
Analysis of Maxim Violation in The Novel *All the Bright Places* by Jennifer Niven

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ABSTRACT

As a popular young adult novel, *All the Bright Places* frequently portrays characters who often violate Grice's maxim violation when dealing with sensitive and emotional situations. Analyzing these maxim violations is important because it facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of the author's intentional construction of dialogue to reveal pragmatic meanings, particularly maxim violations within the Cooperative Principle. This study aims to analyze violations of Grice's Cooperative Principle in the novel *All the Bright Places* by Jennifer Niven, focusing on dialogues between Theodore Finch and Violet Markey. This study employs a descriptive qualitative method. The data are taken from dialogues between the two main characters in the novel *All the Bright Places* by Jennifer Niven and are collected through documentation and note-taking techniques. The data are analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model, which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification, based on Grice's Cooperative Principle and interpreted using Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. The findings show that these maxim violations are used as communication strategies to avoid discussing sensitive topics, maintain personal boundaries, and manage social interaction dynamics. Brown and Levinson's politeness theory is applied to explain the reasons behind these violations, such as efforts to protect face and avoid emotional conflicts. These findings contribute to the development of pragmatic theory and enrich literary studies, especially on how maxim violations deepen characterization and enhance narrative complexity. This study is expected to benefit students, educators, and researchers in linguistics, pragmatics, and literature.

INTRODUCTION

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that focuses on the study of language use in communication. According to Huang (2017), pragmatics examines how context contributes to meaning, going beyond the formal semantic and syntactic structures of language. Pragmatics analyzes how humans use and interpret speech in real communication situations, including how understanding is influenced by social, cultural, and situational contexts. One of the central concepts in pragmatics is the cooperative principle developed by Paul Grice (1975), which explains how people cooperate in communication to achieve effectiveness and efficiency (Cutting, 2005).

Grice's cooperative principle is a fundamental concept that suggests participants in a conversation are expected to cooperate with each other to facilitate effective communication. Yule (2014) explains that this principle is realized through four maxims: the maxim of quantity (providing enough information), the maxim of quality (saying what is true), the maxim of relevance (providing relevant information), and the maxim of manner (speaking clearly and orderly). These principles serve as the foundation for smooth and effective communication between people. In daily communication, the cooperative principle serves as an implicit framework that influences how listeners interpret and expect contributions from speakers during conversations (Yule, 2014).

Human communication, as a complex social practice, does not always strictly follow the cooperative principle. Violations of the associated maxims often occur for various reasons, such as social norms, interpersonal relationships, and situational contexts. According to Paltridge (2012), these violations can happen due to cultural differences, the need to convey implied meanings, or specific communication strategies. In many interactions, speakers may intentionally choose indirect or non-cooperative expressions to avoid conflict, protect personal feelings, or maintain social harmony. Thomas (2014) emphasizes that violating a maxim is not a sign of communication failure but rather a strategic way to convey additional meaning or implicature. Through maxim violations, speakers can be able to communicate messages that cannot be expressed directly, allowing listeners to infer deeper meanings beyond the literal utterances. In pragmatic studies, analyzing violations of the cooperative principle is an interesting research area because it reveals hidden meaning dynamics in interactions and helps explain how speakers manage meaning, intention, and social relationships in communication.

In literary works especially novel, violations of the cooperative principle are often used as a narrative strategy to create certain effects on readers. According to Black (2005), maxim violations in character dialogues can reflect a character's traits, motivations, or emotional state. Violations of the cooperative principle can also be used to create tension, humor, or show the dynamics of relationships between characters. In novels, these violations can serve as a tool to depict a character's internal and external conflicts. Culpeper and McIntyre (2010) state that violations of the cooperative principle in character dialogues can reveal what cannot be directly stated in the text, such as a character's desires or secrets. This highlights that literary works, particularly novels, serve as an important medium for examining how language functions, including how speakers employ conversational strategies or violate maxims in interaction. Therefore, analyzing a novel such as *All the Bright Places* is relevant for understanding how pragmatic phenomena occur in fictional communication.

The novel *All the Bright Places* by Jennifer Niven is a contemporary young adult novel that centers on the lives of two teenagers, Theodore Finch and Violet Markey, who struggle with grief, mental health issues, and emotional trauma. Because the novel deals with sensitive themes such as depression, loss, and self-identity, the characters often communicate indirectly rather than expressing their thoughts and feelings openly. As a result, violations of the cooperative principle frequently occur in their dialogues. In this novel, the main characters, Theodore Finch and Violet Markey, violate the cooperative principle in various forms, such as providing too much or too little information (maxim of quantity), presenting information that is not entirely true (maxim of quality), responding with irrelevant statements (maxim of relevance), and using ambiguous or unclear expressions (maxim of manner). These violations function as communication strategies that reflect the characters' emotional states and help convey deeper meanings within their interactions.

Several relevant studies have been conducted on the analysis of maxim violation in literature and film. Setiawati et al. (2024) analyzed the violation of maxims in the film adaptation of *All the Bright Places*, focusing on how these violations reflect the emotional and psychological states of the characters. Despite this valuable contribution, there remains a significant gap as their research examined only the film adaptation, not the original novel text. Other studies include Cantikawati et al. (2024) who examined maxim violations in *It Starts with Us* and Suardana (2022) who investigated Grice's Maxim Theory in *Never Go Back*. Addressing this research gap is significant as the analysis of the original novel text facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of the author's intentional construction of dialogue to reveal pragmatic violations, specifically maxim violations within the cooperative principle. While film adaptations generally preserve essential dialogues, novels offer richer context and more character interactions that reveal deeper patterns of maxim violations. This research aims to analyze violations of the Cooperative Principle in the dialogues between Violet and Finch in the novel *All the Bright Places*. Using a pragmatic theoretical framework, specifically Grice's Cooperative Principle theory, this research aims to identify which maxims are violated and explore the reasons behind these violations in the interactions between Finch and Violet.

Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies how meaning is shaped by context in communication. According to Yule (2014), Pragmatics is the study of how more is communicated than is actually said, while according to Nangin et al (2025) Pragmatics is a fundamental field in linguistics that studies how context affects meaning. These definitions emphasize that pragmatics goes beyond the literal meaning of words and focuses on how implied meanings are conveyed and interpreted through context. Pragmatics takes into account speaker intention, cultural background, and social norms that influence understanding in communication. The researcher argues that Yule's definition effectively

captures the essence of pragmatics by highlighting the importance of inference and contextual interpretation in meaning-making, which is essential in everyday communication to avoid misunderstanding. Cutting (2005) further explains that Pragmatics studies the choices speakers make, the constraints they face in social interactions, and the effects of their language use on others, indicating that pragmatics also involves strategic language use in different situations. This perspective broadens the scope of pragmatics by integrating both linguistic and social dimensions, showing that concepts such as implicature, presupposition, deixis, and speech acts are central to effective communication. Overall, understanding pragmatics enables individuals to communicate more appropriately and interpret meaning more accurately across academic, professional, and social contexts.

Cooperative Principles

The Cooperative Principle, proposed by Grice in 1975, explains how effective communication is achieved through cooperation between speakers and listeners in a conversation. It states that participants are expected to make contributions that are appropriate to the purpose and direction of the interaction so that meaning can be understood mutually. A successful conversation requires cooperation between the listener and the speaker, so that communication can flow smoothly (Tumimomor et al., 2023). This principle highlights that communication is not merely about exchanging information, but also about shared expectations, mutual understanding, and social cooperation that allow conversations to proceed smoothly in everyday interactions.

Grice (1975) further divided the Cooperative Principle into four conversational maxims: quality, quantity, relevance, and manner. The maxim of quality requires speakers to be truthful and avoid saying things that are false or unsupported by evidence. The maxim of quantity emphasizes that speakers should provide information that is sufficient for the conversation, neither too much nor too little. The maxim of relevance requires contributions to be related to the topic being discussed, while the maxim of manner focuses on clarity, encouraging speakers to avoid ambiguity, obscurity, and unnecessary complexity in their utterances. Each maxim plays a distinct role in guiding effective and meaningful communication.

Observance of these maxims occurs when speakers follow the conversational rules and communicate clearly, truthfully, and appropriately. However, non-observance of maxims happens when speakers intentionally or unintentionally do not follow these principles for certain purposes, such as being indirect, polite, humorous, or avoiding sensitive topics. According to Yule (2014), violating a maxim often results in indirect language, requiring listeners to infer meanings beyond what is explicitly stated. This process of interpretation shows that non-observance does not always lead to communication failure but can instead enrich interaction by creating implicatures and deeper layers of meaning.

Politeness Theory

Politeness strategies are communication strategies that focus on using polite words and actions to maintain harmonious social interaction. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), politeness strategies are developed to protect the hearer's face, which refers to an individual's self-image and the need to maintain self-esteem in social interactions. The concept of face represents the self-image projected by an individual and must be maintained to avoid "losing face" during communication. In this theory, positive face refers to the desire to be valued and accepted by others, while negative face refers to the desire to be free from interference and maintain autonomy, as humans are social creatures who constantly interact with others (Rorintulus et al., 2022). Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory further explains that individuals strive to protect both positive and negative face in conversation. According to Nangin et al. (2025), Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs) highlight the social risks involved in communication, prompting speakers to use politeness strategies based on social context and interpersonal relationships. In many cases, violations of Grice's maxims occur as politeness strategies to protect either the speaker's or the listener's face, especially in sensitive or emotional situations, thereby helping to maintain social harmony and avoid tension.

Brown and Levinson (1978) identify four main strategies for dealing with Face-Threatening Acts: Bald on Record, Negative Politeness, Positive Politeness, and Off-Record strategies. Bald on Record is the most direct strategy, where speakers express their intentions clearly without reducing the impact on the listener's face, often used in informal situations or close relationships. Negative Politeness focuses on respecting the listener's negative face by using indirect language, apologies, or hedging to avoid imposition. Positive Politeness aims to satisfy the listener's positive face by expressing solidarity, care, and closeness, while Off-Record strategies involve indirect and ambiguous expressions that allow the listener to infer meaning without direct confrontation. In *All the Bright Places*, Finch and Violet apply

these politeness strategies to manage emotional vulnerability and sensitive topics. Their use of Bald on Record, Negative Politeness, Positive Politeness, and Off-Record strategies often results in violations of Grice's maxims, which function as pragmatic tools to protect personal boundaries, reduce emotional tension, and explain the underlying reasons for maxim violations in their conversations.

Maxim & Maxim Violations

A maxim is a principle followed by speakers in interaction to ensure that a conversation runs smoothly (Hassani, 2019). Maxims function to maintain the flow and harmony of conversation (Aristyanti, et al., 2020) and serve as rules to determine whether a speaker is cooperative when providing information (Hamani & Puluhulawa, 2019). In addition, maxims act as communication guidelines that support effective interaction (Fitriyani, et al., 2020; Pradika & Rohmanti, 2018). According to Harared (2015), maxims are used to fulfill the Cooperative Principle, while Grice's perspective emphasizes that adherence to maxims enables cooperative conversation (Hidayanti, et al., 2018). Furthermore, Fadly (2012) states that maxims guide speakers to ensure communication is effective, harmonious, and aligned with the Cooperative Principle. Thus, maxims function as principles of cooperation that help individuals convey information clearly, effectively, and comprehensibly in communication.

A maxim violation occurs when a speaker intentionally or unintentionally deviates from Grice's four conversational maxims: quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. According to Grice (1975), such deviations may disrupt the flow of communication, but they are often used deliberately to convey implicit meanings, avoid directness, or achieve specific communicative effects. Violations of the maxim of quantity occur when a speaker provides too much or too little information than required. For example, when Violet asks, "Why do you want to know?", Finch responds with an overly detailed explanation that goes beyond what is necessary, which violates the maxim of quantity. Similarly, a violation of the maxim of quality occurs when a speaker provides false or misleading information. This can be seen when Finch answers Violet's question about his scar by saying, "I drew it on," which is likely untrue and therefore violates the maxim of quality by presenting information that does not align with the truth.

Violations of the maxim of relevance and manner further demonstrate how speakers may depart from cooperative norms in conversation. A violation of relevance occurs when a speaker provides information unrelated to the topic being discussed, as shown when Violet responds to Finch's comment about the rain with a morbid reflection on death, shifting the conversation away from its original focus. Meanwhile, a violation of the maxim of manner occurs when a speaker uses unclear, vague, or ambiguous expressions. This is illustrated when Finch answers Violet's question about where he was by saying, "I was doing some remodeling," which lacks clarity and does not directly address the question. Such violations show that speakers often use indirectness, ambiguity, or irrelevance as communication strategies, reflecting the complexity of human interaction and the role of pragmatic meaning beyond literal expressions.

METHOD

In conducting this research, the researcher used a descriptive qualitative method. According to Kothari (2004), "the qualitative method aims to discover underlying motives and desires in depth for a specific purpose" (p. 3). Furthermore, according to Creswell (2014), descriptive data analysis involves systematic methods of collecting, organizing, analyzing, and interpreting data, followed by drawing meaningful conclusions. This approach ensures that the data is presented accurately and comprehensively, allowing researchers to identify patterns and insights effectively. The descriptive qualitative method focuses on words and meaning in analysis, rather than searching for quantities or numbers. This analysis falls under the descriptive qualitative method because the data collected consists of words, clauses, phrases, and sentences that are analyzed descriptively through words, not numbers. This approach allows the researcher to systematically examine and interpret the dialogues in the novel *All the Bright Places* by Jennifer Niven to identify and interpret instances of maxim violations. The research design of this study is descriptive qualitative, which is suitable for examining linguistic phenomena within their natural context. This design enables the researcher to describe and interpret the use of language in the novel without manipulating variables or applying statistical analysis. By employing a descriptive qualitative research design, the study focuses on identifying patterns of maxim violations and explaining their pragmatic functions in character interactions. This design allows for an in-depth and context-based analysis of dialogues, making it appropriate for understanding how violations of Grice's Cooperative Principle contribute to meaning and communication in the novel.

The data for this research is taken from two sources: the primary source is the novel *All the Bright Places* by Jennifer Niven, first published in 2015, which consists of 388 pages. The secondary sources

include books, journal articles, and other academic materials related to the study. These secondary sources provide relevant insights into Grice's Cooperative Principle and its violations in literary works, particularly through Yule (2014), who discusses pragmatics and implicature, and Cutting (2005), who emphasizes the role of context and discourse in understanding meaning and Brown and Levinson (1987) on politeness strategies. Additional support is also drawn from previous studies that analyze maxim violations in literary texts to strengthen the theoretical and analytical framework of this research.

In this research, the researcher obtain data from Jennifer Niven's novel *All the Bright Places*. The data primarily consist of dialogues containing maxim violations. To collect the data, the researcher used documentation methods and note-taking techniques. According to Sugiyono (2017), documentation is a data collection technique carried out by gathering and analyzing documents relevant to the research. Additionally, According to Creswell (2014), note-taking is a systematic process in qualitative research that involves collecting and recording information in a structured manner to ensure the accuracy and completeness of data. This process includes recording observations, interviews, or analysis of documents relevant to the research focus. Creswell (2014) emphasizes that effective note-taking should be organized, detailed, and reflect the research context comprehensively, thereby facilitating the researcher's ability to analyze and interpret the data.

In analyzing the data, the researcher used the theory by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which includes the processes of selecting and condensing the data (data condensation), presenting the data systematically (data display), and drawing and verifying conclusions (conclusion drawing/verification). In this stage, the researcher identifies the dialogues in *All the Bright Places* that contain maxim violations based on Grice's Cooperative Principle and classifies them into the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relevance, and Manner. Furthermore, Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory is applied to analyze the politeness strategies such as positive politeness, negative politeness, Bald on record or off record strategies in order to explain the reasons behind the maxim violations.

FINDINGS

The analysis of the data is presented in the form of quoted passages from *All the Bright Places* where maxim violations occur based on Grice's (1975) theory of the Cooperative Principle. The researcher found data containing violations of the four maxims (quantity, quality, relevance, and manner) in the communication between Theodore Finch and Violet Markey as shown below. The researcher carries out the process of selection, focus, and simplification of relevant data from the novel *All the Bright Places* by Jennifer Niven. The data consists of dialogues between Theodore Finch and Violet Markey that contain violations of Grice's Cooperative Principle, specifically those reflecting violations of the maxims of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. The researcher simplifies the data by reading the novel multiple times and identifying sections that depict violations of these four maxims. Then, the researcher focuses in the communication between Theodore Finch and Violet Markey, their dialogue was selected because it often depicts violations of the cooperative principle, which allows the researcher to analyze these violations in depth.

Table 1. Maxim Violation

No.	Dialog	Types of Maxim Violation	Chapter	Pages
1	Finch: "It's starting to rain," Violet: "I guess there's an argument to be made that the rain will wash away the blood, leaving us a neater mess to clean up than otherwise. But it's the mess part that's got me thinking. I'm not a vain person, but I am human, and I don't know about you, but I don't want to look like I've been run through the wood chipper at my funeral."	Relevance	Finch (I am awake again. Day 6.)	7
2	Finch: "Theodore Finch. I think we had pre-cal together last year." Violet: "I hate math, but that's not why I'm up here. No offense if that's why you are. You're probably better at math than I am, but it's okay, I'm fine with it. See, I excel at other, more important things-guitar, sex, and consistently disappointing my dad, to name a few. By the way, it's apparently true that you'll never use it in the real world. Math, I mean."	Relevance	Finch (I am awake again. Day 6.)	6

3	Finch: "Thanks for saving me, Violet. I don't know what I would've done if you hadn't come along. I guess I'd be dead right now." Violet: "I was just sitting there, on the railing. I didn't come up here to..."	Relevance	Finch (I am awake again. Day 6.)	11
4	Finch: "So you're afraid to ride in a car but you'll climb up on a bell tower ledge?" Violet: "I'm going home."	Relevance	Violet (151 days till graduation)	93
5	Violet: "I would have gotten out of it so I didn't have to do it to begin with. Why do you want me to do this project with you anyway?" Finch: "Because our mountain is waiting."	Manner	Violet (154 days till graduation)	41
6	Violet: "Where did you get the scar?" Finch: "I drew it on. It's been my experience that girls like scars even better than tattoos."	Quality	Violet (151 days till graduation)	92
7	Violet: "Why do you want to know?" Finch: "Because I like you, not in a romantic, let's get-it-on way, but as a fellow student of U.S geography. And because it might help you to talk about it."	Quantity	Violet (147-146 days till freedom)	199
8	Violet: "Where were you this time?" Finch: "I was doing some remodeling."	Manner	Violet (135,134,133 days to go)	179
9	Violet: "What's all that staff paper there?" Finch: "Ideas for songs, random notes. Things that'll become songs. Things I might write about someday or started once but didn't finish because there wasn't enough in them. If a song's meant to stay around, you carry it with you in your bones."	Quantity	Violet (March 18)	292
10	Violet: "Are you feeling okay?" Finch: "Sorry, Ultraviolet. I'm still feeling kind of under the weather. Which, when you think about it, is a very odd expression. One that finds its origins in the sea--as in a sailor or passenger feels seasick from the storm, and they send him below to get out of the bad water."	Manner	Violet (March 18)	290
11	Violet: "Where are we going?" Finch: "Down there. But be quiet. First one to make a noise has to streak back to school."	Quantity	Violet (135,134,133 days to go)	177
12	Violet: "Is it true you almost drowned Roamer?" Finch: "Something like that."	Manner	Finch (Day 30 and I am AWAKE)	204
13	Violet: "Finch, are you living in here?" Finch: "I've been here before. Eventually, it works. I'll wake up one morning and feel like coming out."	Quantity	Violet (March 18)	295
14	Violet: "What were you doing up on that ledge?" Finch: "The same thing you were. I wanted to see what it was like. I wanted to imagine jumping off it. I wanted to leave all the shit behind. But when I did start to imagine it, I didn't like what it looked like. And then I saw you."	Quantity	Violet (The Day off)	230

DISCUSSIONS

The selected dialogues were systematically organized and categorized into specific types of maxim violations, namely violations of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner, based on Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle. This categorization was conducted to clearly identify how each conversational maxim is violated within the interactions between the characters. After the classification process, the researcher provided a detailed description of each selected dialogue by explaining the type of maxim violated, the conversational context in which the violation occurred, and the linguistic features that indicate the violation. Furthermore, the reasons behind these violations were examined using Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory in order to reveal the speakers' communicative intentions, such as protecting face, managing emotional sensitivity, and maintaining interpersonal relationships.

Maxim of Quantity Violation

The maxim of quantity requires speakers to provide information that is as informative as necessary, neither more nor less than required. However, in *All the Bright Places*, violations of this maxim frequently

occur, especially in Finch's responses. These violations appear when a character gives excessively detailed answers or longer explanations than expected. Such violations are not merely communicative failures but function as pragmatic strategies to avoid emotional pressure, reduce tension, or protect personal boundaries.

Table 2. Maxim of Quantity Violation

Data	Quotation	Explanation
1	<p>Violet: "Why do you want to know?" Finch: "Because I like you, not in a romantic, let's get-it-on way, but as a fellow student of U.S geography. And because it might help you to talk about it." --Chapter Violet (147-146 days till freedom), Page 199</p>	<p>In this dialogue, Finch violates the maxim of quantity by providing a longer and more detailed response than necessary. Violet simply asks, "Why do you want to know?" which could have been answered concisely. However, Finch adds additional information about his feelings for Violet, clarifying that he likes her as a friend and not romantically. He also suggests that talking about the topic might help Violet open up more. The violation of the maxim of quantity occurs in this conversation because Finch is attempting to protect both types of face (positive and negative face) of Violet. He provides more information than needed as a way to avoid tension and ensure that Violet feels valued and understood. Finch is trying to clarify his intentions and explain their relationship, showing attention and goodwill. Although this leads to a violation of the maxim of quantity, the action is taken with a greater purpose: to foster more honest and comfortable communication between them.</p>
2	<p>Violet: "What's all that staff paper there?" Finch: "Ideas for songs, random notes. Things that'll become songs. Things I might write about someday, or started once but didn't finish because there wasn't enough in them. If a song's meant to stay around, you carry it with you in your bones." --Chapter Violet (March 18), Page 292</p>	<p>In this dialogue, Finch violates the maxim of quantity by providing more information than necessary. This happens because Finch is trying to protect his negative face by avoiding a conversation that is too personal or emotional. By giving a longer and more general response, Finch avoids openness that could create tension or make Violet uncomfortable. The reason behind this violation is Finch's effort to maintain social distance. By talking more about songs and his creative process, Finch shifts the conversation away from more intimate or personal topics, such as feelings or more sensitive emotional aspects. This is a form of negative politeness, where Finch avoids sharing too much personal information or revealing deeper feelings that could burden Violet or create tension in their conversation. By providing more information than needed, Finch hopes to protect himself from the pressure of discussing his personal life further, while keeping the conversation flowing smoothly and avoiding potential tension.</p>
3	<p>Violet: "Where are we going?" Finch: "Down there. But be quiet. First one to make a noise has to streak back to school." --Chapter Violet (135,134,133 days to go), Page 177</p>	<p>The violation of the maxim of quantity in this dialogue occurs because Finch provides a longer response than necessary. Finch violates the maxim of quantity to avoid further questions or deeper probing from Violet. By giving a longer answer and adding a game element (such as the rule of silence), Finch tries to redirect the focus of the conversation and avoid further questions about the purpose or reasons behind their plans. This is a way to prevent the conversation from delving into more personal or sensitive topics that might make Finch feel uncomfortable or pressured. If he had provided a more direct or serious answer, the conversation might have felt more formal or intense. By adding a playful element and humor, Finch creates a more relaxed atmosphere and avoids a discussion that could make him feel more open or more pressured to reveal personal feelings. In doing so, Finch protects his negative face, which is the desire to maintain privacy and avoid conversations that might be considered too personal or burdensome</p>

4	<p>Violet: "Finch, are you living in here?" Finch: "I've been here before. Eventually, it works. I'll wake up one morning and feel like coming out." --Chapter Violet (March 18), Page 295</p>	<p>In this dialogue, Finch violates the maxim of quantity by providing a longer response than necessary. When Violet asks if he is living there, Finch gives a longer and more general answer to avoid a more personal conversation. By saying that he has been there before and will eventually feel like coming out, Finch avoids giving a direct answer that could reveal more about his life or his emotional state, which might be more sensitive. The reason for this violation is to protect his negative face, which is the desire not to speak too much or reveal more personal information that might make him feel uncomfortable. Finch does not want to feel pressured to discuss his life situation or personal feelings, so he chooses to give a more vague answer and redirect the conversation away from more emotional and personal matters. By providing more information than necessary, Finch is trying to control the conversation and ensure that he is not forced to talk about topics that are too deep or personal, which could create tension or awkwardness in their relationship.</p>
5	<p>Violet: "What were you doing up on that ledge?" Finch: "The same thing you were. I wanted to see what it was like. I wanted to imagine jumping off it. I wanted to leave all the shit behind. But when I did start to imagine it, I didn't like what it looked like. And then I saw you." --Chapter Violet (The Day off) Page 230</p>	<p>In this dialogue, Finch violates the maxim of quantity by providing a longer and more detailed response than necessary. Violet simply asks, "What were you doing up on that ledge?", which could have been answered concisely, like "I was thinking" or "I wanted to experience it." However, Finch gives a much longer answer, explaining his emotional state, his thoughts about jumping, and his desire to leave everything behind. This violation can be understood through negative politeness. Finch's extended response can be seen as an attempt to avoid a more personal or emotional conversation. By giving more information than necessary, Finch shifts the conversation away from the real emotional reasons behind why he was on the ledge. The deeper explanation allows Finch to share his thoughts without directly confronting the emotional aspects of his situation. Finch may not want to open up too much or reveal deeper emotional struggles, which could make him feel vulnerable. By offering a longer and more general answer about wanting to leave all the problems behind, Finch keeps the conversation on a safer, less personal level, thus protecting his negative face—his desire to maintain privacy and avoid being pressured to talk about deeper personal issues. By providing more information than necessary, Finch is trying to maintain social distance and prevent Violet from probing further into more sensitive or emotional topics. This demonstrates how negative politeness allows Finch to avoid deeper emotional involvement and maintain his emotional boundaries while still engaging in the conversation.</p>

From the data presented above, it can be seen that violations of the maxim of quantity frequently occur in the interactions between Finch and Violet, particularly in emotionally sensitive situations. These violations appear when Finch provides information that is longer, more detailed, or more elaborate than required by the context of the question. Instead of giving concise answers, Finch often expands his responses by adding explanations, emotional reflections, or additional details. According to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, this pattern reflects the use of negative politeness strategies, where the speaker attempts to reduce potential emotional tension and avoid further probing. By providing excessive information, Finch seeks to control the direction of the conversation and protect his privacy, especially when the topic touches on personal feelings or mental struggles. These violations help maintain social harmony by preventing direct confrontation and reducing the risk of emotional discomfort, even though they technically deviate from cooperative conversational norms.

Maxim of Quality Violation

The data below illustrate violations of the maxim of quality, which occur when a speaker provides information that is untrue, exaggerated, or misleading. In the novel, such violations are often used deliberately to conceal painful experiences, avoid sensitive topics, or reduce emotional tension in conversations.

Table 3. Maxim of Quality Violation

Data	Quotation	Explanation
1	<p>Violet: "Where did you get the scar?" Finch: "I drew it on. It's been my experience that girls like scars even better than tattoos." --Chapter Violet (151 days till graduation), Page 92</p>	<p>In this dialogue, Finch violates the maxim of quality by providing false information. When Violet asks about his scar, Finch says that he "drew" the scar, which is clearly not true. This is a violation of the maxim of quality because Finch gives a misleading or false answer. The reason for this violation can be understood through negative politeness. Finch may be trying to avoid talking about the origin of the scar, which could be related to a personal or traumatic experience, such as the fact that the scar was inflicted by his father. By giving a false answer, Finch is trying to protect himself from a deeper, more emotional conversation that could bring up painful memories or feelings. This shows that Finch is using negative politeness to avoid further emotional involvement and maintain social distance in the conversation, without having to open up about a more painful or personal story.</p>

Based on the data above, violations of the maxim of quality occur when Finch provides information that is clearly false or misleading. These violations are not random but are closely connected to emotionally painful or traumatic experiences that Finch is unwilling to discuss openly. By giving untrue answers, Finch avoids revealing sensitive personal information that could expose his vulnerability or invite further questioning. From the perspective of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, such violations function as negative politeness strategies aimed at protecting the speaker's negative face, particularly the desire to avoid emotional exposure and personal intrusion. In this context, the violation of truthfulness allows Finch to maintain emotional distance while still participating in the conversation, thus preserving interpersonal balance without engaging in distressing self-disclosure.

Maxim of Relevance Violation

The following dialogues demonstrate violations of the maxim of relevance, where the speaker responds with information that does not directly relate to the preceding utterance. These violations frequently occur when characters shift the topic to avoid emotionally challenging or uncomfortable discussions.

Table 4. Maxim of Relevance Violation

Data	Quotation	Explanation
1	<p>Finch: "It's starting to rain," Violet: "I guess there's an argument to be made that the rain will wash away the blood, leaving us a neater mess to clean up than otherwise. But it's the mess part that's got me thinking. I'm not a vain person, but I am human, and I don't know about you, but I don't want to look like I've been run through the wood chipper at my funeral." --Chapter Finch (I am awake again. Day 6.), Page 7</p>	<p>The violation of the maxim of relevance occurs because Violet shifts the conversation from Finch's comment about the rain to a very personal and dark topic about death and how she doesn't want to look terrible at her funeral. Finch simply mentions that it's raining, which is a light and neutral statement. However, Violet responds by talking about very emotional and personal matters, such as her fear of death and how she doesn't want to appear horrifying at her funeral. This violates the maxim of relevance because her response is unrelated to the topic of the rain that was initially discussed. The reason for this maxim violation is that Violet wants to express her fear of death, but she is not ready to discuss it directly. This fear is too personal or emotional for Violet to openly talk about, so she chooses to use an off-record strategy to touch on the topic without directly revealing it. By</p>

		<p>talking about the rain as an opening, she can touch on her dark and fearful thoughts about death, while still avoiding speaking directly about the fear itself. This is an example of negative politeness, where Violet tries to avoid a conversation that could make her feel awkward or too open about something very personal or emotional. In this way, she can express her feelings without having to be fully open or discuss them directly.</p>
2	<p>Finch: "Thanks for saving me, Violet. I don't know what I would've done if you hadn't come along. I guess I'd be dead right now." Violet: "I was just sitting there, on the railing. I didn't come up here to..." --Chapter Finch (I am awake again. Day 6.), Page 11</p>	<p>Violet violates the maxim of relevance by changing the topic of conversation. Finch expresses deep gratitude to Violet, stating that he might have been dead if she hadn't come to save him. However, Violet responds by shifting the topic to explain that she was just sitting on the railing and didn't come up there to save him. This response is unrelated to Finch's expression of gratitude and emotions, instead focusing on a personal explanation that doesn't align with the previous context of the conversation. This violation can be understood as a form of negative politeness, where Violet avoids emotional involvement with Finch's deeply emotional and grateful statement. Violet might feel uncomfortable with the intensity of Finch's gratitude and chooses to redirect the conversation to a lighter, more neutral topic. By shifting the conversation to herself, Violet protects herself from a discussion that might become more personal or emotionally revealing. This shows that Violet is trying to maintain social distance and avoid further emotional involvement, keeping the conversation at a safer, less pressuring level.</p>
3	<p>Finch: "So you're afraid to ride in a car but you'll climb up on a bell tower ledge?" Violet: "I'm going home." --Chapter Violet (151 days till graduation), Page 93</p>	<p>Violet violates the maxim of relevance by giving an irrelevant answer to Finch's question. Finch compares Violet's fear of riding in a car with her bravery in climbing the bell tower ledge. However, Violet does not directly answer the question and instead says, "I'm going home," which is clearly unrelated to what Finch said before. This violation happens because Violet avoids a conversation that makes her feel uncomfortable or pressured. Finch's question challenges Violet's fear, and it reminds her of past experiences and trauma that are difficult for her to discuss. Violet feels pressured by the comparison and does not want to open up about her painful feelings or experiences. By saying "I'm going home," Violet uses a negative politeness strategy to avoid further emotional involvement and steer the conversation away from a topic that makes her feel vulnerable or too open. This also shows that Violet is trying to protect herself from a conversation that could bring up more personal or emotional topics, possibly related to trauma or deep fears she has. By doing so, Violet maintains social distance to avoid emotional tension and protect herself from a discussion that might reveal deeper, more personal feelings.</p>
4	<p>Finch: "Theodore Finch. I think we had pre-cal together last year." Violet: "I hate math, but that's not why I'm up here. No offense if that's why you are. You're probably better at math than I am, but it's okay, I'm fine with it. See, I excel at other, more important things—guitar, sex, and consistently disappointing my dad, to name a few. By the way, it's apparently true that you'll never use it in the real world. Math, I mean." -</p>	<p>Violet violates the maxim of relevance by changing the topic of conversation. Finch talks about their shared math class, but Violet shifts the conversation to something more personal and relevant to her, like her dislike for math, her skills, and even issues with her father. According to Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, this happens because Violet is trying to protect her face (face-saving). She uses a positive politeness strategy by talking about personal things to connect with Finch and make both of them feel more comfortable. Sharing these details helps her avoid</p>

<p>-Chapter Finch (I am awake again. Day 6.), Page 6</p>	<p>awkwardness and keeps the conversation light, instead of making it too serious or formal. Violet uses indirect communication to keep the conversation flowing smoothly without getting into topics that might be too emotional or uncomfortable.</p>
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The data indicate that violations of the maxim of relevance frequently occur when either Finch or Violet responds to an utterance by shifting the topic away from the original subject. These shifts often happen during emotionally intense moments, such as discussions involving fear, trauma, gratitude, or vulnerability. Instead of responding directly, the characters redirect the conversation to safer or less emotionally demanding topics. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), this behavior reflects the use of negative politeness and off record strategies, which allow speakers to avoid face threatening situations without explicit refusal or confrontation. By violating relevance, the characters manage emotional discomfort and protect themselves from conversations that might escalate into deeper emotional exposure. As a result, these violations help regulate emotional intensity and maintain a manageable level of interpersonal closeness.

Maxim of Manner Violation

The maxim of manner requires speakers to be clear, orderly, and unambiguous in their communication. However, the characters in *All the Bright Places* often violate this maxim by using vague, indirect, or unclear expressions. These violations typically occur in emotionally sensitive situations where direct answers might lead to discomfort, vulnerability, or conflict.

Table 5. Maxim of Manner Violation

Data	Quotation	Explanation
1	<p>Violet: "I would have gotten out of it so I didn't have to do it to begin with. Why do you want me to do this project with you anyway?" Finch: "Because our mountain is waiting." -- Chapter Violet (154 days till graduation), Page 41</p>	<p>Finch gives an unclear and indirect response, saying "our mountain is waiting," which makes his message hard to understand directly. Instead of giving a clear and straightforward answer, Finch opts to use a more abstract expression, shifting the conversation away from a direct and easily understandable topic. The reason for this violation is that Finch wants to keep the conversation light and not too serious. He feels that directly stating why he wants Violet's help could come off as too formal or boring, so he uses a metaphor to avoid a more open or serious conversation. This is an example of negative politeness, where Finch avoids providing a clear or detailed explanation to maintain emotional distance and keep the conversation relaxed and enjoyable.</p>
2	<p>Violet: "Where were you this time?" Finch: "I was doing some remodeling." -- Chapter Violet (135,134,133 days to go), Page 179</p>	<p>Finch violates the maxim of manner by giving a confusing answer: "I was doing some remodeling." This reply doesn't clearly tell Violet what he was really doing, making it hard for her to understand the truth. He does this because he wants to hide his mental health struggles. Finch doesn't want Violet to worry about him, so he gives a simple, neutral answer instead of explaining his real feelings. By being vague, he avoids talking about his emotions or problems, which might make Violet upset or anxious. This is called negative politeness - Finch is trying to protect himself from emotional conversations and keep some distance. He doesn't want to share personal issues that might make him feel exposed or lead to deeper discussions. In short, Finch uses unclear language to avoid conflict and keep things from getting too serious or emotional.</p>
3	<p>Violet: "Are you feeling okay?" Finch: "Sorry, Ultraviolet. I'm still feeling kind of under the weather. Which, when you think about it, is a very odd expression. One that finds its origins in the sea--as in a sailor or passenger feels seasick from the storm, and</p>	<p>Finch breaks the maxim of manner by giving a long and irrelevant answer to Violet's question about his health. When Violet asks if he is feeling okay, Finch talks instead about the origin of the phrase "under the weather" without directly answering her question. He does this because he wants to avoid discussing his true</p>

	they send him below to get out of the bad water." --Chapter: Violet (March 18), Page 290	feelings, which might be sensitive or personal. By explaining the phrase, Finch changes the topic away from his health, which he finds harder to talk about. This is an example of negative politeness, where Finch tries to keep a distance and avoid getting too emotional. He doesn't want to have a conversation that could become too personal or reveal deeper feelings, so he protects himself from feeling vulnerable.
4	Violet: "Is it true you almost drowned Roamer?" Finch: "Something like that." Chapter: Finch (Day 30 and I am AWAKE), Page 20	Finch violates the maxim of manner by giving a vague and unclear response, saying "Something like that." When Violet asks if it's true that Finch almost drowned Roamer, Finch does not provide a direct explanation and gives an unspecific answer. The reason for this violation is that Finch is hiding important information to avoid conflict and not make Violet worried. By providing a vague answer, Finch avoids a conversation that could cause Violet to feel anxious or stressed. Talking about the incident might open up more emotional topics or make Violet worry about his safety or his mental health. Finch chooses to avoid giving further details to prevent Violet from feeling burdened or concerned. This unclear response shows negative politeness, where Finch is trying to protect himself and avoid emotional involvement that could lead to conflict or cause anxiety. In this way, Finch keeps the conversation light and avoids delving into heavier issues that could disturb Violet.

From the data above, violations of the maxim of manner are evident when Finch responds with vague, ambiguous, or indirect expressions that lack clarity. These violations typically occur when questions relate to Finch's personal condition, whereabouts, or emotionally sensitive experiences. Instead of providing clear and straightforward answers, Finch uses metaphors, vague statements, or irrelevant elaborations. In line with Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, this reflects a strong tendency toward negative politeness, as Finch seeks to avoid explicit explanations that might lead to emotional confrontation or vulnerability. By being unclear, Finch maintains emotional distance and protects his personal boundaries while still engaging in the interaction. These violations demonstrate how ambiguity can function as a pragmatic strategy to avoid conflict and manage emotional pressure within interpersonal communication.

Analysis

After analyzing the dialogues from *All the Bright Places* by Jennifer Niven using Grice's Cooperative Principle, the research reveals clear patterns in the violation of maxims during the interactions between the main characters, Theodore Finch and Violet Markey. The violations observed across the four maxims quantity, quality, relevance, and manner offer insight into the characters' complex emotional states and communication strategies. The data consistently demonstrates Finch's tendency to provide more information than necessary, particularly when discussing sensitive topics. For example, in the dialogue where Finch elaborates on his feelings and offers extra explanations, he is often trying to avoid deeper emotional confrontations. This pattern suggests that Finch, while engaging in meaningful communication, chooses to provide more details as a protective strategy to avoid uncomfortable or revealing exchanges. This behavior aligns with the theory of negative politeness, where Finch tries to maintain his privacy and avoid conflict, even if it means giving excessive details.

In several instances, Finch is observed providing information that may not align with the truth, such as when he claims to have drawn the scar on himself. This serves as an example of how negative politeness works to shield both Finch and Violet from confronting painful truths. By offering a misleading response, Finch prevents a potentially painful conversation about the real origins of his scar, reflecting a deliberate avoidance of emotional exposure. This violation helps to manage the emotional comfort of both characters, keeping them at a safe distance from their vulnerabilities. The violations of relevance typically occur when Violet shifts the topic to more emotionally charged subjects, particularly in her responses to Finch's more neutral remarks. For instance, Violet's statement about death and appearances at her funeral, after Finch mentions the rain, highlights her avoidance of the immediate

conversation. These shifts in focus allow Violet to express deeper emotions indirectly, often in an attempt to distance herself from topics she is not ready to confront head-on. This strategy is consistent with off-record politeness, where she skirts around difficult emotions, protecting her face by discussing these sensitive issues in a less direct manner.

The maxim of manner is violated when Finch uses ambiguous language, as seen in his responses to Violet's questions about his whereabouts or his state of health. For example, his response about "doing some remodeling" instead of providing a clearer answer shows how he prefers to keep things vague. This avoids the need for explanations that might expose his emotional or mental struggles, again demonstrating his use of negative politeness to manage the conversation's tone and prevent it from becoming too personal or emotionally intense. The analysis of maxim violations is consistent across multiple dialogues in the text. Each violation serves a specific function whether it's to protect Finch's and Violet's emotional well-being, maintain social distance, or avoid uncomfortable truths. These findings align with Grice's theory of maxim violation and Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, confirming that the characters' violations are intentional and serve the social and emotional goals of the conversation. Furthermore, the recurring patterns in the dialogues support the idea that these violations are not random but are strategically used to facilitate smoother communication between Finch and Violet while preserving their respective faces.

The data verified that these violations, while breaching the Cooperative Principle, enhance the richness of the characters' interactions by offering layers of meaning that would not be as easily conveyed through straightforward conversation. The violations reflect deeper emotional complexities and social dynamics between the characters, making them an essential part of the narrative's development. Thus, the use of maxim violations in *All the Bright Places* is an intentional and significant narrative tool, effectively used by the author to shape the characters' interactions and to reflect their emotional growth and the dynamics of their relationship.

Comparison with the Relevant Studies

This study shares several similarities with previous research on maxim violations in literary and film dialogues. Similar to Setiawati et al. (2024), who analyzed *All the Bright Places* in its movie adaptation, this study also finds that maxim violations frequently occur when characters experience emotional distress, confusion, or mental health struggles. In both studies, violations of quantity, relevance, and manner are often used by characters to avoid direct communication and express inner feelings indirectly. Likewise, Cantikawati et al. (2024), in their study of *It Starts with Us*, found that maxim violations influence character relationships and emotional development, which is also evident in the interactions between Finch and Violet. In addition, Suardana (2022), who studied *Never Go Back*, revealed that maxim violations often function as a way for characters to hide emotions or protect themselves from emotional exposure. These findings align with this study, where Finch and Violet frequently violate maxims to maintain emotional distance, avoid sensitive topics, and protect their personal boundaries. However, this study also presents new insights compared to earlier research. While most previous studies mainly focused on identifying the types of maxim violations using Grice's theory, this research goes further by combining Grice's Cooperative Principle with Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory to explain the reasons behind the violations. This approach shows that maxim violations in *All the Bright Places* are not random or accidental, but are closely related to politeness strategies, especially negative politeness, used to protect face during emotionally sensitive interactions. By analyzing the original novel rather than its film adaptation, this study provides richer linguistic data and deeper context. Therefore, this research contributes new understanding by showing that maxim violations function as meaningful communicative strategies that reflect emotional vulnerability, mental health issues, and the complexity of interpersonal relationships in the novel.

Limitation

This study has several limitations. First, the data were taken only from selected dialogues in *All the Bright Places* and focused only on conversations between the two main characters, Theodore Finch and Violet Markey. Because of this, the findings may not represent all types of maxim violations in the novel, especially those involving other characters. Second, this study mainly used Grice's Cooperative Principle and Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. As a result, other factors such as cultural background, gender issues, or the author's writing style were not fully discussed. Third, the analysis focused only on written dialogue and did not include paralinguistic elements such as tone, intonation, or pacing, which could help explain the characters' emotions and intentions more clearly.

Based on these limitations, future research is suggested to analyze more dialogues and include other characters in the novel. Future studies may also use other theories, such as sociopragmatics, corpus-based analysis, or narrative theory, to gain deeper understanding of maxim violations in literary works. In addition, comparing this novel with other young adult novels that discuss mental health themes, or analyzing different media adaptations, could reveal similar or different communication patterns. Finally, combining qualitative and quantitative methods may help provide a more systematic and detailed analysis of maxim violations and their roles in building meaning in the story.

CONCLUSION

This study successfully analyzed the violations of Grice's Cooperative Principle in the dialogues between Theodore Finch and Violet Markey in *All the Bright Places* by Jennifer Niven, focusing on the role these violations play in the communication between the characters. Through the application of Grice's maxim violation theory and Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, this research demonstrates how the two characters deviate from conversational norms to achieve specific communication goals. The analysis shows that Finch and Violet use maxim violations as strategies to manage conversations more effectively in certain situations. Violations of the maxim of quantity were found when Finch provided excessive information, such as when explaining his feelings or avoiding sensitive topics, which reflects the use of negative politeness to maintain social distance. Additionally, violations of the maxim of quality, where Finch provides misleading or false information, highlight his efforts to avoid deeper conversations about personal issues. This study also identified various examples of violations of the maxim of relevance, particularly by Violet, who shifts the conversation to more emotional and personal topics. This shift reflects the use of off-record strategies, allowing her to express feelings or uncertainties without directly addressing the topic. Similarly, violations of the maxim of manner occur when Finch provides vague or unclear responses to avoid more open and direct discussions.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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