is practiced, specifically its speakers' deliberate breaking of conversational rules and expectations, is underexplored in contemporary digital media forms. As such, this study investigated how violations of the Gricean Cooperative Principles index identity in SwardSpeak conversations between Baus Rufo and Mark Averilla in two episodes of their video podcast, *Dogshow Divas*. As a qualitative-dominant (QUAL-quant) mixed-methods study, it largely employed the pragma-discourse approach in its examination of Gricean conversational maxim violations and their roles as strategic conversational strategies and speaker identity construction on approximately 110 minutes of audio data. A frequency count was used to numerically support qualitative interpretations. Results show that Gricean maxims were violated a total of 247 times, with the maxim of manner (n=96) having been flouted the most and quantity (n=34) the least. Further, the spontaneous violations were strategically committed to produce humor mostly through exaggeration, wordplay, and sarcasm. Finally, the investigation reveals that such violations reinforce speakers' identity mostly through the projection of mock confidence, shared cultural knowledge, and consequently strengthened in-group solidarity within the LGBTQ+ discourse community. The findings demonstrate that maxim violations are not surface deviations from conversational cooperation; they function as strategic tools to effectively channel information, establish presence, and affirm identity. Thus, recognizing maxim violations as part of speakers' or learners' identity-building highlights the need for diverse and gender-sensitive learning spaces that allow learners and digital consumers to exercise this communicative resource.

Keywords: Cooperative Principle; Indexicality; Lavender Linguistics; Pragma-discourse; SwardSpeak.

Recent studies posited the transcendent nature of communication beyond its linguistic forms. The function of language in communication goes beyond simple information delivery; it is a medium with which speakers construct and express their social identity (Terkourafi, 2026). This means that meaning is not fixed in the structural forms of the language-in-use (Gudmestad & Kanwit, 2025). It is attached to the interpretations of speech communities (Leap, 1996; Barrett, 2017). As such, language is a critical medium for constructing identity, performing social roles, and establishing group membership.

Grice (1975) describes how speakers naturally and intentionally cooperate to achieve these aims. The Cooperative Principle and its related maxims of quantity, quality, manner, and relevance ensure that communication is effective when observed by all participants (Levinson, 2000). The maxim of quantity necessitates the optimal amount of information between insufficient and excessive; the maxim of quality demands truth and accuracy in the conveyed information; the maxim of manner demands clear delivery, devoid of vagueness and ambiguity; and finally, the maxim of relevance encourages coherence of topic-points of the conversation, discouraging off-topic contributions (Shen Li et al., 2025). In this sense, an effective construction of social identity and belongingness is ascertained when these conversational maxims are adhered to (Blommaert, 2005).

On the contrary, and perhaps more importantly, violating the conversational maxims is also utilized as a communicative strategy to achieve these same aims (Stotts, 2022). These intentional violations are usually characterized by tonal shifts, in-group references, emasculated linguistic practices, and exaggerated storytelling devices in Filipino queer-themed media performances (Simon et al., 2025). Speakers linguistically and strategically choose deliberate maxim violations to achieve performative or communicative effects. This means that breaking the rules of conversation in the prescriptive sense is simply an expressive form of self-identity and social membership in these interactional contexts (Ulla et al., 2024).

Michael Silverstein's theory of indexicality (2003) provides an analytical framework that bridges language and identity expression in these transformative sites of meaning. Silverstein (2003) posits three orders of indexicality. The first-order of indexicality involves recognizing linguistic forms that signal identity. In this study, these linguistic forms were the Gricean maxim violations. The second-order examines how these utterances function beyond their linguistic forms, taking into account stylistic uniqueness and social functions. In this study, the eleven forms of spontaneous conversational humor by Rod A. Martin (2007) were employed. It described how speakers' maxim violations function beyond simple communicative underperformance and serve as strategies to maintain an engaging and entertaining discourse. Finally, the third-order examines how this linguistic practice indexes identity, including queer and diva personalities, recognized by the broader society.

In Philippine society, the unique and highly dynamic linguistic variety of the Filipino LGBTQ+ community is considered a crucial medium of identity construction and belonging (Rubiales, 2020). Its sociolinguistic appeal makes it a highly visible language resource in popular media and entertainment as a communicative strategy of exaggeration and wit (Sinkeviciute, 2019). The sociolect foregrounds its speakers' linguistic creativity through the production and proliferation of a rich lexicon, such as *awra*, *bongga*, *charot*, *eme*, *hanash*, and *kalerki*, in various interactional contexts. Beyond lexical creativity, the sociolect continually evolves to include popular cultural and national icons (Rubiales, 2020), also illustrating the centrality of broader cultural and societal events to their self-expression and identity construction (Quimosing-Ocay & Ocampo, 2024).

Despite its mercurial nature, Swardsppeak's relatability, lightness, and humor make it an easy sociolect to acquire and exercise (Almoite, 2025), thus expanding its speakers to include closeted gay men (Romero, 2019) and women allies (Gregorio et al., 2022). Its growing speaker base makes it increasingly visible in contemporary entertainment media, such as podcasts and live streams, where it caters to diverse audiences. The research derives its data from this category of media. It examines talk from Dogshow Divas hosted by Baus Rufo and Mark Averilla, a live video podcast frequently going viral for discussions and debates on highly relatable and nostalgic Filipino pop culture events, icons, and current events (De Guzman, 2025).

Mediated spaces, such as Dogshow Divas, are important because research shows that these are prominent sites for identity construction and negotiation in queer discourse (Almoite, 2025). Queer representation, and consequently discourse, in media influences societal perception, especially in times of polarizing tensions (Raditz, 2025). A study by Myers (2025) shows that queer audiences feel positively seen when consuming these media forms, while non-queer participants express solidarity with the queer community and advocacy towards its harmful stereotyping. This underlines the critical role of language in queer media in co-constructing sexual identity and societal perception.

Despite its sociolinguistic significance, existing Swardsppeak research is largely structural, leaving its strategic function in conversational norms and its community-building work in queer digital media underexplored. Research on Swardsppeak focuses more on its morphological features (Almoite, 2025; Quimosing-Ocay & Ocampo, 2024) and linguistic analyses in mainstream media (Deparine et al., 2023; Ulla et al., 2024). This highlights the

limited research on how Gricean principles operate within Swardspeak constraints, specifically how audiences may perceive and interpret indexed expressions. Further, although the usage of Gricean principles was examined in movies (Grace et al., 2023), journalistic media (Dogcol & Villanueva, 2024; Geranco, 2020; Ramos, 2025), and talk shows (Porquiado & Sumaljag, 2025), research applications in niche digital media platforms, such as live and spontaneous podcasts, are warranted. Finally, there is also a lack of investigation into Swardspeak as an indexical language of queer identity in the Philippines, beyond being seen as linguistic excess.

This research addresses these gaps and reinforces the sociolect's relevance in widely consumed digital media among today's youth, including queer students navigating identity and social roles. Foremost, it highlights learners' strategic agency in both produced and reproduced learning interactions within speech communities by recognizing commonly perceived prescriptive errors in communication as legitimate communicative efforts in identity-building. To add, it offers educators and policymakers a basis for designing equitable educational decisions and interventions that enhance classroom engagement and acknowledge linguistic diversity in learning interactions. The findings support concerted efforts made towards the development of individuals who are competently inclusive and strategic enough to succeed in communicative spaces that respect and normalize diversity. Fostering gender-sensitive communicative competence dismantles stigma, strengthens solidarity, and affirms students' individuality and identity.

The present study examines how the violations of Grice's conversational maxims in Swardspeak are utilized to express identity in two live video podcast episodes of Dogshow Divas. Using conversational analysis, it highlighted phrasal and sentential utterances that violate the maxims of truth, substance, clarity, and coherence. These identified utterances that violate the Cooperative Principle were then examined to describe how they convey social meaning and signal identity. It specifically aims to answer the following questions: (1) How often do Dogshow Divas speakers violate the Gricean conversational maxims of a) quality, b) quantity, c) manner, and d) relevance; and (2) how do these violations function as: a) conversational strategies, and b) influences on identity?

Methodology

Research Design

This is a qualitative-dominant (QUAL-quant) mixed-methods study as it utilizes both qualitative and quantitative methods with a major focus on the former (American Psychological Association, 2023). Addressing the first research question, the quantitative component involved a frequency count, which provided a numerical notation of the instances of maxim violations.

As the study is qualitative-dominant, it employed a pragmatic-discursive approach in the analysis and interpretation of the corpus. The pragma-discourse approach examines the social and cultural nature of spontaneous utterances beyond the linguistic feature under investigation (Al-Hindawi & Saffah, 2017). Following this approach, the Gricean conversation maxims violations as the linguistic feature under investigation were treated beyond their role as mere communicative irregularities. To explore the second research question, it supported the examination of their social nature as conversational strategies in interaction-in-action. Finally, it addressed the third research question by exploring their cultural nature through the analysis of their influence on societal perceptions of speakers. The approach provided the researchers with a framework that not only examines the pragmatic features of conversation but also reinforces the interpretation through Silverstein's (2003) lens of indexicality.

Sampling Strategy

Purposive-quota sampling was employed, involving intentional selection of live video podcast episodes based on set characteristics or traits relevant to the research objectives (Bhardwaj, 2019). The material selection was guided by Biber's (1993) internal and external criteria of corpus design. Internal criteria refer to the presence of the linguistic feature under investigation in the corpus, while external criteria refer to the communicative or interactional context of the discourse (Biber, 1993). Rather than aiming for statistical representativeness, the corpus was selected for its relevance to the study's aims. Accordingly, the selection criteria included: (1) the use of humorous conversational strategies and Swardspeak in the discourse (internal), and (2) the participation of at least two speakers in spontaneous conversation (external).

Data saturation was employed to determine corpus size. Following this, additional data were continually considered until relevant codes or themes ceased to emerge (Guest & Chen, 2020). During the iterative review process, the researchers continually monitored the occurrence of maxim violations, their strategic roles in the conversation, and their identity-influence on the speakers. After analyzing the second material, transcripts no longer generated new themes or conversational patterns aligned with the research objectives, indicating that the selected corpus was sufficient for analysis.

At the time of study implementation, the official YouTube channel of Dogshow Divas had uploaded only three episodes. The first two of these three episodes were selected.

Research Material

Two of three live video podcast episodes sourced from the official Dogshow Divas YouTube channel comprised the research material. Specifically, the pilot episode entitled “Heto Na Naman Tayo” (Rufo & Averilla, 2025b) and “The Legacy Of The Lin Dynasty” (Rufo & Averilla, 2025a) were included. The speakers’ smoothly executed topic shifts provided rich interactional and linguistic research material for qualitative analysis, including, but not limited to, pop culture moments, culinary tastes, film perspectives, and queer life in the Philippines. The first episode lasted 52 minutes and 56 seconds; the second lasted 55 minutes and 1 second, which composed 107 minutes and 57 seconds of research material. Both episodes passed the selection criteria.

Data Gathering Procedure

After corpus selection, the automatically generated subtitles of the selected live video podcast episodes were downloaded as text files using a third-party web application. These text files served as a primary basis for the study’s transcriptions. They were manually edited and reviewed against the original video recording to ensure contextual accuracy and completeness. Regular peer cross-checking was observed to carefully check and resolve instances of unclear or unrecognized words in the auto-generated subtitles. The finalized transcripts were reviewed and validated by the research adviser and then organized into a corpus for analysis.

Data Analysis Procedure

The validated transcripts were analyzed following Miles and Huberman’s (1984) three-stage qualitative analysis approach: data reduction, data display, and conclusion. First, the transcripts were filtered line by line for significant information. In parallel with Silverstein’s (2003) hierarchical order of first-, second-, and third-order indexicality, the initially processed data underwent coding analysis that progressed from low-inference descriptive coding towards pattern coding abstraction (Lungu, 2022). The coding process transpired as follows:

The first stage applied descriptive, low-inference coding to identify all instances of maxim violations. The transcript was examined line by line to identify breaches of the Cooperative Principle (Grice, 1975). Following the approved practice of qualitative coding (Lungu, 2022), each violation was assigned an exact code corresponding to the conversation maxim broken, specifically: quality for falsity, quantity for lack or excess of information, manner for ambiguity, and relevance for incoherence. A frequency count was performed to establish pattern identification. This initial coding scheme served as a foundation for subsequent analyses. As such, several rounds of review were undertaken to refine and verify the consistency of code application in line with prescribed qualitative coding practices.

The second stage applied interpretative (latent) coding to re-examine the previously coded maxim violations. Aligned with Corbin and Strauss’ (2015) view of interpretative coding as uncovering deeper processes beyond surface-level descriptions, this stage focused on the interactional intent and social meaning behind each violation. As interpretative coding requires a guiding principle or theoretical lens (Lungu, 2022), the analysis was supported by Martin’s (2007) eleven forms of spontaneous conversational humor. Each violation was recoded as clever replies to serious statements, double entendres, exaggeration, irony, puns, replies to rhetorical questions, sarcasm, self-deprecation, teasing, and transformations of frozen expressions according to its function in the interaction. The interpreted utterances demonstrate how apparent linguistic errors function as conversational strategies that drive communicative aims.

The final stage utilized pattern codes to synthesize previously generated coded data into identity-influence themes. Following the appropriate practice on second-cycle coding (Lungu, 2022), the descriptive and interpretative codes were categorized into code categories that signal broader influence on identity practices, such

as playful banter, exaggerated humor, or playful teasing. Initial pattern codes were refined into themes that described how the speakers' language use indicates identity structures. Silverstein's (2003) theory of indexicality describes these themes as third-order indices. The conversational practice, specifically the maxim violations, which function strategically in conversation, accumulates into social identities recognizable to the larger community. Secondly, the coded data were organized (Miles & Huberman, 1984) in tabular form. The tables facilitated an easier cross-case comparison, allowing patterns, frequencies, and relationships between codes to be identified. They supported analytical transparency and reinforced interpretations. Finally, interpretations were drawn and verified (Miles & Huberman, 1984) by integrating the previously mentioned theoretical frameworks. The analyses also drew from previously published studies on humor and identity-constructing language practices to establish sociolinguistic relevance. The conclusion also summarized the study's overall significance for the communities involved.

Trustworthiness

The study followed Lincoln and Guba's (1985) model of credibility, confirmability, transferability, and dependability (CCTD). Credibility was maintained through transparent procedures. The researchers applied theoretical frameworks consistent with approved qualitative coding procedures to ground interpretation. They unanimously decided on a coding format and anonymization rules. The editing and verification of the written transcript against the original recording were also conducted through regular monitoring and online updates. In the analysis, the codebook was uniformly referenced to avoid making ungrounded and baseless coding decisions. To ensure alignment with the theoretical framework, coding approach, and data interpretations, the iterative coding cycles were conducted collaboratively.

Confirmability was ensured through research documentation and research reflexivity. The researchers tracked research progress through meeting minutes and coding memos. A monitoring spreadsheet shared online with restricted researcher access audited research decisions. Although the researchers practiced reflexivity in their analyses, they also held regular online meetings with the research adviser before and after each coding stage. These provided a valuable external perspective to minimize prejudice and bias in interpretation. The online meetings were also documented.

Dependability was ensured through consistent analytical processes, from the explicit selection criteria grounded in Biber's (1993) principles of corpus design to the three-layered coding process parallel to Silverstein's hierarchy of indexicality and the approved practice of qualitative coding (Lungu, 2022). The coding process was applied consistently throughout the study, and regular cross-peer checking reinforced interpretative decisions with a record trail demonstrating the stabilization of codes across the research process.

Transferability was ensured through a detailed and comprehensive account of the research methodology. The digital nature of the research material, its platform, program, episode titles, duration, and linguistically rich interactional setting were explicitly described. More importantly, the procedural descriptions, especially the data analysis procedure, with examples of the initial codes within the tri-layered coding process, were written with sufficient detail to support replicability.

Results and Discussion

Frequency of Gricean Violations

Table 1 displays the frequency of violations of Gricean maxims observed in conversations.

Table 1. *Frequency of Gricean Maxim Violations*

Gricean Maxim Violated (Grice, 1975)	Frequency
Manner	96
Quality	75
Relevance	42
Quantity	34
Total	247

The analysis revealed 247 instances of Gricean maxim violations: 96 for the maxim of manner, 75 for the maxim of quality, 42 for the maxim of relevance, and 34 for the maxim of quantity. This implies a heavy reliance on truth distortion and ambiguous expressions in the speakers' conversations, discussed in more detail below.

Manner Maxim Violations

The manner maxim violations demonstrated the speakers' heavy reliance on intentional ambiguity and disorganized delivery in the transcripts. Manner maxim violations were largely manifested through unclear referents and playful renaming and mislabeling. Unclear referents commonly involved ambiguous media references, vague pop culture references, or queer insider knowledge, such as in the selected transcripts below.

Excerpt 1

And the *circle of kabaklaan*. Every June.
(on Quezon Memorial Circle)

Excerpt 2

Speaker A: Accessibility, not only access to people, but *access to organs of people*.
Speaker B: Yes, if there is a certain *craving of the loins that you are looking for...*
(on the Guadalupe MRT station)

Excerpt 3

Tama. You know, the embodiment of *Princess May Boyag*.

In the transcripts above, the manner maxim violations delayed audience alignment with the topic, which is crucial given the rapid and unpredictable shifts in topic in the research material's interactional context. This supports the findings of Nisa et al. (2025) in stand-up comedy, who argue that manner maxim violations are humorous only when sufficient background knowledge supports audience interpretation. This implies that content unretrievable from context can cost audience engagement. On the other hand, the same study also highlights the comedians' intentions in manipulating standard conversational expectations (Nisa et al., 2025). This contrasts with the present data set, where manner maxim violations emerge as consequences of highly specific referents. Although the hosts still utilize them as comedic devices, the humor depends heavily on insider knowledge.

In addition, manner maxim violations manifested as puns involving the playful naming, renaming, or mislabeling of popular or niche people and places, as in the transcripts below.

Excerpt 4

Speaker A: The first merchant was *Eddie...*
Speaker B: *Wow*.

Excerpt 5

It's like, what is that name? Phil COA? Like Chinese *ba siya*? *First name P-Phil. Last name Koa?*

Excerpt 6

Yes, si *Boots Anson-Roa*, who happens to be the cousin of *Butch Francisco*.

In their study of strategic humor in language, Fernández and Araya (2023) reveal that humorous utterances often rely on deliberate linguistic manipulation and shared cultural knowledge to realize communicative intent, as shown in the transcripts above. Notably, strategic obscurity extends beyond mere communicative deviations only when the deliberateness of its execution is recognized by its audience (Fernández & Araya, 2023). Overall, the breaching of the manner maxim presents both interactional advantages and risks.

Quality Maxim Violations

The trend of heavy reliance on quality maxim violations is situated in humor intentions and buffering concepts of danger. This repeated practice demonstrates the play-mirth theory (Hatzithomas, 2024), which recognizes exaggeration, overstatement, and ironic reinterpretation as prevalent "playful turns" that provoke collective laughter when they correspond with the participants' goals. Given that the hosts share a common communicative goal of audience engagement through humor, the quality maxim is repeatedly breached to achieve this aim. This is also observed in the selected transcripts below.

Excerpt 7

I feel like *the topic of siomai is such a very potent topic for Filipinos*. I wouldn't be surprised if *the next presidential candidate will use siomai as their platform*.

Excerpt 8

Kasi nakakatakot yung vibe niya. *Para siyang simulation ng zombie apocalypse* if you think about it. (on a Philippine Metro Rail Transportation station)

In addition, quality maxim violations also appeared across the dataset when conversation topics involved danger and absurd situations. This tendency mirrors the findings of Torres-Marín et al. (2022) in their study about humor styles, particularly on exaggerated metaphors. This is observed in the selected transcripts below.

Excerpt 9

Kapag Rey's Barbecue yung kinakain mo sa overtime... You know what? Sige, kaya ko pa. *Kaya ko pang hindi maligo. Kaya ko pang di magpakita sa pamilya ko*.

Excerpt 10

So there, *you are playing with death. You are living on the edge* by being there sa TAFT Avenue.

As shown, a decreased perception of danger and increased comedic effect of absurd situations were attributed to the use of exaggerated expressions in humorous discourse (Torres-Marín et al., 2022). This implies the speakers' strategic skill in diffusing risk-related scenarios into shared comedic experiences. In sum, quality maxim violations reflect the hosts' comedic intentions through absurd danger blurring, which are strategically constructed to advance humor goals and strengthen audience engagement.

Relevance Maxim Violations

Relevance maxim violations were commonly committed through associative topic shifting and genre recontextualization. Topic shifts commonly stemmed from phonological or lexical associations, such as the transcripts below.

Excerpt 11

Speaker A: And apparently, *Eddie Wow is a top*.

Speaker B: That's right. Top siya. And definitely, *doon nabuo ang TAFT Avenue Station*.

Excerpt 12

Speaker A: We told you this episode is political.

Speaker B: Yeah, it's political because kaya nga na-inspire yung writer at *gumawa siya ng isa pang musical. Puss in Boots*. Di ba?

Speaker A: So there.

Speaker B: Iba yung puss in boots ha. *Nana yun sa loob nung boots na suot mo kasi lagi kang nasa baha*.

The selected transcripts demonstrate successful topic shifts due to phonological (*top* and *TAFT*) and lexical (*puss* and *nana*) similarities or translanguaging. This trend of associative leaps was also noted in the study by Nafi and Pratama (2025), which examined maxim flouting in online episodes of Steve Harvey's talk show. Mirroring the study's findings, topic shifts were prompted by wordplay and sound-based similarities. Aside from this, relevance maxim violations originated from sudden shifts in discourse framing, as seen in the lifted transcripts below.

Excerpt 13

Pero feeling ko kailangan pa nating i-uplift ang mga kagawad. I think *somebody needs to make a porn film wherein ang character trope eh isang kagawad na nahuli ang isang lalaki na hindi ko alam nagbubulsa ng Nutribond or something*.

Excerpt 14

Feminist ahead of her time. Alpha. Sino pa bang hinahanap natin? *Lenny Robredo*. (on the cast of a Filipino remake of Powerpuff Girls)

The abruptness of discourse-frame shifting, which ranges from porn-film tropes to political framings to imagined scenarios, demonstrates how speakers manipulate the relevance maxim to produce humor effectively. Chavez and Prado (2023) affirm this trend of discourse framing in humorous conversations in the research on gender-based jokes online. Sudden discourse-frame shifting was employed to alleviate the severity of conversational topics or elicit comedy by introducing loosely connected alternative scenarios (Chavez & Prado, 2023). This shows that the deliberate breaching of the relevance maxim offers speakers strategic avenues for humor.

Quantity Maxim Violations

Quantity maxim violations were commonly committed by overextending unnecessary information through playful repetition or echoing, and rarely by the same speaker. This interactional pattern strongly echoes the findings of Obasi and Melafa (2022) in their study about stylistic language strategies in Nigerian comic skits. In particular, quantity maxim violations were committed to serve as lexical cohesive devices, according to Halliday's (2014) concept of the textual metafunction. It refers to the linguistic resources that create cohesion and organize discourse into a coherent text (Halliday, 2014). This is also demonstrated in the selected transcripts below.

Excerpt 15

Speaker A: I want to allot um... The *tenacity* or the electricity.

Speaker B: *Tenacity*.

Speaker A: *The vibration* of that.

Speaker B: *The vibration*, 'di ba? Pag mabagal, mas malakas yung vibration.
(on setting a rating scale for MRT stations)

Excerpt 16

Speaker A: My God, like Miranda Priestly is like... *that is groundbreaking*.

Speaker B: *That is groundbreaking*. Like vests... for spring...

Both: *Groundbreaking*.

(on barangay kagawads' vest uniforms)

As shown, the quantity maxim violations operate within a cohesive network where they anchor possible reference points, secure opportunities for topic shifts or turn-taking, and build interactional momentum. The predictable collocational patterns construct a dense lexical network that lubricates conversational flow (Obasi & Melafa, 2022). This demonstrates how the quantity maxim is not simply breached but adapted to contribute to a rhythmic unfolding of humor in discourse.

Overall, these patterned violations across manner, quality, relevance, and quantity illustrate how maxim violations serve as intentional, central mechanisms in speakers' humor construction during conversation. The dataset reveals that such patterned breaching also supports the negotiation of stance (Torres-Marín et al., 2022) and the regulation of interactional flow (Obasi & Melafa, 2022). The high frequency of maxim violations also implies a strategic intentionality behind the disruptions to cooperative expectations, which depend on shared contextual knowledge (Attardo, 2022). This enables interlocutors to recognize the humor as deliberate rather than inadvertent, thereby reinforcing the social and relational functions of humor in interaction (Attardo, 2022).

Spontaneous Conversational Humor Strategies

Considering the strategic utilization attached to patterned maxim violations, adapting Martin's (2007) spontaneous conversational humor strategies enabled a detailed mapping of the strategic functions operationalized within the humor structures. The findings are tabulated in Table 2. The analysis revealed four noteworthy humor strategies used across all maxim violations: exaggeration (n=116), puns (n=48), satire (n=25), and clever replies to serious statements (n=12). Although all strategies were evident across all maxim violations, a closer look revealed that some were more prevalent under particular maxim violations than others. The strategies are discussed below in order of frequency.

Table 2. *Strategies Manifested in Gricean Maxim Violations*

Strategies Manifested (Martin, 2007)	Gricean Maxim Violated (Grice, 1975)				Total
	Quality	Quantity	Manner	Relevance	
Exaggeration	50	15	39	12	116
Puns	7	6	25	10	48
Satire	5	4	10	6	25
Clever replies to serious statements	5	2	3	2	12
Irony	3	2	3	2	10
Teasing	1	2	3	4	10
Transformations of frozen expressions	1	1	5	3	10
Self-deprecation	2	1	2	1	6
Double entendres	0	0	4	1	5
Sarcasm	1	1	1	0	3
Replies to rhetorical questions	0	2	0	0	2

Exaggeration. Any intentional dramatized, under- or over- emphasis of meaning was recoded under exaggeration (Martin, 2007). As it relies on truth distortion as a conversational strategy, it occurred most concurrently as quality (n=50) and manner (n=39) maxim violations. As a conversational strategy, these maxim violations contributed to the over-the-top delivery of expressions and assisted in humor delivery, as shown in the lifted transcripts below.

Excerpt 17

Cross-stitching is the prerequisite to cross-dressing.

Excerpt 18

I would like to commend the inventor of buchi because *buchi is the first lip gloss that was ever made.*

Puns. Any wordplay utilizing phonological features was recoded as a pun (Martin, 2007). As it relies mostly on loose similarity between lexical and semantic items, it occurred most concurrently as manner (n=25) and relevance (n=10) maxim violations. They commonly facilitated topic shifts characterized by abruptness and absurd associations, which heightened comedic effect, as shown in the lifted transcripts below.

Excerpt 19

Speaker A: It's becoming.

Speaker B: Sabi nga nila... it's *beks* coming.

Excerpt 20

Speaker A: Kaya ang daming creative din na mga Gen Z ngayon. Kasi maraming nagha-*habi* or maraming nagtatahi.

Speaker B: Mga *hobbyists*.

Satire. Any expression that forms part of playful, aggressive banter directed at social structures of power was recoded as satire (Martin, 2007). Satire is characterized by its political or sociocultural commentary or critique in spontaneous conversation. As such, it occurs most frequently as manner (n=10) and relevance (n=6) maxim violations. They are used for politically framing the conversation when an interactional opportunity arises, or to introduce an unexpectedly humorous angle to a familiar topic. This is shown in the lifted transcripts below.

Excerpt 21

That's true. Kaya itim yung, ano, yung font kasi *ganyan kaitim yung budhi nung iba* (government contractors).

Excerpt 22

Ang clear ng imagery, pero doon mo rin masasabi, Bausy, na parang *karamihan sa mga officials busog. Parang kumain sila ng tatlong Jamaican patties.*

Clever replies to serious statements. When the violations were committed as part of unexpected or surprising responses to questions, they were recoded as clever replies to serious statements (Martin, 2007). It occurred mostly

as a quality (n=5) maxim violation, as it reinterprets the question or answer, thus partly distorting the objective situation at the expense of heightening humor.

Excerpt 23

Speaker A: ...Ano ba ang nagpapagawa ng ulap?

Speaker B: *Luha.*

Irony. The violations committed in order to express the opposite of their literal meaning were recoded as irony (Martin, 2007). They occurred equally as quality (n=3) and manner (n=3) maxim violations. Aside from distorting sincerity, the violations occurred when speakers attempted impartiality and censorship, requiring listeners to infer the opposite of what is literally expressed.

Excerpt 24

Speaker A: Parang tatlong strand lang eh, 'ba? *Tatlong strand ng carrots, tatlong strand...*

Speaker B: ...Parang *fine dining* yung serving ng atsara...

Excerpt 25

Diba, I mean if we are bridging possible feuds... *we're not saying there's a feud here between the two directors, pero let's bridge 'ba GMA7, ABS.*

Teasing. Violations that formed part of playful, non-hostile mockery of a specific person, event, or entity's characteristic were recoded as teasing (Martin, 2007). They occurred mostly as relevance (n=5) maxim violations, functioning as sudden, humorous jabs at subjects of the current discourse frame, as illustrated by the lifted transcripts below.

Excerpt 26

Parang tinalo mo yung mga teleserye nung 90s...*Mula sa Puso?*

Excerpt 27

You're a dogshow!

Transformation of frozen expressions. Creative restating of known proverbs, sayings, or lines was categorized as transformations of frozen expressions (Martin, 2007). These occurred most frequently as manner (n=5) maxim violations, in which speakers distorted well-known phrases or lines to create humor in the conversation, requiring listeners to infer the intended meaning beyond the literal meaning of the frozen expression.

Excerpt 28

Speaker A: Because ganon naman talaga mga bading, when there's no one else left. Well, I guess it's just the two of us now.

Speaker B: Oo, that's true. Parang ano iyan eh, *the boat is sinking. Group yourselves into...*

Both: *Two.*

Excerpt 29

Sugar, spice, and everything nice: *gulaman, pawis ni Toni Fowler, hibla ng buhok ni Pokwang.*

Self-deprecation. Violations that form part of a speaker's utterance to downplay or mock their own abilities or actions were recoded as self-deprecation (Martin, 2007). It manifested equally as quality and manner (n=2) maxim violations. They were largely utilized to inject humor into speakers' experiences or situations.

Excerpt 30

Speaker A: Tsaka ano, *mabilis po kaming mag-settle.* Charot.

Speaker B: *Hindi po kami inaabot ng one year.* Eme!

Double entendres. Violations that form part of expressions that hint at a secondary meaning were recoded as double entendres (Martin, 2007). As these violations involved contextual inference for audience interpretation,

they occurred mostly as manner (n=4) maxim violations. In the transcripts, they were strategically employed to veil socially sensitive or adult-themed secondary meanings, as shown in the lifted transcripts below.

Excerpt 31

Hindi naman pwede yan. Magaling ka na, *tapos masarap ka pa.*

Excerpt 32

You ask for divine presence, but then *you also have access to your own divine by going to a motel.*

Sarcasm. Violations that involved sharp, mocking, and intentional remarks directed at an individual were recoded as sarcasm (Martin, 2007). They manifested as quality, quantity, and manner maxim violations. In the transcripts, they were characterized by insincere mockery or critique of conversational situations, such as:

Excerpt 33

So... *pack you sa inyo.* Okay? Yun po talaga.

Replies to rhetorical questions. Violations that involved an unintended response to a question were recoded as replies to rhetorical questions (Martin, 2007). Because these responses were not needed for elaboration, they occurred as quantity (n=2) maxim violations. They were deliberately committed to heightening humor.

Excerpt 34

Speaker A: Like Chinese ba siya? First name P-Phil. Last name Koa?

Speaker B: *Oo. Parang isa ba siyang dating gobernador ng QC. Tapos siya ba ang nagtatag ng Filipino-Chinese Friendship Arc sa Binondo?*

Overall, these frequencies mirror the maxim violations from Table 1, which demonstrate a heavy reliance on truth distortion, playful ambiguity, and abrupt topic shifts through loose associations to maintain comedic coherence or ensure conversational momentum. Similar interactional patterns have been reported in recent pragmatic studies, which argue that humorous discourse intentionally departs from the Cooperative Principle because speakers expect audiences to recover the intended meaning through contextual inference rather than literal interpretation (Nafi & Pratama, 2025; Fernández & Araya, 2023; Nisa et al., 2025). Contemporary humor research likewise emphasizes that successful conversational humor depends not on strict adherence to Gricean maxims but on the audience's pragmatic competence to recognize deliberate violations as communicative resources rather than conversational failures (Torres-Marín et al., 2022). This implies that the speakers strategically manipulate conversational norms to maximize humorous effects while preserving interactional coherence through shared cultural knowledge and inferential processing.

A further interpretation of these frequency patterns suggests that maxim violations function not merely as isolated humorous devices but as interactional mechanisms that sustain collaborative meaning-making between speakers and listeners. From an applied linguistics perspective, this reflects the dynamic nature of pragmatic competence, where conversational success depends on participants' ability to negotiate implied meanings beyond literal utterances (Fernández & Araya, 2023). Likewise, recent discourse-pragmatic research argues that humor emerges through collaborative inferencing and the co-construction of contextual meaning rather than through individual utterances alone (Chavez & Prado, 2023; Hatzithomas, 2024). This implies that frequent maxim violations indicate highly interactive discourse in which humor is jointly constructed through shared pragmatic knowledge, cultural familiarity, and audience inference.

Influence on Identity

The influence of these conversational strategies on the speakers' identity is mapped in Table 3. Table 3 shows the pattern codes and the identity-influence themes that emerged in the coding process. The pattern codes yielded four prevalent identity-influence themes. Maxim violations emerged as the most prevalent in camp performance and wit identity-influence (n=103), then solidarity and community identity (n=55), power and persona construction (n=34), and lastly shade and social control (n=31). These distributions imply how maxim violations in the speakers' conversations contributed to the construction of an ostentatious, performative persona recognized by the larger society. They also signaled group membership, asserted authority in interactional spaces, and delivered socio-cultural commentary. These identity themes are discussed in more detail below.

Table 3. *Pattern Codes and Identity-Influence Themes*

Pattern Codes	Identity-Influence Themes
Exaggerated humor	Camp Performance and Wit
Dramatized performance	
Linguistic play	
Shared queer references	Solidarity and Community Identity
Collaborative humor	
Insider expressions	
Strategic indirectness	Power and Persona Construction
Playful teasing	
Mock superiority	
Veiled correction	Shade and Social Control
Euphemistic insults	
Mock critique	

Camp Performance and Wit. The speakers' language projects an identity of quick-wittedness, creative language manipulation, and over-the-top humor. For instance, the shift from cross to extended dramatized opinion (Excerpt 17) or the exaggerated compliment of barangay kagawads' vests as groundbreaking, leading to a comical skit of "The Devil Wears Prada" (Excerpt 16), exemplifies what Hellmuth (2024) describes as camp's reliance on the recontextualization of familiar social material. The linguistic practice drives theatricality, humor, or commentary. In his study about the reactionary politics and performative strategies of camp, these linguistic distortions are operationalized in stylized performances that foreground artifice and playful excess (Hellmuth, 2024).

In this sense, the speakers' maxim violations operate as camp techniques, echoing Cleto's (2019) framing of camp as a queer cultural strategy rooted in theatricality and creative reworking of signs. These patterned maxim violations and humorous linguistic maneuvers become part of a recognizable discourse frame associated with queer camp performance (Agha, 2005). As speakers repeatedly mobilize exaggeration (Excerpts 7, 8, 17, 18), puns (Excerpts 19, 20), clever replies to serious statements (Excerpt 23), and informational excess (Excerpts 11, 14), these practices accumulate social value within the community.

Solidarity and Community Identity. The speakers' language use also built solidarity and affirmed community belonging. This identity emerges through collaborative humor, insider references, and shared queer cultural knowledge that presupposes mutual understanding between speakers and listeners. For instance, a shared understanding may be necessitated through references to place deixis (Excerpts 1, 2, 34), popular media (Excerpt 3), or collaborative humor-building (Excerpt 28).

According to Bucholtz and Hall (2005), these linguistic practices are described as tactics of intersubjectivity, where speakers actively position themselves in relation to others through shared semiotic repertoires. Following this, maxim violations function as intersubjective tactics which enable humorous expansions, unnecessary elaborations, or sudden associative leaps that only make sense within the group's shared interpretive frame (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Aside from playful exaggeration (Excerpts 1, 2, 3), most of these utterances rely on the transformation of frozen expressions (Excerpt 28) or replies to rhetorical questions (Excerpt 34). These practices signal comfort and relational closeness dependent on shared media knowledge and queer humor forms, pointing not only to shared experiences but to a socially typified identity rooted in camaraderie, familiarity, and collective humor.

Power and Persona Construction. The speaker's language use contributed to their construction of a persona, which enabled them to express or be the object of social critique or alignment without literally committing, through strategic indirectness, playful teasing, and mock superiority. Specifically, they construct risk-taking (Excerpts 9, 10), self-assured (Excerpts 31, 32), or mock-influential (Excerpts 25, 30) personas to manage power and social stance through humorous interaction. According to Heritage and Clayman (2023), this linguistic practice is described as Goffman's (1981) footing shifts, wherein speakers momentarily suspend a serious stance and shift to a theatrical footing to socially or personally critique themselves, the audience, or broader social life without disturbing the interactional order.

This justifies how maxim violations function to manage social risks in interaction through humor. According to Lakoff and Johnson (2008), they become "thought-manipulators" or pragmatic cues that direct audience

interpretation by making socially risky and risqué commentaries palatable. These utterances are usually expressed through conversational forms of irony (Excerpt 25), self-deprecation (Excerpt 30), sarcasm (Excerpt 33), and double entendres (Excerpts 31, 32). In the process, this repetitive donning of snap personas becomes characteristic of the speech community's stance-shifting practices, aligning with Mendoza-Denton's (2014) findings that speakers use rapid, interactionally cued persona shifts to negotiate authority and power in discourse. Rather than indexing a fixed identity, these recurring cues work as interactional resources that signal shared familiarity and the playful relationality that characterizes this community's talk (Kim & Michel, 2023).

Shade and Social Control. The speakers' language use enabled indirect critique, playful superiority, and subtle stance-taking, allowing them to comment on sociopolitical issues without overt confrontation. This linguistic practice was specifically noted for its abrupt shifts in discourse frame or associative leaps bordering on exaggerated absurdity. This is illustrated through absurd imagined scenarios like porn films (Excerpt 13) or associative leaps from musical productions to political commentary (Excerpt 12). These utterances echo the carnivalesque strategies documented in Quines' (2025) analysis of Vice Ganda's online discourse, where exaggeration, parody, and playful irreverence enable critique while maintaining plausible deniability.

Through Bakhtin's carnivalesque, speakers temporarily invert social hierarchies, using laughter and absurdity to destabilize the seriousness of political discourse (Grübel, 2023). It supports how repeated maxim violations become vehicles for sociopolitical commentary within the interactional space. Aligning with Irvine and Gal's (2019) notion of semiotic processes, speakers use indirectness and contrast to position themselves as discerning evaluators of sociopolitical life (Slota, 2025). These utterances commonly involve satire (Excerpts 21, 22) aside from discourse-frame leaps (Excerpts 12, 13).

Across these themes, the patterned maxim violations contribute to an indexical style that becomes recognizable within the queer-Filipino speech community (Moore, 2020). As Table 2 illustrates, these maxim-violating practices repeat across interactions. According to Silverstein (2003), these stylistic patterns accrue a third-order indexical value, meaning they begin to function as recognizable cues that circulate within the group and signal an identity characterized by campy wit, collaborative belonging, strategic persona-shifting, and playful sociopolitical critique. In practice, this means that what starts as a single joke, pun, or dramatic exaggeration becomes a socially meaningful sign in conversations. Listeners learn to hear these moves as markers of queer humor, shared cultural knowledge, and a stance of playful criticality (Moore, 2020). The style becomes recognizable not just as "funny," but as a way of speaking that points to who the speakers are, whom they align with, and how they position themselves within broader social life. Recent research likewise shows that recurring humorous discourse practices become enregistered, allowing audiences to associate particular linguistic styles with specific identities and communities (Gerwin, 2024). Moreover, humorous interaction relies on shared pragmatic competence, whereby listeners recognize maxim violations as intended cues for non-literal interpretation rather than conversational breakdowns (Dynel, 2021). This implies that repeated maxim violations function not only as humor strategies but also as socially meaningful linguistic resources through which speakers construct and reinforce queer identity, group affiliation, and shared cultural knowledge.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the infringement of Gricean conversational maxims in spontaneous queer-Filipino humor is more than a matter of linguistic deviation. Rather, these violations function as strategic communicative resources that enable speakers to construct humor, negotiate identity, and sustain social cohesion. The patterned breaches of manner, quality, relevance, and quantity were shown to facilitate exaggeration, wordplay, irony, satire, and other humor strategies that shaped the speakers' projected wit, community belongingness, persona management, and subtle social control. These findings highlight how maxim violations reinforce communicative intentions such as heightening audience engagement, affirming identity, or strengthening relational bonds.

The study further reveals that these linguistic practices are deeply dependent on interactional context and shared cultural knowledge. Strategic hyperbole, playful reframing, and clever reinterpretations were found to draw heavily on intertextual references familiar to the queer-Filipino community. These practices culminate in group-specific performances that foreground creativity, theatricality, and shared humor norms. In this sense, maxim violations emerge as identity-indexing practices that reflect and reproduce the community's semiotic repertoire.

From an educational standpoint, the study highlights the need for a holistic pedagogical approach that considers students' linguistic deviations and deviance not merely as substandard language use but as strategic expressions of identity and social belonging. The implementation of such a pedagogy will require an inclusive learning space that normalizes gender-sensitive language and accounts for student individuality, multiple intelligences, and learning styles. Doing so will help equip students with the communicative tools and strategies needed to participate and contribute meaningfully in dense, demanding linguistic landscapes that serve as sites for identity affirmation and social belonging.

From a sociolinguistic standpoint, the study points to a gradual shift away from prescriptive language expectations toward a recognition of language as context-situated, fluid, and shaped by social relations. Students should learn to critically understand that no monolithic social body holds sole control over language standards, which are largely influenced by power structures and heteronormative nuances. Educational landscapes, therefore, should align with the socially embedded, gender-transcendent, and highly dynamic language practices that students regularly encounter.

These implications extend to media and public discourse, where gender minorities continue to be portrayed in incomplete or distorted ways. Addressing these imbalances requires deliberate pedagogical efforts towards the careful selection of inclusive instructional materials, the integration of activities that highlight how social dynamics shape language ideologies, and the cultivation of media literacy that empowers students to critically evaluate representations of gender and identity. Ultimately, the study emphasizes the importance of fostering an adaptive, inclusive, and identity-affirming language education.

Future research may explore maxim violations in other queer-Filipino contexts, compare humor practices across digital and face-to-face interactions, or examine how non-queer audiences interpret these humorous strategies. Investigating generational, regional, or platform-based variations would further illuminate how humor, identity, and social meaning evolve across contexts. While this study focused on a specific speech community, its findings open pathways for broader inquiries into how groups use humor and linguistic creativity to navigate social life.

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All authors declare equal contribution to the work.

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