Gricean Maxims and ASD Individuals on TV

A pragmatic analysis of individuals with ASD and their sensitivity to Gricean Maxims

By: Alice Ann Mikha

Supervisor: Dusan Stamenkovic
Södertörn University
Master's dissertation 15 credits
English | Spring term 2023
Ämneslärarutbildning med interkulturell profil med inriktning gymnasieskolan

Abstract

The purpose of this essay is to examine the way the flouting of the Gricean maxims is used to portray a fictional character with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This study analyzes a character named Sam Gardner from the television series *Atypical*. The study is based on written transcripts from six episodes of the TV series and was carried out qualitatively and quantitatively. The methodology of the study involved transcribing, counting, and analyzing the flouts used by Sam in these six episodes. The results suggest that Sam flouts all the maxims but flouts the maxim of relation most, with a total of 22 flouts, which can cause a problem in communication. Sam does not follow the maxim of relation as he tends to abruptly change the conversational topic to something else. In many cases, he changes the topic to something he is interested in, which is Antarctica and penguins. The second most dominant maxim in all six episodes to be flouted was the maxim of quantity, with a total of 15 flouts, as he gave either too much or too little information to the listener. The results of Sam's limited pragmatic abilities fall into agreement with Fein's (2010) claim that ASD individuals have pragmatic language deficits as they struggle to stay on topic and incorporate irrelevant details in conversations. This study further discusses how analyzing neurodivergent characters' speech patterns can benefit teachers and students in a pedagogical setting.

Keywords

Autism, ASD, *Atypical*, the Gricean Cooperative Principle, maxims, flouting, pragmatics, autistic disorder, language understanding, neuropsychiatric disabilities, education

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Language is used by human beings to convey an infinite number of messages. We use language to communicate and to get our ideas across. It enables us to express many things, such as thoughts, feelings, likes, and dislikes (Jakobson, 1972). Pragmatics, the study of language use, is a crucial factor in linguistics. It allows us to understand what speakers imply through their utterances based on the context. The Cooperative Principle proposed by Paul Grice (1989) is considered one of the foundational concepts in the linguistic field of pragmatics (Hossain, 2021, p. 32). The Cooperative Principle consists of four maxims that act as guiding principles for making communication as effective as possible. They are not rules but more a set of observations that illustrate how people communicate when they want to be properly understood by others. However, these maxims can be flouted, or violated. The term **flout** indicates when speakers accidentally do not follow these maxims. For instance, the speaker flouts the maxims but expects the hearer to recognize the meaning implied. When the speaker flouts a maxim, they assume the hearer knows that the speaker's words should not be taken at face value. In other words, the hearer must figure out the implicit meaning (Cutting, 2005, p. 37). **Violating** a maxim is when the speaker knows that the hearer will not know the truth and only understand the surface meaning of the words, which intentionally generates a misleading implicature (Thomas, 1995, p. 73).

This analysis aims to identify pragmatic difficulties through a fictional character as he expresses an atypical language in social interactions. The Gricean maxims included in the pragmatic theory of the Cooperative Principle will be utilized in the analysis to identify the character's pragmatic difficulties and illustrate how language is used to create this character. It is possible to comprehend how the series works with speech and language through a pragmatic analysis (Thomas, 1995, p. 1). *Atypical* is one of the shows that explicitly portrays Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) by incorporating voices from the autism community and bringing actors, consultants, and a playwright with ASD into the production (Lee and Deng, 2020). This study will use *Atypical* as the main corpus as it uses language to create a character on the spectrum that differs from other characters. Therefore, pragmatics is a crucial tool for examining the characteristics of ASD.

This topic was chosen because other studies have analyzed characters in novels or TV series and how those characters use flouts, for instance, for a comedic effect. However, few studies have analyzed how an autistic character works with the Gricean maxims. There have been studies on Sheldon Cooper from *The Big Bang Theory*, his pragmatic abilities, and how he flouts the Gricean maxims. However, Sheldon Cooper has never been officially diagnosed with autism. The viewers only speculate that he has autism due to his behavior and language. In contrast, Sam Gardner from *Atypical* is officially presented as a

character with autism. Fictional characters that are officially presented with ASD are thus underrepresented, and when they are portrayed, many of these may be inaccurate or perpetuate misinformation (Berger, 2018). Despite this, film and television "can enable new, innovative, and analytical ways of seeing and relating to the world around us" (James et al, 2011, p. 354). Therefore, this topic is significant as there are a lot of different characteristics of social communication and interactions in individuals with ASD, which differ from those without the disorder. Sam Gardner and his use of flouts may illustrate one way of social communication and interaction challenges in ASD.

This study hopes to provide up-to-date information regarding ASD individuals and their communication difficulties. It aims to raise teachers' awareness and knowledge of these difficulties in ASD so they can adapt their communication to all students, including ASD students, to build a strong teacher-student relationship. A teacher can thus become more considerate of ASD children and their communicative behavior through examples in films or series. Therefore, the series can be seen as a pedagogical tool for learning language, analyzing language, spreading awareness, and promoting tolerance, potentially creating a classroom environment that embraces diversity (Safran, 1998, p. 227).

1.1 Research Questions

The aim of this essay is to analyze a fictional character, Sam Gardner, from the series *Atypical* and count his flouts to find out which maxim is the most flouted. This will also help determine whether the flouts are connected to ASD, or if the flouts are done to create an implicature. A qualitative and quantitative analyses will thus be utilized to analyze and count the instances of flouts. The qualitative analysis will identify and analyze the situations in which the flouts occur. In addition, a qualitative approach will help identify the reasons why the character flout the maxims. The quantitative analysis will present structured tables with numerical value which shows how many times each maxim was flouted in which episode. Additionally, the results of this study will be compared to results of other studies on some ASD individuals and their pragmatic skills.

This study explores the following research questions:

- What are the instances of the main character in *Atypical* flouting the Gricean maxims, and which of the maxims are flouted most often?
- Can the results of the analysis be compared to the results of psychological studies assessing some ASD individuals and their pragmatic skills?
- In what way can the results of the analysis be used in a pedagogical context?

The first research question is crucial as it will present examples of how the scriptwriter has decided to portray a fictional character with autism. Furthermore, the research questions make it possible to compare studies on individuals with autism to find out if their pragmatic skills differ from a fictional character with autism. Lastly, finding out how the analysis results can be used in a pedagogical context can contribute to teachers using such TV series or movies as educational and entertainment tools for themselves, which they could then apply in the classroom.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Pragmatics and Autism

There is a study of language within the linguistic field called pragmatics that focuses on how language is used in communication. Pragmatics is the analysis of what people mean by their utterances. Pragmatics aims to understand what speakers mean in a particular context and how the context influences what is being said. The idea of pragmatics is understanding what a specific sentence means on one occasion. For instance, simple words such as *"*It is hot in here!" can mean different things at different times (Thomas, 1995, p. 1). The perspective of pragmatics refers to how more is always being communicated than is said (Yule, 2017, p. 142).

The study deals with three levels of meaning within the field of pragmatics that are of relevance: abstract meaning, contextual meaning, and force. **Abstract meaning**, which is the first level of meaning, considers what words, phrases, and sentences could mean. For instance, the sentence "She is vegan" can be understood through our knowledge of language, even though it is not explicitly mentioned who is saying it at what time and who they refer to (Thomas, 1995, p. 2). The second level of meaning, **contextual meaning**, examines what speakers mean by words on a particular occasion. The sentence "She is vegan" will be used as an example again. If person A knows that person B said this sentence and about who they referred to, then person A can determine whether the utterance is true or false. **Force** is the third level of meaning, which considers the speaker's intention behind an utterance. If person A prepares a dinner party, and person B asks if a certain guest eats chicken, and person A utters "She is vegan," then the intention behind person A's utterance is to communicate the dietary restriction of the guest in question. Person A intends to inform that the guest does not eat animal products and will be provided with food options that align with their dietary restrictions. These three levels of meanings are important to discuss within the field of pragmatic as the speaker's intention is crucial in determining the meaning of an utterance in a specific context.

Within pragmatics, there is a concept called implicatures. Implicatures refer to implied meanings that occur during a conversation but are not explicitly stated. It is possible to determine how people decide someone is "implying" something in a conversation (Yule, 2017, p. 165). For instance, if a speaker chooses to violate a maxim while knowing that the hearer will not know the truth and only understand the surface meaning of the words, then the speaker is intentionally generating a misleading implicature (Thomas, 1995, p. 73). Grice (1989) stated that implicature is correlated with terms such as imply, suggest, and mean. He distinguished between two types of implicature: conversational and conventional. Conversational implicature refers to when the speaker's utterance has more meaning than the words. For instance, when person A asks, "Do you have any plans tomorrow?" and person B replies with, "I have a comedy show I've been meaning to watch" then the implicature in this case would be that person B does not have anything planned and intends to spend the day watching a comedy show. On the other hand, conventional implicature refers to words that can carry an implicature within a sentence. For instance, specific words such as *but, even, yet,* and *therefore* are used in conventional implicature to explain the implied meaning. If a person said, "She is short and strong," then it would be assumed that both parts of the statement can be true. However, if the utterance was changed to "She is short but strong," then both parts would remain true, but a contrast would be added (Thomas, 1995, p. 57).

Research has shown that ASD individuals often experience difficulties with pragmatic language skills that are essential for social communication. Abnormal use of social language (pragmatics) is commonly observed in ASD individuals. Baron-Cohen (1988) argues that these deficits are linked with autism, as pragmatics is part of social competence. These studies suggest that ASD individuals struggle with pragmatics throughout their lives as they struggle to understand appropriate language use for social purposes (Dunn and Rapin, 1997). Furthermore, Fein (2010) suggests that the common factors connected to ASD are maintaining the topic of interest and giving enough but not too much information to the listener. ASD individuals tend to withdraw socially from others as they have communication difficulties, such as restricted and repetitive behaviors and interests. While pragmatic deficits are not specific to autism, studies indicate that these communication difficulties are typical for those with the disorder. Additionally, research by Surian et al. (1996, p. 56) highlights that abnormal communication is common among ASD individuals, which is why they struggle to use words in the appropriate contexts and formulate sentences and paragraphs verbally (Waterhouse et al, 1996, p. 60). Moreover, Cantwell et al. (1978) suggest that ASD individuals may struggle to formulate their thoughts and express themselves clearly, leading to difficulties constructing a coherent narrative with well-formed sentences. Individuals

with ASD may thus use simple sentence structures, even if they know more complex structures, as they struggle to formulate their thoughts and express themselves clearly.

2.2 Grice's Cooperative Principle

Paul Grice was a philosopher of language, best known for his theory of the Cooperative Principle. Grice (1989) describes the principle in which individuals make their conversational contribution as required, for instance, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which they are engaged. This principle inspired the development of pragmatics as a separate field within linguistics (Davies, 2000). The Cooperative Principle, as Grice calls it, is divided into four maxims. The maxims are observations of interaction that people flout or not. There are four types of maxims in Grice's theory of the cooperative principle:

- Quantity – avoid less or more information than is required for the current purposes of the conversation.
- Relation – stay relevant to the topic.
- Quality – be truthful and avoid saying something lacking adequate evidence.
- Manner – be clear and brief.

Formulating a general principle that participants will be expected to observe is necessary. These maxims are, according to Grice, principles and not rules. The maxims are seen as the pragmatic key to the question of why communication, in most cases, is efficient (Fägersten, 2016, p. 127). Talk exchanges in conversations do generally not consist of a succession of disconnected remarks. Therefore, communicators need to understand one another and cooperate to construct and maintain a meaningful conversation (Grice, 1989, p. 25). There are cooperative efforts in conversations where each participant recognizes a common purpose or mutually accepted direction. The purpose or direction may be established at the start of the conversation by, for example, initiating a proposal of questions for discussion. Conversational moves at each stage would be excluded as they are considered conversationally unsuitable. Speakers often flout the maxims intentionally or accidentally, which causes an implicature or another meaning than the surface meaning. By cooperating, such implicatures can be understood between a speaker and a listener in the conversation. There are also circumstances in which it is preferable to produce a white lie even though the maxims are blatantly violated. For instance, one might ask, "What do you think of my dress?" to seek validation or approval. However, the person responding might not genuinely like the dress but produces a lie and answers that it is a beautiful dress.

Most of the time, being cooperative and maintaining excellent social relations takes more than the four maxims as they blank out interpersonal relations.

2.2.1 Flouting the Maxim of Quantity

The **maxim of quantity** relates to the quantity of information provided during a conversation. It refers to when a person says enough information but not too much or too little when communicating. The speaker should not make their contribution more informative than is required, as it may cause over-informativeness, which can confuse or mislead the hearer (Grice, 1989, pp. 26-27). When asked, "How was your day?" the respondent might list every activity they did during the day, which counts as flouting the maxim of quantity. Another example of flouting the maxim of quantity is when an individual gives too little information, such as in response to "What did you eat yesterday?" the respondent might answer, "Food." (Cheung and Wee, 2009).

2.2.2 Flouting the Maxim of Quality

Regarding the **maxim of quality**, one must have adequate evidence for what they say. It requires information provided in conversations to be genuine and justified. An example of flouting this maxim would be when asked, "Do you know where the Big Ben Clock Tower is?" one might reply "It is in Hong Kong," which is incorrect and therefore contributes to being unsubstantiated.

Other ways to flout the maxim of quality are through hyperbole, metaphor, or irony (Cutting, 2005, p. 38). Cutting (2005, pp. 37-38) further discusses the examples of speakers flouting the maxim of quality. A speaker may exaggerate to flout the maxim, as in the hyperbole "I could eat a horse." Naturally, the speaker would not want to eat a horse, literally speaking. In this case, the hearer would be expected to understand that the speaker meant that they were starving. Using metaphors is also a way to flout the maxim of quality. An example of a metaphor would be, "My house is a refrigerator in January." The speaker does not mean that their house will turn into a literal refrigerator in January, but rather that it is cold in the house during January. The hearer, in this case, would understand that the house was cold.

Lastly, irony and banter are two ways of flouting the maxim of quality. To quote Leech (1983), 'While irony is an apparently friendly way of being offensive (mock-politeness), the type of verbal behavior known as "banter" is an offensive way of being friendly (mock impoliteness).' (p. 144). From his quote, Leech (1983) suggests that the speaker uses irony to express a positive attitude and implies a negative one. If a speaker says, "If only you knew how much I love being woken up at 3 am by loud noises", he

is being ironic and expecting his friends to understand that he means the opposite. Sarcasm is a form of irony that is not kind; it is usually used with the intent to hurt, as in, "Yum, this is a lovely, undercooked potato that you have given me." On the other hand, banter is used to express a negative attitude while implying a positive one. For instance, one could say, "You are stingy, how could you only give me one hug?" yet mean to use it as an expression of friendship. Of course, these figures of speech can coexist as speakers can both, for instance, exaggerate and mock attack the recipient.

2.2.3 Flouting the Maxim of Relation

The **maxim of relation** relates to being relevant, suggesting the speaker should stay relevant to the topic during the discussion. Through the maxim of relation, it is possible to notice how questions shift during a talk exchange and how it allows the subjects of conversations to change (Grice, 1989, p. 27). An example of flouting this maxim is in a conversation where the topic is about food; the speaker might suddenly start discussing a favorite video game without a clear transition. Another example of flouting the maxim of relation would be through irrelevant details. For instance, when talking about a recent vacation, they might focus on the weather rather than their experiences (Cheung and Wee, 2009).

2.2.4 Flouting the Maxim of Manner

Lastly, the **maxim of manner** requires one to be clear in a conversation. This maxim relates to how something is being said in the conversation, for instance, through vagueness and ambiguity. An example of flouting the maxim from Cutting (2005, p. 39) will be shown below:

> "Wife: Where are you off to?
> Husband: I was thinking of going out to get some of that funny white stuff for somebody.
> Wife: OK, but don't be long – dinner's nearly ready. " (Cutting, 2005, p. 39)

The husband mentions words such as "funny white stuff" and "somebody," which indicates that he is speaking in an ambiguous way. The reason for such language use would be avoiding saying ice cream and his daughter's name so she would not be excited and ask for ice cream before dinner. There are, of course, numerous other ways to flout one or multiple maxims.

These maxims are fundamental for understanding conversational rules as they create smooth communication. The conversational rules shared in society may contribute to mutual understanding during conversation. This research paper identifies and counts the instances when the fictional character

with ASD flouts them in a conversation (Grice, 1989, pp. 26-27). All the information presented above will be used to identify flouts, which will be further presented in section 3.3.

2.3 Children With Autism and Their Sensitivity to Gricean Maxims

Several studies have researched the Cooperative Principle and associated maxims. A study by Surian, Baron-Cohen, and H Van der Lely (1996) presented that most children with ASD violate conversational maxims. The study observed communication impairment by comparing children with autism with typically developing (TD) children. The study by Surian et al. (1996) found that children with autism have severe deficits in multiple areas of language development, frequently flouting the maxim of quantity, providing either too much or too little information. The maxim of quantity is divided into two specific submaxims, Quantity I and Quantity II. The first submaxim, Quantity I, relates to making the contribution as informative as is required. The second submaxim, Quantity II, relates to avoiding unnecessary information in a conversation. Through this division, it would be possible to distinguish which part of the maxim of quantity was flouted the most (Surian et al, 1996, p. 58). Surian et al. (1996) concluded that children with autism had difficulties evaluating all types of pragmatic violations, while typically developing children only had difficulties evaluating the violations of the maxim of quantity. One suggested explanation for these findings, according to Surian et al. (1996), was that children with ASD had abnormal communication, which affected their ability to detect pragmatic violations.

According to Paul, Orlovski, Marcinko, and Volkmar (2008), the most dominant communication deficits seen in ASD individuals are "in the areas of conversational pragmatics and social communication. Difficulties in social uses of language, especially in conversation, have been widely noted for people with both high functioning autism and Asperger syndrome" (2008, p. 115). Another study examined how TD children differed from children with ASD using the Conversational Violations Test (CVT), which contains simple question-answer conversations. The CVT includes two alternative answers to one question, which detects the violations of all maxims (Asada et al, 2022). Their study concluded that children with ASD performed slightly worse than typically developing children in the CVT. The results of CVT demonstrated that children with specific language impairment and TD children achieved better results than children with ASD on the maxims of quality, manner, relation, and quantity II but not on quantity I. According to Asada et al. (2022), children with ASD without intellectual disabilities find it challenging to understand conversational maxims.

Another study by Wahyunianto, Djatmika, and Purnanto (2020) examined how five ASD children communicate using Grice's cooperative principle. It was found that children with ASD frequently flout the maxim of relation, making it the most dominant maxim to be flouted. The second most flouted maxim was the maxim of quality. The authors concluded that ASD children are prone to produce utterances that contain not one but multiple flouts of the maxims. Jones and Schwartz (2009) suggest that this may be due to difficulties in giving suitable comments and appropriate responses in social interaction. The results revealed that ASD children may show a lack of awareness and repetitive behavior, which also causes them to flout unintentionally in their utterances (Mattard-Labrecque et al, 2013). In addition, these studies suggest that children with ASD have more difficulties understanding the Gricean maxims than TD children due to their delayed development (Asada et al, 2022).

The collective findings from the studies above indicate that ASD children generally create smooth conversations but have difficulties using conversational maxims and may flout or violate them more often than TD children. Furthermore, the studies highlight a major difference between TD children and ASD children. Flouts are often done unintentionally by ASD children due to their challenges in social communication and pragmatic language skills. Fein (2010) suggests that ASD children have a restricted repertoire of interests and behaviors and have a habit of repeating the last words uttered by another person (echolalia). Furthermore, Baron-Cohen (1988) suggests that ASD children often struggle with the theory of mind, which includes difficulties in understanding others' perspectives, beliefs, and intentions. These challenges with the theory of mind can result in difficulties using language for communicative goals, such as humor or sarcasm. Many flouts made by ASD children are thus related to autism because of their communicative challenges, which is why they often flout unintentionally in a conversation (Aprilidya et al, 2018, p. 404). Meanwhile, flouts that are done intentionally are often done by those without the disorder. Compared to ASD children, TD children did not show any delay in their linguistic, social, and cognitive development (Surian et al, 1996). Alduais et al. (2022) suggest that TD children become syntactically competent as their knowledge of words grows as they develop. For this reason, TD children understand social norms and the intended meaning behind their communication, which leads to intentional flouts. Therefore, they typically flout the maxims with the intention of producing implicatures.

However, the topic of autism and Gricean maxims is complex and situational, as there may be different results depending on the circumstances and various other factors, such as the age of the ASD individuals. In fact, several studies observed children under the age of 10, which makes it possible for different results if adolescents with ASD were observed instead. The results may also vary depending on

cultural and linguistic contexts. Moreover, because the criteria for autism diagnosis are broad, results cannot be based solely on these. It is also worth noting that the results may differ as one of the articles cited above is from 1996, and knowledge on ASD and their pragmatic skills have expanded since then.

2.4 Language in Television

The TV series *Atypical* plays a crucial role in this research, highlighting significance of television in this paper. Television portrays characters and situations in a way that engages the viewers and tries to make them relatable. Television promotes stereotypes, resulting in viewers often adopting them. Television series may construct the language of characters in a way that perpetuates stereotypes of various types, in this case, autism. Fictional characters with ASD may show a stereotypical image as to how they are expected to speak in different situations, which is then portrayed on television. This can be misleading for viewers who may believe it is reality, as these portrayals may not be accurate. Therefore, it is essential to note that television shows are fictional and do not illustrate reality (Fägersten, 2016, p. 2).

There have been numerous studies on fictional characters and their language use, specifically on Sheldon Cooper from *The Big Bang Theory* and his language use. However, this character has never been officially diagnosed with autism. Nevertheless, viewers suggest his character traits point out the characteristics of an ASD individual, for instance, his struggles with social interactions and disregard for the conversational principle. Sheldon Cooper is one example of a character unaware of social customs because of his traits resembling ASD. He is thus often responsible for communicative breakdowns where others do not understand their contributions, or Sheldon does not understand others' contributions (Eitelmann and Stange, 2016, pp. 115-116). Identically, the recent Korean TV drama from 2022 called *Extraordinary Attorney Woo* gained popularity due to its portrayal of a main character with high-functioning ASD. The writer uses language to portray the characteristic features of ASD, such as a formal speech style and an intense obsession with whales and dolphins. The main character carries out her obsessions in conversations regardless of the given conversational topic, thus adhering to stereotypes of autism (Hwang, 2023, p. 115).

Nonetheless, it is possible to understand the conversational exchanges in a TV series, primarily through a fictional character with autism, by analyzing language in television. For instance, watching a series to identify the speech patterns of a particular character would give the viewer an idea of how the language is deliberately scripted. This raises awareness about how language is used and represented in television. Despite the fact how artificial or authentic television dialogue may be, it improves our thinking and

makes us more aware of language. Additionally, it is possible to discover the speech patterns of a particular character through observations of a character's language use (Fägersten, 2016, p. 2).

3. Methodology

The primary source for this study will be the Netflix TV series *Atypical*, as the focus will be on the main character's language. It is worth mentioning that other characters in the show also flout the maxims; however, this study explicitly focuses on the main character's flouts to determine how and what maxims the main character flouts and which maxim is most flouted.

This study was conducted both qualitatively and quantitatively using descriptive analysis. The reason for selecting a mixed methods approach for this study is to apply the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative approach enabled the identification of the instances of flouting, which provided a detailed explanation through examples of the character's atypical communication (Gunasekare, 2015, p. 362). The analysis of these examples will demonstrate how certain utterances were identified as flouts and whether they might be associated with his neurological disorder. Through a quantitative approach, it is possible to present the results in tables to show frequencies. The quantitative results will be presented in two tables to demonstrate the frequencies of which maxims are most flouted and how many times each maxim is flouted. This methodology has thus been chosen to determine the frequency of the flouts in a conversation and to identify which maxim has been flouted the most.

3.1 The Corpus

Atypical aired on Netflix in 2017, and the last season, Season 4, premiered in 2021. *Atypical* focuses on Sam Gardner, a teenage boy with autism. It concentrates on how his family deals with his neurodevelopmental disability. The TV series focuses on Sam Gardner's struggles with his disability, which affects his environment, friendships, and how he converses with others. It is important to note that Sam is not the representative of all the other individuals who have ASD, as they have different problems in terms of interaction and social communication.

The reason for selecting a fictional character with autism was that few studies have analyzed how a character officially presented with autism works with the Gricean maxims. *Atypical* was explicitly chosen because David Finch, an individual with autism, became a part of the writing team for Season 2, which helped the autistic portrayals to become more accurate (Fabian, 2023). Another reason this series was selected was because the producers decided to work with actors with autism to improve the autistic

portrayals, which few have done. These are eight actors from The Miracle Project, a theater and film program for neurodivergent and disabled individuals, and they have supporting roles in the second and third seasons. These actors with autism play characters with neurological disorders. Therefore, this paper has chosen to use *Atypical* as the main corpus as the producers have decided to work with actors with autism to improve autistic portrayals.

3.2 Data collection

The data collection was based on transcription of six episodes of the TV series, with three episodes from Season 2 and the other three from Season 3. Season 1 was excluded because it was criticized by ASD viewers as the main protagonist was seen to have stereotypical autistic behavior. The transcripts of each episode of *Atypical* have been found online and downloaded, which means that if there are mistakes such as misspellings or abbreviations in the transcript, then these are intentional. Afterward, the transcript was thoroughly analyzed to check the accuracy of the transcription by comparing the script with the actual dialogue in the show. Lastly, parts of the transcripts containing flouts are selected, copied, and presented. The table below gives an overview of which episodes were chosen and what their title names are.

Table 1

List of Episodes

Season 2:

- Episode 1: Juiced!
- Episode 2: Penguin Cam and Chill.
- Episode 3: Little Dude and the Lion.

Season 3:

- Episode 1: Best Laid Plans.
- Episode 2: Standing Sam.
- Episode 3: Cocaine Pills and Pony Meat.

The length of each episode varied from episode to episode, but each episode of the series was about 30 minutes. The total length of the six episodes is approximately 3 hours long.

3.3 Identification of Flouts

The focus of this study is to identify the instances where Sam Gardner flouts the maxims in his conversations. This section will present how these instances were identified, and they will be highlighted in different colors in the results section. The utterances that flout the maxim of quantity will

be highlighted in yellow, while those that flout the maxim of quality will be highlighted in red. The utterances that flout the maxim of relation will be highlighted in green, and the flouting of the maxim of manner will be highlighted in pink.

The identifications of Sam flouting **the maxim of quantity** are the following:

- Too much information.
- Too little information.
- Repeating the same word.
- Not informative.

If he participates in a conversation and responds with too much or too little information, to the point where the listener seems confused, then that has been classified as a flout. Repeating certain words in one conversation will also be classified as a flout of this maxim.

The identifications of Sam flouting **the maxim of quality** are the following:

- Using figure of speech such as hyperbole or making an ironic and sarcastic statement.
- Lying or saying something that is believed to be false.
- Denying something.

If Sam Gardner gives out information in conversations that are not genuine and justified, then that is classified as a flout. Another identification of flouting this maxim would be if Sam uses any figures of speech, such as hyperbole to exaggerate for effect, or makes an ironic and sarcastic statement.

The identifications of Sam flouting **the maxim of relation** are the following:

- Saying something that is not connected to the topic.
- Changing the conversation topic abruptly.
- Hiding something by answering something that is not relevant to the question, to not participate in the current topic.

For instance, if Sam changes the conversation topic by uttering something irrelevant to the previous topic, that will be considered a flout.

The identifications of Sam flouting **the maxim of manner** are the following:

- Using ambiguous language, general words such as *stuff*, or *thing*, or referring to others as *that lady*, *the guy*.
- Exaggerate.
- Using slang with someone who does not understand.

For instance, if Sam uses vague words such as “that thing” without previously mentioning what “that thing” is, then it is considered a flout.

It is also possible for Sam to flout more than one maxim in a conversation. For instance, Sam can lie about a particular subject while providing too much information, flouting both maxims of quantity and quality. This, of course, is possible for all maxims. It is important to note that there can be some difficulty in identifying all instances of flouting in the chosen episodes, as some utterances can be vague and may represent a violation (see section 1) rather than a flouting of maxims. There is also a possibility of flouts being overlooked because it was difficult to identify them.

It is essential to differentiate between flouts that are done unintentionally and those that are done intentionally. The flouts that occur due to challenges in social communication and pragmatic language skills will be connected to autism and, therefore, identified as unintentional flouts. The flouts that do not explicitly highlight these challenges will be identified as intentional flouts and not connected to autism.

4. Results

This section will present the results and analysis as follows: in subsection 4.1, detailed examples of the flouts used by Sam Gardner will be presented. Examples will be shown throughout this section, where each of these examples demonstrates his way of flouting the maxims. There will be an explanation of the context of each conversation under “analysis” for the reader to understand the scene. The “analysis” section will also include an explanation of how Sam’s flouts may be linked to autism or other effects, such as implicatures. In subsection 4.2, a quantitative result will be presented through two tables: Table 2 and Table 3. Table 2 will present the number of times each maxim was flouted in Season 2, while Table 3 will present the number of times each maxim was flouted in Season 3.

4.1 Qualitative Results

The examples will be presented in the order of quantity, quality, relation, and lastly, manner. The following conversations examine the information collected from Sam’s utterances in *Atypical*.

Furthermore, contextual background of specific scenes and timestamps will be provided. Sam's language is looked at in detail in the examples below. Additionally, the examples demonstrate the various flouts used by Sam, exploring the implicatures and effects that arise. The aim here is not only to identify the types of flouts used but also to understand how Sam's unintentional flouts might be connected to autism.

a. Flouting the Maxim of Quantity

Excerpt 1
Situation: Sam is late for class. [Season 3, Episode 3, 00:00:51-00:01:18]

> **Professor** : Look at the sweaty guy walking in late on the first day. Some of you are not gonna make it, let's all take guesses on who.
> **Sam** : Sorry I'm late. I had two and a half hours between this class and my class before this, which is too long to hang out on campus, but not long enough to go home, so I went to my scientific illustration class to draw, and I lost track of time and, you know, running and lacrosse teams and – stairs.

Analysis:
In this scene, Sam is late for his lecture at university. Sam's first response had already been required for the professor's statement. While apologizing for his tardiness would suffice, Sam goes on by adding unnecessary information with the utterance, "I had two and a half hours between this class and my class before this, which is too long to hang out on campus, but not long enough to go home, so I went to my scientific illustration class to draw, and I lost track of time and, you know, running and lacrosse teams and - stairs." His utterance falls into the identification of flouting the maxim of quantity, such as that he provides too much information to the professor. The tendency to provide unnecessary explanations is common among ASD individuals, which can result in the oversharing of information. As seen in this excerpt, Sam's overexplaining in this situation present an example of how his flout can be associated with ASD (Patrick, 2010, p. 32). From this example, it can be concluded that Sam flouted the maxim of quantity unintentionally.

Excerpt 2
Situation: Sam runs away from home as he feels unsure and needs to talk to someone about his feelings. This results in Sam unexpectedly meeting up with his former therapist, Julia. [Season 2, Episode 1, 00:22:33-00:23:06]

> **Julia** : Oh! You feeling okay?
> **Sam** : I don't know how I feel.
> **Julia** : Well, sometimes that's okay too.

Sam : First I thought I was mad about the toothbrush, but maybe I was mad because Casey lied to me about my mom having an affair, or maybe I was mad because my mom had an affair and my dad doesn't live at home anymore, and I need my dad to live at home. Actually, I think it was the toothbrush.

Analysis:

Julia notices Sam is in distress and asks him if he is okay. Sam's initial response would suffice as it is a concise answer, but he proceeds to provide excessive details. Again, the same issue in Excerpt 1 occurs in this situation, where he over-explains, which also falls into the category of flouting the maxim of quantity. Sam attempts to convey everything that has happened to the point where it barely makes sense, which results in Sam not replying in a cohesive sentence. The use of flout in this utterance may thus be an example to present ASD characteristics because ASD individuals tend to give too much information to the listener (Patrick, 2010, p. 32).

b. Flouting the Maxim of Quality

Excerpt 3

Situation: Sam is trying to find a new therapist and mentions to his mom that one of the therapists appeared to be a rabbit. [Season 2, Episode 1, 00:14:18-00:14:29]

Elsa : Oh come on. That is very funny, but Dr. Robertson is not a rabbit.
Sam : You weren't there. Her nose wiggled the whole time and she ate, like, 20 carrots.

Analysis:

The scene starts with Elsa's statement, leaving viewers to speculate about their previous conversation. In this example, Sam flouts the maxim of quality through a hyperbolic statement, which causes him to overstate Dr. Robertson's behavior. Sam claims that her "nose wiggled the whole time" and that she ate "like, 20 carrots", which suggests that Dr. Robertson has a rabbit-like behavior. Furthermore, the word "like" in Sam's utterance shows an approximation, which suggests that Sam is not giving an exact number but a rough estimate for exaggeration. Sam's flout is considered intentional, as he exaggerates to create an ironic statement to mock Dr. Robertson's behavior.

c. Flouting the Maxim of Relation

Excerpt 4

Situation: Sam speaking to his sister Casey about his girlfriend Paige. [Season 3, Episode 1, 00:27:12-00:27:55]

Casey : Hey! She wasn't trying to distract you, dumb-ass. She loves you, and she wanted you to be her first. And you acted like a total dude about it and got distracted on your own.
Sam : No. Maybe. Oh, yeah.
Casey : Look I will make fun of Paige and her silly talkity-talk and her hair bows all day long, but that lady gets you, and you're lucky to have her.
Sam : Did they let you keep your appendix in a jar?
Casey : Is that an option? Damn it.

Analysis:

In this scene, Sam is speaking to Casey about Paige. Sam missed the first day of class registration and blames Paige for distracting him. Casey, however, is trying to explain to Sam why Paige did not mean to distract him and was not the reason he missed the first day of registering. Sam changes the topic in the middle of the conversation and asks Casey if she could keep her appendix in a jar after surgery. Sam asked a question unrelated to the previous topic, thus leading to him flouting the maxim of relation. This excerpt is also the perfect example of atypical conversational behavior. Sam has difficulties following conversation rules, such as staying on topic, which many ASD individuals tend to have (Fein, 2010).

Excerpt 5

Situation: Sam runs away from home to speak to his former therapist, Julia. [Season 2, Episode 1, 00:22:05-00:22:34]

Julia : Oh, looks like you might want to talk. I can't see you anymore, but I can help find someone else to talk to. I can call my coworker.
Sam : Did you know there's a hole in the middle of Antarctica the size of Maine?
Julia : Is that how you're feeling lately? Like there's a hole in your life?
Sam : Casey moved my toothbrush. And we fought, hitting each other. Well, she hit me. I kind of just became a potato bug.

Analysis:

As previously mentioned, it is possible to flout more than one maxim in an utterance, depending on the context and how it is interpreted. The utterances highlighted in green are identified as flouting the maxim of relation. The identification of flouting the maxim of relation is to say something that is not connected to the topic. These utterances demonstrate how Sam is producing irrelevant responses in his conversation with Julia. Therefore, these utterances can flout the maxim of relation as Sam does not react appropriately to Julia's previous statements.

The first flout highlighted in green reveals that Sam has an unhealthy obsession with Antarctica. This flout may illustrate the characteristics of ASD because ASD individuals tend to have intense interest in a specific subject (Patrick, 2010, p. 42). The flouts highlighted in green can thus be used as examples to present pragmatic problems in autism as ASD individuals have restricted interests and tend to abruptly change the topic (Fein, 2010, p. 126).

Another utterance that can be considered flouting in this example is the one highlighted in pink, which is "I just kind of became a potato bug." The identification of flouting the maxim of manner is to use ambiguous language. Sam fails to provide enough information on what he means by "potato bug," which is why this statement is considered unclear and ambiguous, making it difficult to understand Sam's intended meaning. This can illustrate the difficulties that ASD individuals have as they fail to clarify ambiguities (Mesibov et al, 1997).

d. Flouting the Maxim of Manner

Excerpt 6

Situation: Sam's girlfriend, Paige, invites him to her house because she called and she is sad, she needed to talk about her feelings and needed someone to listen [Season 2, Episode 2, 00:24:40-00:24:55]

Paige : When did she say that?
Sam : Last week, when I went to tell her about all the stuff happening with my parents.
Paige : What do you mean?
Sam : What?

Analysis:

Sam uses ambiguous language in this scene, referring to his family issues using the term "stuff." This use of ambiguous language resulted in him flouting the maxim of manner. He does not explicitly explain that he has been talking to his previous therapist, Julia (her), about his family issues. Instead, he calls the family issues "stuff," which makes him speak ambiguously, flouting the maxim of manner. Sam Gardner may be using the term "stuff" because he is unsure whether Paige understands what he refers to. The reason this flout could be considered characteristic of ASD is because they have difficulties considering the perspective of the listener (Patrick, 2010, p. 32).

4.2 Quantitative Results

There were 62 conversations in which Sam Gardner participated in all six episodes. In the study, 41 instances of flouts were identified within all six episodes. As seen in Table 2 and Table 3, the maxim of relation was flouted the most, followed by the maxim of quantity, the maxim of quality, and the maxim of manner. Of 41 flouts, 25 flouts were in Season 2 and 16 were in Season 3.

Table 2 - *Number and frequency of maxims flouted in three episodes in Season 2 of Atypical*

Season 2	**Flouting the Maxim of**				**Total**
	Quantity	**Quality**	**Relation**	**Manner**	
Episode 1	4	1	5	1	**11**
Episode 2	3	0	4	1	**8**
Episode 3	2	0	4	0	**6**
Total	**9**	**1**	**13**	**2**	**25**

The results in Table 2 provides numbers of instances of flouting in Season 2. This table suggest that Sam Gardner flouted the maxims 25 times in the first three episodes of Season 2. In Season 2, Episode 1, 11 flouts were identified. Episode 2 contained a total of 8 flouts, and lastly, Episode 3 contained 6 flouts. These flouts were identified out of 26 conversations. Some episodes contained more flouts than others, which made the number of instances of flouting vary in frequency from episode to episode. The findings also demonstrated that some conversational maxims were flouted more often than others.

Table 3 - *Number and frequency of maxims flouted in three episodes in Season 3 of Atypical*

Season 3	**Flouting the Maxim of**				**Total**
	Quantity	**Quality**	**Relation**	**Manner**	
Episode 1	2	0	3	1	**6**
Episode 2	2	0	2	0	**4**
Episode 3	2	0	4	0	**6**
Total	**6**	**0**	**9**	**1**	**16**

The results in Table 3 provides numbers of instances of flouting in Season 3. Table 3 suggest that Sam flouted the maxims a total of 16 times in these three episodes. The results in Table 3 further reveal that the maxims that were flouted the most were the maxim of quantity and the maxim of relation. In Season 3, Episode 1, there were 6 instances of flouting. Episode 2 contained a total of 4 flouts, while Episode 3 contained a total of 6 flouts. The flouts identified through a total of 36 conversations in the first three episodes of Season 3.

These tables demonstrate that the flouts were not evenly distributed in these six episodes. As a result, it can be concluded that the flouts used most frequently by Sam were the maxim of quantity and the maxim of relation in both Seasons 2 and 3.

5. Discussion

This section will present a discussion to answer each research question. The qualitative and quantitative results presented above will be discussed in subsection 5.1 as they count the instances of a fictional character with autism flouting the Gricean maxims in conversations. Subsection 5.1 will also present a discussion on how some of these flouts are often associated with ASD. The second research question will be answered in subsection 5.2 through a discussion of how the results of this study can be compared to the studies in subsection 2.3. The third research question will be answered in subsection 5.3 through a discussion of the way the results of the analysis can be used in a pedagogical context. It is important to keep in mind that the data collected and analyzed in this study is from a fictional show created for entertainment purposes.

5.1 Probability of an ASD Character Flouting the Gricean Maxims

The first research question concerned the instances of Sam Gardner flouting the Gricean maxims in the series *Atypical* and which of the maxims are flouted most often. The six episodes focused on in this study contained 62 conversations that included Sam Gardner. It was found that all 41 flouts, except for one, were associated with ASD, as they did not result in any observable implicature. Many ASD individuals have difficulties following conversation rules due to the characteristics of their language skills, which leads to unintentional flouts (Fein, 2010). Despite this, it was found that Sam generally created smooth conversations with others.

The previous section demonstrated that the most dominant occurrence of flouting the maxims was the maxim of relation, with 22 instances of 41. Cutting (2005, p. 35) stated that the maxim of relation is that

"speakers are assumed to be saying something that is relevant to what has been said before." The conversation topic should thus stay the same, and if the speaker wants to change the topic, he should make a smooth transition in the conversation. If speakers do not follow this, then flouting of the maxim of relation will occur. In the findings, many of Sam's utterances are unrelated to the topic as he starts discussing something else, which could be seen in examples (4) and (5). Regarding Sam's flouts to the maxim of relation, the subject he often unexpectedly shifts to is Antarctica, which was mostly unrelated to the topic of the earlier conversation. This is because Antarctica is a topic that holds his interest, which he carries on in a conversation regardless of the current topic. ASD individuals tend to be fixated on a specific topic, which can explain Sam's obsession with Antarctica and penguins (Patrick, 2010, p. 32). Fein (2010) mentions that many ASD individuals struggle to maintain the conversational topic, which is also the case for Sam, as he often does not react appropriately to previous statements.

The second dominant occurrence of flouting the maxims was the maxim of quantity, with 15 instances out of 41. In this case, the flouts were mostly identified through utterances that gave too little or too much information. The information given as a response by Sam should be enough for the recipient to understand the context fully, but this rarely occurred. These utterances prove that Sam Gardner struggles to provide the right amount of information where he, at times, mentions multiple events in one single utterance without explaining these events any further (Speer, 2012). It is clear in examples (1) and (2) that Sam Gardner displayed some ASD characteristics by having difficulties formulating his thoughts and expressing himself clearly. ASD individuals tend to struggle to formulate their thoughts and express themselves clearly, which highlights their difficulties in putting together a coherent and well-formed sentence, which is the case for Sam Gardner when he flouts the maxim of quantity (Fein, 2010, p. 126). Sam's use of flouts of this maxim may thus be due to formulation deficits, as Baron-Cohen (1988) claimed ASD individuals tend to have, which could prevent him from using a syntactic structure that provides the right amount of information, which thus leads to him accidentally flout the maxim of quantity.

The maxim of manner was flouted 3 times and was not as frequent as the maxims of relation and quantity because his utterance could be identified as either a flout or a violation in certain scenes. However, the instances where Sam flouted the maxim of manner were the utterances that included ambiguous language or vague, generic words such as "stuff" or "that lady," as seen in examples (5) and (6). An explanation of this may be because ASD individuals fail to recognize who does and does not already possess the information (Perner et al, 1989). Therefore, Sam unintentionally flouted the maxim of manner because he had difficulties considering the listener's perspective, meaning if the listener

possesses enough information to understand who or what he is referring to. Lam (2014) claims that the pragmatic problems that occur in autism include failure to clarify ambiguities, which falls into agreement with Sam Gardner and why he did not proceed to clarify the ambiguous word he uttered.

The results show that the maxim of quality was only flouted once. Talwar et al. (2012, p. 122) stated that the theory of mind is a "prerequisite to having the ability to deceive another person because deception depends on recognizing what knowledge is available to another person and appreciating their mental states." However, as previously mentioned, ASD individuals struggle with the theory of mind and have difficulties understanding the thoughts and feelings of others. In order to lie, a speaker must make a false statement with the intention to deceive the recipient. ASD individuals struggle to lie or to deceive people, and when they do so, they struggle to maintain the lie. According to Aprilidya et al. (2018), the maxim of quality is commonly observed by ASD individuals as they tend to be truthful and give factual statements. These characteristics align with Sam, who is truthful and provides information that does not lack evidence, which is why he observed the maxim of quality in almost every utterance as he rarely lies. Despite this, what could be found was that Sam's utterance in example (3) may have been flouted intentionally and is not associated with autism. The maxim of quality can be flouted for various reasons, such as through hyperbole or making an ironic and sarcastic statement (Aprilidya et al, 2018). Sam makes a hyperbolic statement in example (3) to exaggerate Dr. Robertson's behavior by adding "like" in his statement. As previously mentioned, the word "like" is used to give a rough estimate for exaggeration. Sam is thus creating an exaggerated or hyperbolic statement on Dr. Robertson's behavior. Therefore, the flout in example (3) is not associated with autism and seems intentional as he deliberately insults her rabbit-like behavior.

5.2 Comparing Results With Other Studies on Individuals With ASD

The second question of this study was whether the results of the analysis can be compared to the results of past research on individuals with ASD and their ability to work with the Gricean maxims. Previous claims made by Suran et al. (1996) and Asada et al. (2022) reported that ASD children flout the maxims more frequently because they exhibit inappropriate language behavior in social situations, which creates linguistic and social difficulties. It is difficult for ASD individuals to convey their feelings and what they want, which is why they have problems with pragmatics (Wahyunianto et al, 2020). ASD children observe the maxims quite often, but when they flout, it is due to their inability to produce accurate and brief utterances because of the characteristics of their language skills (Aprilidya et al, 2018). It is difficult to identify a scriptwriter's full intention through a fictional character and how they want to

present the character's atypicality. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that the flouts that did not result in any observable implicature were used to illustrate ASD. The results thus demonstrated Sam's difficulties as he exhibits inappropriate language behavior in social situations the way ASD children normally do. In this case, the results of the analysis can be comparable to the results of psychological studies of ASD children's pragmatic skills because the difficulty in conveying thoughts and feelings can be seen in examples (1) and (2), as Sam Gardner overexplains and tends to give unpredictable responses.

Furthermore, Wahyunianto et al.'s study (2020) found that the maxim of quantity was observed frequently as children with ASD can provide adequate information needed in the conversation exchange. This was not the case with the results of this study, as Sam Gardner had difficulties giving adequate information to the listener multiple times. For instance, Sam Gardner incorporated many irrelevant details in his utterances, flouting the maxim of quantity many times. A similarity between these results and Wahyunianto et al.'s study (2020) is that the maxim of relation is the most flouted. This was due to ASD children's difficulties in giving suitable comments in social interaction. In many cases, Sam gave comments that were not suitable for the conversation, which resulted in flouting the maxim of relation. Flouts of the maxim of manner were found to be difficult to test on ASD children as the researchers could not generate items appropriate to the ASD children's knowledge base. In all six episodes, only three flouts of the maxim of manner were identified. Therefore, comparing the results of the maxim of manner to past research is complicated.

It is essential to note that past findings concluded that ASD children can create successful communication. The studies in section 2.3 found that children with ASD observe the maxim of relation less than typically developed (TD) children, though there were no statistically significant differences in their results (Surian et al,1996; Kosuke et al, 2022). Whether Sam Gardner observed the maxim of relation less than TD characters is difficult to discuss because this study did not count the instances of flouts made by other characters. However, what could be found was that Sam Gardner created successful communication most of the time and hardly flouted the maxims to create implicatures as people commonly do. Only one utterance seemed to contain an implicature, as seen in example (3). Many of Sam's flouts might be due to pragmatic difficulties in terms of language and communication skills, as ASD children have poor topic maintenance and lack reciprocity in conversation (Aprilidya et al, 2018).

As previously mentioned, the results may vary depending on the situation and who is observed. Past studies observed ASD children, where most of them were under the age of 10. Children with ASD flout

maxims frequently due to their severe deficits in language at an early age, though this can be improved (Surian et al,1996; Kosuke et al, 2022; Wahyunianto et al,2020). Past research mentioned in this study might be in line with Sam's language behavior because he is a teenager and may have difficulties understanding the proper communication principles due to his ongoing development. There are many similarities between findings reported previously and Sam Gardner's manifested pragmatic skills. For instance, ASD individuals barely use any device to indicate the change or maintain a link between the old and new conversational topic study (Lam, 2014). This is in line with Sam Gardner and his pragmatic difficulties, as he often abruptly changed the conversational topic. These instances of Sam's communication reveal that abnormal communication is a key symptom of autism (Surian et al, 1996, p. 56). Therefore, the result of this analysis seems to be in line with results of psychological studies assessing some ASD individuals and their pragmatic skills to an extent. However, it is crucial to keep in mind that pragmatic skills vary from person to person.

5.3 Autism, Pedagogy and Education

The third research question dealt with the way the results of this study could be used in a didactic setting. There has been an increase in individuals being diagnosed with ADHD and autism in Sweden, which affects the school environment (Jablonska B et al, 2022, p. 20). Pupils with ASD or other similar diagnoses must attend regular primary and secondary school as the special needs school only accepts pupils with intellectual disabilities, such as hearing or visual ones. The possibility of having more than one pupil with ASD in a regular classroom has therefore increased (Gomez-Mari et al, 2021). Regular teacher programs in Swedish universities do not provide a course on neuropsychological diagnoses, as it would be a complicated process to modify these. Because of this, regular teachers' knowledge of ASD is poor, and they may feel unprepared or not confident enough to meet ASD students' educational and communicational needs because they cannot recognize some language characteristics of ASD (Devi and Ganguly, 2022). Thus, teachers must be equipped with a knowledge of different disabilities to be more competent in teaching students with ASD and to better adapt education for them (Gomez-Mari et al, 2021).

A solution to this would be using the results of this study because the series builds on pragmatic difficulties seen in ASD children. Since this study explicitly focused on a teenager, it can give teachers another picture of the varieties of pragmatic difficulties in ASD children and older children, as the results present a less complicated way for teachers to notice pragmatic difficulties in young pupils with ASD. Awareness and knowledge of atypical speech patterns in ASD would be beneficial in a

pedagogical setting, as teachers would notice the diverse ways neurodivergent individuals may use speech and language. Adequate knowledge about ASD would also lead to fewer misconceptions about their communicative abilities (Olsson, 2016). Therefore, the analysis of Sam's flouting can be used as educational materials for teachers to notice the pragmatic difficulties in ASD individuals when they use language. By doing so, it would be possible for teachers to notice and manage these communicative problems easier. Teachers' knowledge of ASD may also improve the relationship between teachers and students. It is important to consider that communicative challenges are experienced by children and adult students, and that not all individuals on the spectrum display the same communicative challenges. For instance, not all ASD individuals change the conversational topic without a smooth transition, whether it be accidentally or deliberately. However, most ASD individuals show severe deficits in areas of language development which cause communication challenges (Surian et al, 1996, p. 56).

According to Skolverket (2022), pupils are expected to be given the opportunity to develop knowledge of language, which helps them develop an all-round communicative skill. The subject of English should also provide opportunities to develop "the ability to express oneself and communicate in English in speech and writing" as well as "the ability to use different language strategies in different contexts" (Skolverket, 2022). A greater emphasis on teaching pragmatic knowledge may lead to pupils using language in a functional and meaningful context to develop all-around communicative skills. Pupils can be given the opportunity to improve multiple skills when a teacher combines pragmatics and popular culture in a didactic setting.

Teachers can present the Gricean maxims and explain them to pupils. They can create group activities based on the maxims, allowing pupils to converse with each other while being aware of the possibilities of flouting. Pupils would be given the opportunity to have a smoother conversation by being aware of and understanding the Gricean maxims as they lead to effective communication. The better pupils are at conveying information, the more likely the recipients are to understand what they have to say. Pupils may often violate the maxims without realizing it, but being aware of the maxims could help them avoid such mistakes in communication. For instance, pupils can try to remind themselves to include all the necessary information needed for the conversation. They may also practice sarcasm and irony to flout a particular maxim on purpose to see if the conversation remains smooth. Introducing the results of this study in a didactic setting is significant as it can help teachers and pupils minimize misunderstandings during lectures. Additionally, teachers can educate their pupils about pragmatic challenges to increase the learning and teaching of language. It is essential to consider why communication fails and how it can be more successful. Pupils use language both inside and outside the classroom, which is why they would

benefit from the knowledge of pragmatics (Safitri et al, n.d, p. 2). The educational materials provided by teachers could be video examples of Sam's conversations that specifically highlight his flouts. Teachers could use these videos to create roleplaying exercises, allowing pupils to practice pragmatic responses and behaviors. This would benefit pupils in improving their speech and contribution to conversation by, for instance, understanding why a flout occurs and how some utterances can mean differently on the surface but contain an implicature. The examples presented by teachers may highlight communication patterns that can be analyzed in the classroom. Including such activities in a classroom would help pupils practice and use these social skills to form a safe and supportive environment.

6. Conclusion

This paper sets out to address three research questions. The first question was to analyze and count the instances of flouts from Sam Gardner in *Atypical.* The TV series *Atypical* contains different occurrences of maxim flouting. Since this study is only based on data from six episodes, it is difficult to generalize which maxim is flouted the most. However, the results concluded that the main character, Sam Gardner, flouts all the maxims: quantity, quality, relation, and manner. Through this pragmatic analysis, it was possible to conclude that Sam Gardner uses language to display some characteristics of ASD by unintentionally flouting the maxims multiple times. Sam flouted some maxims more than others - the maxims of relation and quantity were flouted more often than the maxims of quality and manner. The findings further illustrate that the scriptwriter of *Atypical* has included many flouts to highlight ASD characteristics in Sam's character. As the results concluded, only one flout by Sam Gardner was used to induce implicatures and might not be related to his autism.

The second research question compared the pragmatic differences between some ASD individuals and Sam Gardner. Sam Gardner, who usually creates successful communications, has difficulties observing the maxims of relation and quantity. Sam struggles to stay on topic and rarely provides enough information in his utterances. Although ASD individuals' pragmatic skills differ and are culturally and linguistically diverse, it is possible to understand some of their communicative difficulties through observations of the fictional character.

The third research question sought to address how the results can be used in a pedagogical setting as a way of raising awareness about these pragmatic difficulties within ASD, as teachers need to consider that children with autism are often a few steps behind non-autistic children in terms of learning (Powell & Jordan 1998 p, 31). Hopefully, the learning outcome from the results would be that it would be

possible to increase the awareness of pragmatic difficulties in ASD students through Sam Gardner's language and behavior, as it gives an insight into why he speaks in an atypical way. If teachers gain more knowledge regarding this topic, perhaps it would be easier to converse with and adapt to ASD students to increase learning and motivation in the classroom.

This topic is broad, which provides the possibility of further research. An interesting topic for further research might be to analyze and compare how other characters in *Atypical* flout the Gricean maxims for different purposes. Another interesting topic for further research would be to compare women and men with ASD and their differences in flouting the Gricean maxims. The differences between their pragmatic skills would be interesting to analyze as women are underrepresented in autism research (Morgan-Trimmer, 2022).

References

Alduais, A., Al-Qaderi, I. and Alfadda, H. (2022). Pragmatic Language Development: Analysis of Mapping Knowledge Domains on How Infants and Children Become Pragmatically Competent. *Children*, 9(9), https://doi.org/10.3390/children9091407

Aprilidya, Y. and Imperiani, E. (2018). Examining Conversation of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) – An Application of Grice's Cooperative Principle. *The Tenth Conference on Applied Linguitics and The Second English Language Teaching and Technology Conference in collaboration with The First International Conference on Language, Literature, Culture, and Education – CONAPLIN and ICOLLITE*, SciTePress, pp. 399-405. https://doi.org/10.5220/0007168003990405

Asada, K., Itakura, S., Okanda, M., Moriguchi, Y., Yokawa, K., Kumagaya, S., Konishi, K. and Konishi, Y. (2022). Understanding of the Gricean maxims in children with autism spectrum disorder: Implications for pragmatic language development. *Journal of Neurolinguistics*, 63, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jneuroling.2022.101085

Baron-Cohen, S. (1988). Social and pragmatic deficits in autism: Cognitive or affective? *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 18(3), pp. 379-402. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02212194

Beers Fägersten, K. (2016). *Watching TV with a Linguist.* Syracuse University Press.

Berger, R. (2018). Disability and humor in film and television: A content analysis. In R Berger & L.S. Lorenz (Es.), *Disability and Qualitative Inquiry: Methods for Rethinking an Ableist World.* Ashgate Publishing.

Cantwell, D.P., Baker, L., and Rutter, M. (1978). A comparative study of infantile autism and specific developmental receptive language disorder: IV. Analysis of syntax and language function. *Child Psychology & Psychiatry & Allied Disciplines*, 19(4), pp. 351-362. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.1978.tb00481.x

Cutting, J. (2005). *Pragmatics and Discourse.* Routledge.

Eitelmann, M., and Stange, U. (2016). The Pragmatics Explication – Making Sense of Nerds in The Big Bang Theory, in Beers Fägersten (ed.) *Watching TV with a Linguist.* Syracuse University Press. Ch. 5

Fabian, R. (2023). *These Autistic Actors Helped 'Atypical' Increase Its Authentic Representation.* The Mighty. Available at: https://themighty.com/topic/autism-spectrum-disorder/atypical-cast-autistic-peer-group-actors/

Fein, D.A. (2010). *The Neuropsychology of Autism*. Oxford University Press.

Gomez-Mari, I., Sanz-Cervera, P. and Tarraga-Minguez, P. (2021). Teachers' Knowledge Regarding Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): A Systematic Review. *Sustainability*, 13(9), pp. 1-23. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13095097

Grice, H.P. (1989). *Studies in the way of words.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Gunasekare, U. (2015). *Mixed research method as the third research paradigm: A literature review*. International Journal of Science and Research, 4(8), pp. 363-367. Available at: https://ssrn.com/abstract=2735996

Happé, F.G.E. (1993). Communicative competence and theory of mind in autism: a test for Relevance theory. *Cognition*, 48, pp. 101-119.

Hay, I. and Winn, S. (n.d.). *Title: Secondary Students with HFAS High Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder: A challenge to secondary school educators and the students with the condition*. [online] Available at: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED542469.pdf

Hossain, M. (2021). The Application of Grice Maxims in Conversation: A Pragmatic Study. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 3(10), pp. 32-40. https://doi.org/10.32996/jeltal.2021.3.10.4

Jablonska B, Ohlis A, Dal H. *Autismspektrumtillstånd och adhd bland barn och ungdomar i Stockholms län: förekomst i befolkningen samt vårdkonsumtion.* En uppföljningsrapport. Stockholm: Centrum för epidemiologi och samhällsmedicin, Region Stockholm; 2022. Rapport 2022:5.

Jakobson, R. (1972). Verbal Communication. *Scientific American*, 227(3), pp. 72-81.

James, C.E., Marin, L. and Kassam, S (2011). Looking Through the Cinematic Mirror: Film as an Educational Tool. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 33(4), p. 354-364. https://doi.org/10.1080/10714413.2011.597647

Jubas, K. (2023). Using popular culture in professional education to foster critical curiosity and learning. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 55:1, pp. 240-258. https://doi.org/10.1080/02660830.2022.2114690

Lam, Y.G. (2014). Pragmatic Language in Autism: An Overview. Comprebensive Guide to Auism, pp. 533-550. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-4788-7_25

Lee, J.Y. and Deng, Z. (2020). Atypical: A Novel Portrayal of Individuals With Autism Spectrum Disorder. *American Journal of Psychiatry Residents' Journal*, 15(3), p. 20. https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp-rj.2020.150309

Leech, G.N. and Short, M. (2007). "Conversation in the novel" in *Style in fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose.* Pearson Education, pp. 231-253.

Leslie, S. (2012). The Neuropsychology of Autism. Archives of Clinical Neuropsychology, 27(5), pp. 573-574

Morgan-Trimmer, R. (2022). Autism in women – under-diagnosed, under-served and under-represented. *Murmurations: Journal of Transformative Systematic Practice*, 4(2), pp. 10-19. https://doi.org/10.28963/4.2.3

Olsson, M. (2016). *Lärares ledarskap som möjliggörande och begränsande i mötet med 'alla' barn: En deltagarorienterad studie.* Stockholms Universitetet

Patrick, N.J (2019). *Leva med Asperger: en praktisk guide för tonåringar och vuxna.* Stockholm: Natur & Kultur

Paul, R., Orlovski, S.M., Marcinko, H.C. and Volkmar, F. (2008). Conversational Behaviors in Youth with High-functioning ASD and Asperger Syndrome. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, [online] 39(1), pp. 115-125. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-008-0607-1.

Powell, S and Jordan, R. (1998). *Autism leka, lära och leva. En handbok för praktiskt lärande.* Stockholm: Cura

Perner, J., Frith, U., Leslie, A.M and Leekam, S.R. (1989). Exploration of the autistic child's theory of mind: knowledge, belief, and communication. *Child Development*, 60(3), pp. 668-700. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/2737018/

Rapin, I. and Dunn, M. (1997). Language disorders in children with autism. *Seminars in Pediatric Neurology*, 4(2), pp. 86-92. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1071-9091(97)80024-1.

Rashid, R. (Director). (2017). *Atypical*. Available through Netflix [Accessed 10 March 2023].

Safitri, M., Seken, K., and Putra Jaya Adi, N. (n.d). *Observance and non-observance of Gricean maxims in instructional context: an analysis of EFL classroom interacton.* Available at: https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/119526-EN-observance-and-non-observance-of-gricean.pdf

Safran, S.P. (1998). Disability Portrayal in Film: Reflecting the Past, Directing the Future. *Exceptional Children*, 64(2), pp. 227-238. https://doi.org/10.1177/0014402998064002.

Simpson, L. and Bui, Y. (2016). Effect of a Peer-Mediated Intervention on Social Interactions of Students with Low-Functioning Autism and Perceptions of Typical Peers. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 51 (2), pp. 162-178.

Skolverket. (2011). *Curriculum for the upper secondary school.* Stockholm: Skolverket.

Springfield! Springfield! (n.d.). *Atypical (2017) Episode Scripts | SS*. [online] Available at: https://www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/episode_scripts.php?tv-show=atypical-2017 [Accessed 10 March 2023].

Surian, L., Baron-Cohen S., and Van del Lely H. (1996). Are Children with Autism Deaf to Gricean Maxims? *Cognitive Neuropsychiatry*, 1(1), pp. 55–72. https://doi.org/10.1080/135468096396703

Talwar, V., Zwaigenbaum, L., Goulden, K.J., Manji, S., Loomes, C. and Rasmussen, C. (2012). Lie-Telling Behavior in Children With Autism and Its Relation to False-Belief Understanding. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 27(2), pp. 122-129 https://doi.org/10.1177/1088357612441828

Thomas, J. (1995). Meaning in Interaction: An Introduction to Pragmatics. London: Longman.

Waterhouse, L., Morris, R., Allen, D., Dunn, M., Fein, D., Feinstein, C., Rapin, I. and Wing, L. (1996). Diagnosis and classification in autism. Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 26(1), pp. 59-86. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02276235

Wee, L., and Cheung, W. (2009). *An animated and narrated glossary of terms used in Linguistics.* Hong Kong Baptist University. Available at: https://digital.lib.hkbu.edu.hk/linguisticglossary/PDF-HO/Maxim%20of%20Relation.pdf

Yule, G. (2017). *The study of language*. 6. ed. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Appendix

All the 62 conversations that Sam Gardner participated in will be included in this section.

Season 2 episode 1:

Conversation 1
[ELSA.] Sam, honey. Sam? You okay?
[SAM.] It's Monday at four o'clock. I always see Julia on Monday at four o'clock.
[ELSA.] I know you do, but I made you an appointment for tomorrow, with someone new. He sounds really cool. It says on his website that he does karate.
[SAM.] Oh.
[ELSA.] In the meantime, you can always talk to your old mom. Open for business. We can go out and get ice cream and gab. Like we used to when you were little.
[SAM.] No, thank you.

Conversation 2
[SAM.] You probably don't know this, but a hole the size of the state of Maine has been found in the middle of Antarctica. You wouldn't expect to find a hole in the middle of a continent, but you'd be wrong. Something that seemed so rock-solid, or, I guess, ice-solid. And yet, impossible as it sounds that's exactly what's happening. [EXHALES.]
[SAM.] A giant hole. And while scientists like to think they know something about it, they don't. No one does. [TAPS FINGERS.] It's a mystery.
[THERAPIST.] Wow, that's a heck of a fun fact, champ.
[SAM.] I don't think this is going to work out.

Conversation 3
[SAM.] His eyebrows were huge. Like he was an arthropod using them as a tactile sensory appendage.
[CASEY.] God, it must be hilarious being you.
[SAM.] Sometimes.
[ELSA.] We'll just find you someone else, someone with more reasonable eyebrows. Oh, Casey, good news.
[CASEY.] Oh, Elsa, I don't care.
[SAM.] Why are you calling Mom "Elsa"?
[ELSA.] Your Clayton uniform came today. I hung it in your closet to get rid of that factory smell, but it is adorable. It just, it looks smart.
[SAM TAPS FORK.]
[ELSA.] So, what do you two think of the roast? Just for fun, I tried a new pre-packaged spice mix.
[CASEY.] Cheater.
[SAM.] Why did you change the spice mix? Also, Elsa, you carved it weird. Dad carves it better. When is he coming back? Do we call him Doug?
[ELSA.] No. We're still Mom and Dad.
[CASEY.] Yeah, that's a good question. When is Dad coming home?
[ELSA.] Well, he's at Grandpa's building the porch. So, whenever that's done.
[CASEY.] Well, I guess it's good that he's building a home, instead of wrecking one.
[ELSA.] Who wants more carrots?
[SAM.] Hard pass.
[CASEY.] I'm going for a run.
[SAM.] I've been thinking about it, and I really want to see Julia again. I know she hurt my feelings with what she said, but I feel better now.
[ELSA.] No, Sam, absolutely not. I'm sorry, we'll find you someone, okay?
[SAM.] Okay.
[ELSA.] His eyebrows looked pretty normal on the website.
[SAM.] Photoshop, Elsa.

Conversation 4
[PAIGE.] Maine is so beautiful. It's just like Stephen King described it. Minus the scary sewer clowns. [CHUCKLES.]
[SAM.] Paige, I'd like to discuss the handjob and its implications for our relationship.
[PAIGE.] Sam, my Mee-Maw is right there. I can't talk about this now.
[SAM.] We have to. I usually talk about everything with Julia.
[PAIGE.] You know you are never to speak that name to me.
[SAM.] But since I can't talk to that lady anymore and I refuse to go to the guy with the caterpillar eyebrows, who calls me "champ," even though I'm not a champion of anything. I don't have anyone to talk to and it's making me a little jumpy.
[PAIGE.] Look, Sam, I'm I'm sorry that you're feeling jumpy. And despite our truly magical igloo encounter, we are not boyfriend and girlfriend anymore. I think we need to spend this time apart thinking about what we want. And how [INHALES.] whatever this thing is between us fits into our lives and futures.
[SAM CHUCKLES.]
[PAIGE.] What?
[SAM.] Well, you mentioned the igloo, so now I'm thinking about the handjob again.
[PAIGE.] Sam, I gotta go. It's family rap night, and the Hip-Hop Hardaways are performing Hamilton. I'm playing all three sisters, so it's a lot.
[SAM.] Okay.
[PAIGE.] Okay.

Conversation 5
[SAM.] Why was my toothbrush in the top left hole?
[EVAN.] Hey, Sam.
[SAM.] Hi, Evan. It's always in the top right hole, you know that's where it goes, but it was in the top left hole.
[CASEY.] You're a top left hole.
[SAM.] Did you move it?
[CASEY.] Move what?
[SAM.] My toothbrush.
[CASEY.] I can't confirm or deny.
[SAM.] Don't touch my stuff!
[EVAN.] Um..
[CASEY.] What?
[EVAN.] Maybe you should give your brother a break considering your family's, you know, exploding.
[CASEY.] No. All the autism research shows that it is crucial to continue to bust balls in a time of crisis. It's part of his routine.
[EVAN.] Hmm.
[CASEY.] It's how he knows I care.
[EVAN.] Hah. You're such a jerk.
[CASEY.] Sam, you know I care, right?
[SAM.] Shut up!
[CASEY.] He knows.

Conversation 6
[SAM.] Did you know there's a giant hole in Antarctica? Been a big year for ice-related news at the bottom of the world.
[ZAHID.] Random and possibly a cry for help. How's the therapist search going, dude?
[SAM.] Terrible.
[ZAHID.] Screw it, don't get one. Lean on your crew, Stu. Me, your dad, your turtle.
[SAM.] Edison's got too much going on now. New heat lamp, and my dad's been away. I just need him to come back so everything can go back to normal.
[ZAHID.] Where's old Dougie?
[SAM.] At my grandpa's cabin, building a dumb porch.
[ZAHID.] In the middle of the winter?
[SAM.] I guess.
[ZAHID.] Seems like the dumbest possible time.
[SAM.] I wouldn't know, I never built a porch.
[ZAHID.] I mean, how would you even hold a hammer with mittens on? Or is Doug a nail gun kind of guy?
[SAM.] I don't know. How can you tell?
[ZAHID.] Okay. I can see that you need me. So, you know what I do when I got to get my crazies out? I text a random phone number with all of my problems. It leads to some very interesting conversations. Watch. [TAPS KEYS.] "I cry in the bathtub at night." I do. And send.
[PHONE CHIMES.]
[ZAHID.] That one was to a group. Try it.
[SAM.] I don't think so. I don't enjoy intimacy with strangers. We are very different people.
[ZAHID.] Okay, alright. When I am really in my head, I put on my puffiest winter coat And I'm talking serious fluff, like, grade-A marshmallow. I go to the batting cages and let the balls pelt me.
[SAM.] Does that work?
[ZAHID.] The results are inconclusive. Just make sure to wear a cup. I'll only make that mistake once. [PHONE RINGING.] Ooh, I got a few texts. Two "eat shits" and a "me too." Aww.
[SAM.] I just want to talk to Julia.
[ZAHID.] Well, then, go talk to Julia.
[SAM.] I can't, my mom won't let me.
[ZAHID.] You are your own man, Sam. You can do whatever you want. You can wear pants backwards.
[SAM.] Why would I want to?
[ZAHID.] I don't know. Easy access to your wallet? A zipper for your butt? It's getting away from me. But okay, if you really don't want to go against your hot mom's wishes which I totally understand, I mean, she is a wise tour de force. Gotta keep looking. Can't be that hard to find a good therapist, right? So in that way, I wouldn't even call it therapy, as much as I would call it rap time with a friend.

Conversation 7
[SAM'S HANDS TAPPING.]
[SAM.] I don't think this is going to work out.

[JAUNTY TUNE CONTINUES.]
[SAM'S HANDS TAPPING.]
[SAM.] Okay, then.

Conversation 8
[ELSA.] Oh, come on. That is very funny, but Dr.Robertson is not a rabbit.
[SAM.] You weren't there. Her nose wiggled the whole time and she ate, like, 20 carrots. Hey, Mom? Why is Dad building a porch in the winter?
[ELSA.] So it will be ready in the spring.
[SAM.] What is my toothbrush doing there? [SURPRISED.]
[ELSA.] That's weird. Where are you going?
[SAM.] Out. I just want to go back to Julia, but you won't let me, so I might as well just give up.

Conversation 9
[CASEY.] Mom, where's my blazer?
[ELSA.] Oh. Um It's in there.
[CASEY.] What the hell? You murdered it!
[ELSA.] No, I'm tailoring it. And please don't say "hell."
[CASEY.] I told you not to.
[ELSA.]I know you did, honey, but it was huge on you and I wanted to do something
[CASEY.] I can't believe you!
[ELSA.] Casey. I read an article about repairing our relationship. I'm trying to be more "parent" and less "friend."
[CASEY.] I'd prefer if you lay off both for a while, Elsa.
[ELSA.] Casey.
[CASEY.] You never wanted me to go to Clayton. You're trying to sabotage me. I start school tomorrow!
[ELSA.] I know, honey, and I'm sorry, but it will be done tomorrow. I promise. I've been really short on time.
[CASEY.] You have time to cheat on Dad, you just don't to finish some alterations?
[SAM.] What?
[CASEY PANTS.] Crap.
[SAM.] You. You cheated on Dad?
[ELSA.] Sam.
[CASEY.] This is why I didn't want to keep your dirty little secret.
[ELSA.] I'm sorry, Sam.
[SAM.] Is that why Dad left?
[ELSA.] Yes.
[SAM.] So he's not building a porch?
[ELSA.] Well, he is staying at Grandpa's. But he just needs space right now, from me. This isn't.. Not about you. Either of you. It's really all my fault.
[SAM NARRATING.] *The hole in Antarctica is most probably a result of hot water bubbling underneath the Arctic Ice. Invisible, but slowly destroying the ice sheets from under the surface.*
[SAM.] Huh! I never met anyone who committed adultery before.
[ELSA.] Sam? Sam, do you want to talk about it?
[SAM.] No.
[ELSA.] Are you sure?
[SAM.] Yes. No, thank you.
[ELSA.] Okay. Honey, I found a really great therapist, Dr.Brob. I got her number. I'm going to call her on Monday. I'll put it on the calendar.
[SAM NARRATING.] *Inch by inch, one layer at a time what was once thick ice finally gets so thin I'll put it on the calendar. It cracks wide-open.*
[ELSA.] Casey, toothbrush again?
[SAM SHOUTS.] You!
[CASEY.] Sam, I'm so sorry. Seriously, I did that before.
[SAM.] I told you not to touch my toothbrush!
[CASEY.] Whoa! [SOBS.] My uniform
[ELSA] Casey! Casey Gardner! - [SAM SCREAMING.] Casey! Stop it! - Get off! - Casey! - [CASEY PANTING AND SOBBING.]
[ELSA.] Sam? Where are you going?
[SAM.] Work.
[ELSA.] Let me drive you.
[SAM.] No, thank you.

Conversation 10
[SAM.] Hi, Julia.
[JULIA.] Hi, Sam. You shouldn't be here, you know that. [SAM SCRATCHING.] Why don't you sit? Just for a minute. In the waiting area.
[SAM.] Don't worry, I'm not here to talk about love. I don't love you anymore, I don't think. There was a handjob, a lot has happened.
[SILENTLY MOUTHS.]
[JULIA.] Oh. Looks like you might want to talk. I can't see you anymore, but I can help find someone else to talk to. I can call my coworker.
[SAM.] Did you know there's a hole in the middle of Antarctica the size of Maine?
[JULIA SIGHS.] Is that how you're feeling lately? Like there's a hole in your life?
[SAM.] Casey moved my toothbrush. And we fought, hitting each other. Well, she hit me. I kind of just became a potato bug.
[JULIA.] Oh! You feeling okay?
[SAM.] I don't know how I feel.
[JULIA.] Well, sometimes that's okay too.
[SAM.] First I thought I was mad about the toothbrush, but maybe I was mad because Casey lied to me about my mom having an affair, or maybe I was mad because my mom had an affair and my dad doesn't live at home anymore, and I need my dad to live at home. Actually, I think it was the toothbrush.
[JULIA.] Wow. Um Okay.
[JULIA SIGHS.] You know, Sam, I'm proud of you.
[SAM.] For fighting with Casey? That makes no sense.
[JULIA.] No, but a year ago you wouldn't have been able to be so calm and articulate after a stressful incident like that. I really believe, whatever is going on, you can handle it.
[SAM.] Yeah?
[JULIA.] Yeah. I'm gonna send you a recommendation for a wonderful therapist.
[SAM.] No, I've tried pretty much every therapist in town, even that rabbit. They're all garbage. I need you.
[JULIA.] Well, I'm sorry, but that can't happen. It wouldn't be right for either of us.
[SAM.] I know. My mom didn't want me to come here either, but I'm my own man. I can wear my pants backwards. Thank you for being my therapist, except for when you yelled at me and made me have a meltdown on the bus. Everything else was good.
[JULIA SIGHS.] You're welcome. And sorry for that time.
[SAM.] Maybe you can be my therapist again someday.
[JULIA.] I don't think so.
[SAM.] But maybe.

Conversation 11
[ELSA.] Ahh! There you are, I've been calling your cell. Are you okay? How was work?
[SAM.] I was 46 minutes late to work because we passed Julia's stop on the bus. So I decided to get off to see Julia. So I saw Julia.
[ELSA.] What?
[SAM.] I saw Julia. I've said it two times now.
[ELSA.] Honey, I know you might be angry with me, but I specifically told you not to see her.
[SAM.] I don't know if I'm angry with you. I don't know how I feel. But that's okay sometimes.
[ELSA.] Okay. So how was it seeing her again? Honey, talk to me.
[SAM.] No. Dad!
[DOUG.] Hey.
[SAM.] You're back?
[DOUG.] I'm back.
[SAM.] Good. You missed a lot. We got this ugly new Merry Christmas sign and Casey told me that Mom cheated. Oh, and Mom changed the spice rub. Bad idea. So you're back.
[DOUG.] Yeah, I'm coming home.

Conversation 12
[DOOR KNOCKING.]
[CASEY.] Yeah?
[SAM.] You got me a new toothbrush and you put it in the right hole.
[CASEY.] Yeah, Mom has, like, a million spares. Sam I'm really sorry.
[SAM.] I know. I used my employee discount to get you these mechanical pencils for your first day of school. Seven millimeters. I know that's your preferred lead width.
[CASEY.] Thank you. You didn't have to do that.
[SAM.] I'm your big brother. I can take care of you sometimes too.
[DOOR CLOSES.]

Season 2 episode 2:

Conversation 13
[SAM.] After a female emperor penguin lays an egg, she immediately goes away, leaving the male to care for and warm the egg until it hatches.
[DOUG.] Oh, yeah? [PENGUINS SQUAWK.] Where's the egg?
[SAM.] Under the father's tail feathers.
[DOUG.] That's a dude? That's cool.
[CASEY SHOUTS.] Hey! Ketchup. What are you watching?
[DOUG & SAM.] Baby penguin cam.
[CASEY.] More like baby boring boring.
[DOUG.] Hey, looking good, Case.
[CASEY.] Mmm. This uniform is so lame.

[DOUG.] It's your first day, you excited?
[CASEY.] I don't know. Sam, are you sure you're going to be okay without me? [POURING JUICE.]
[SAM.] Yes, you're so annoying.
[CASEY.] I feel like I've adequately prepared him for the real world.
[DOUG.] Yeah, thanks for that.
[CASEY.] Yeah.
[ELSA.] Knock, knock.
[CASEY.] Mom. And a cat.
[DOUG.] What are you doing here?
[ELSA.] I just came to see everyone off on their big first day back, after the break. Also, I left a couple things. Like, I didn't pack any good socks.
[DOUG.] We're just getting ready to go.
[ELSA.] Fridge is pretty empty. Maybe I should go by the store and pick up some supplies. I could make dinner.
[DOUG.] We got it.
[ELSA.] What about something else that I could do, dishes or beds.
[DOUG.]
It's all done.
[CASEY.] You don't live here anymore, lady.
[DOUG.] Come on, let's go. We can't be late. It's the first day. Sam.
[ELSA.] Sam? Sam, honey? I really missed you. It's the first night I've ever been apart from you. [SNIFFS.]
[SAM.] You have a cat now?
[ELSA.] Temporarily.
[SAM EXHALES.]
[CASEY.] Why do villains always have cats?
[DOUG.] Come on, we can't be late.

Conversation 14
[STUDENTS CHATTERING.]
[PAIGE.] Hi, Sam, I'm back from Maine.
[SAM.] Obviously. You look like Roald Amundsen, dressed for an expedition. Without the frostbite and the beard.
[PAIGE.] Is that a compliment?
[SAM.] Of course.
[PAIGE.] Thank you. My mom wasn't feeling well and she gave me her credit card and I may have gone a little bananas at the L.L.Bean outlet. Anyway, um I did some thinking while I was away. The pastoral beauty just really encourages quiet reflection and I'm thinking we should keep things casual between us.
[SAM.] Okay. [STUDENTS CHATTERING.] What does that mean?
[PAIGE.] Well, my cousin Coco was home from Skidmore for the holidays, and she has several casual relationships. It allows for adult fun, while keeping a focus on what's important, like her own life and future. Plus I only have 12 more years to make it on the Forbes 30 Under 30 list, so And I was thinking of taking a trip to Oprah's girls' school
[SAM NARRATING.] *Sometimes when talking to Paige, I lose track of what her words mean. It's like she's a whale or a dolphin using echolocation*. [BREATHES.] *And I'm a boy speaking English.* [WHALE SONG.]
[SAM CHUCKLES.]
[PAIGE.] What?
[SAM.] I was just thinking about how you're like a whale.
[PAIGE.] What?
[SAM.] Echolocation.
[PAIGE.] God, Sam, I swear sometimes it's like we speak completely different languages.
[SAM.] Exactly.
[PAIGE.] Anyway, as I was saying while things between us will be totally casual, and no strings we can still do this. [WET KISSING.]
[SAM.] Good.
[PAIGE.] I agree.
[SAM.] More of that?
[PAIGE.] Oh, sorry, no, I have studying to do. But see? It's casual.
[STUDENTS CHATTERING.]
[PAIGE.] Sam. What are you doing? We can't hold hands. We're not together.
[SAM.] We were just making out.
[PAIGE.] So? [STUDENTS LAUGHING.]

Conversation 15
[SAM.] I don't understand this at all. First, Paige made out with me in the art room, but then she wouldn't hold my hand even though she's the one who came up with the hand-holding rule in the first place, months ago.
[ZAHID.] Tale as old as time, beautiful vixen using her wiles to scramble your brains.
[SAM.] Yes, they do feel scrambled.
[ZAHID.] Because you, my man, are in the gray area. First, you and Paige were hot and heavy: relationship. Then you broke her heart and she murdered that poor penguin: not a relationship. So she wants to protect herself, but still finds you really cute, obvi. And now, you're all up in that gray area.
[SAM.] Is the gray area a bird or me?
[ZAHID.] Yes. Okay. Advice incoming. Sit down.
[SAM.] Good. I was hoping for this. I brought my notebook.
[ZAHID.] Uhh! You ready? Here's what you do. [PEOPLE CHATTERING.] Nothing.
[SAM.] What?
[ZAHID.] Dude, the gray area is the bomb! You get all the nookie and none of the responsibility. Let me put it this way: What's the reason you'd never have a dragon as a pet?
[SAM.] Ahh! So many.
[ZAHID.] Exactly. Where are you going to find the treasure for it to fall asleep on? How do you keep it from burning down your house? How do you keep it a secret from the FBI, so they don't take him away, wrap him in plastic and take away his powers like ET? [PEOPLE CHATTERING.] If all those problems just magically went away, then poof! You get to pal around with a dope-ass dragon all day.
[SAM.] I don't think I'm following.
[ZAHID.] The gray area is good.
[SAM.] I don't know. I like rules, I need rules.
[ZAHID.] Then ask her for the rules. But for real, how baller would it be to have a dragon?
[SAM.] Not very.
[ZAHID.] What if it could sing?
[SAM.] Still no.

Conversation 16
[DOUG.] Hi. Did Mom come back here?
[SAM.] I don't know.
[DOUG.] How's the penguin dad doing?
[SAM.] If I had to guess hungry. He hasn't eaten in over a week.
[DOUG.] I got pizza.
[SAM.] Oh.

Conversation 17
[CHUCKLES.]
[SHARICE.] Hey, Sam, don't you think Casey should come back to Newton?
[SAM.] I actually didn't miss her at all today. So, no.
[CASEY.] Well, that's totally not hurtful at all.
[SAM.] Dad brought pizza. There's enough for everyone, but only if all non-family members only have one slice.
[CASEY.] Okay.

Conversation 18
[PAIGE.] Oh, Sam, good. Which thank you note for the Dean of Admissions at Bowdoin? I think the whimsical design says, "I can think outside the box." But the flowers say, "I'm traditional and I can buckle down."
[SAM.] I don't care. Paige I need you to clarify the rules of a casual relationship.
[PAIGE.] Oh! Um I haven't really thought about it, but Rule number one: We don't hold hands. We don't hold books, we don't hold anything. Well, except for each other, when I say that we can. Okay, we don't discuss feelings, crushes or finances. Oh! And our weekends are our own. If we happen to be eating lunch together or studying together, sit across the table from each other, not side-by-side like the French. But we do kiss like the French.
[SAM.] Got it. You want to watch the penguin cam with me?
[PAIGE LAUGHS.] Absolutely not. A shared interest that involves birth is a minefield, definitely against the rules.
[SAM.] Okay. [TYPING.]
[PAIGE.] But that looks really cute. Send me the link.

Conversation 19
[ZAHID.] Yeah, I feel that. Two times a year I'll wear a pair of my dad's underwear to remind myself why I'm not a tighty-whitey guy. And why he's always so grumpy.
[SAM.] That's why I like Paige. She doesn't mind when I say weird stuff. And now that she's explained the rules, I like the casual relationship because we still get to make out.
[ZAHID.] And you get to buzz around other flowers like the horny little bumblebee you are. Oh. There's a cutie.
[CUSTOMERS CHATTERING.]
[PHONE RINGS.]
[SAM.] How does she know?
[ZAHID.] That right there is witchy.
[SAM.] She wants me to come over.
[ZAHID.] You know what that means. Need a condom? I carry 12 at all times. Three in my shoes, two in my back pocket, several in my front pocket and one in your ear.
[SAM.] You walk around with condoms in your shoes?
[ZAHID.] It helps my plantar fasciitis.
[SAM.] Huh.

Comversation 20
[DOOR CLOSES.]
[PAIGE.] Thanks for coming.
[SAM.] Rule number nine: No kissing hello or goodbye. Remember?

[PAIGE.] Yeah. Sorry, I just I just found out I got wait-listed for Bowdoin. [SOBS.] I've been sad-baking all day, I already ate, like, six cookies. [CRIES.] I feel really rejected.
[SAM.] Rule number three: No talking about feelings. So, where should we make out? The couch?
[PAIGE.] Um Honestly, I feel pretty bummed. I mean, can't we just, like cuddle and watch a movie?
[SAM.] Is that a joke? Rule number four and eleven.
[PAIGE.] Sam, forget about the rules. Okay? How do you feel about me?
[SAM.] I don't know. I don't know how I feel. But Julia says that's okay sometimes.
[PAIGE.] When did she say that?
[SAM.] Last week, when I went to tell her about all the stuff happening with my parents.
[PAIGE.] What do you mean?
[SAM.] What?
[PAIGE.] What stuff?
[SAM.] Oh! My mom cheated on my dad and now she lives with Christopher and has a cat.
[PAIGE.] What?
[SAM.] I know, cats are the worst.
[PAIGE.] No. Sam, why wouldn't you tell me about your parents?
[SAM.] I didn't need to, I told Julia about it.
[PAIGE EXHALES.] Okay, Sam, I'm really sorry and I'm here if you want to talk, but, I mean, when I got wait-listed for Bowdoin and, you know, something bad happened to me, you're the first person I wanted to tell. And for.. For you, that person is still Julia.
[SAM.] She's really helpful.
[PAIGE CLICKS TONGUE.] I think we need to end our casual relationship.
[SAM.] What? But now that I know the rules, I'm really good at it.
[PAIGE.] I know you are. But I guess I'm not.

Conversation 21
[DOUG.] I got to hand it to you. I never left a break up with homemade cookies.
[SAM.] She said she wanted them and me out of her sight. I get that.
[CASEY.] Ooh. Give me one. What's up?
[SAM.] Paige broke up with me.
[CASEY.] Oh I didn't know you were back together.
[SAM.] I don't even know if we were.
[CASEY.] Hm.
[SAM.] I know it was just a casual relationship, but it was still nice to know that Paige was there if I needed her.
[CASEY.] I'm sorry, Sam.
[DOUG.] Me, too.
[SAM.] Me, too.
[CASEY.] Hey do you want to go watch the penguin cam thing?
[SAM.] Okay. If the wind picked up, the father might have shifted positions.
[CASEY.] That would be crazy.
[DOUG.] You're a good kid.
[CASEY.] Shut up.
[DOUG.] Give me 20 bucks, I won't tell anybody.
[CASEY.] Get out of here, you're so stupid.
[SAM.] He's in a different position! Come look! [PHONE CHIMES.]

Season 2 Episode 3:

Conversation 22
[SAM NARRATING.*] For most mammalian species, survival depends on knowing and sticking with your pack. But the members of my pack keep migrating. To other schools to other houses to other patients or just away from me. Everyone was worried about my first day of school without Casey. But it turns out, because of my breakup with Paige, it wasn't my first day everyone should've been worried about. It was my ninth.*
[MS. WHITAKER.] You make a great point. [CHUCKLES.]
[DOUG.] California rolls.
[ELSA.] Hi.
[MS. WHITAKER.] Hi.
[ELSA.] Sorry, I'm late. I'm not actually late. I'm on time, but I'm usually really early, - so for me, this is late.
[MS. WHITAKER.] Oh, no problem.
[DOUG.]Was that a brag or an apology?
[MS. WHITAKER.] Oh, hey. No, sit. We were chatting about nothing. What were we even chatting about?
[DOUG.] Oh, sushi.
[MS. WHITAKER.] Yes, raw fish. It's delicious, but risky.
[ELSA CHUCKLES.] Um, so, Ms.Whitaker, thank you so much for meeting with us. We just wanted to check in because Casey is no longer at Newton and I We've just been going through some changes at home.
[SAM.] She had an affair and Dad kicked her out of the house and now she has a cat. Ugh, cat! [SCRIBBLING.]
[DOUG.] Sam, that's private, bud.
[MS.WHITAKER CLICKS HER TONGUE.] Well, let's refocus. We want to help Sam in any way that we can, and speaking of, I noticed that he hasn't applied to any colleges.
[ELSA.] We have that all planned out. So after graduation, Sam's gonna continue to live at home, and take one or two courses at a community college and continue working at Techtropolis.
[DOUG.] Is that what you want? Because you don't have to do that. You can go away to college, Sam.
[SAM.] I'm fine with staying home.
[MS. WHITAKER.] Well, Sam, if you're still figuring it out, I facilitate a district-wide peer group for students on the spectrum, focused on handling transitions, specifically, around graduation.
[DOUG.] Really? Oh. That group sounds cool.
[MS. WHITAKER] Oh, it's very cool. It's very cool, and it prepares students for adulthood and kind of supports the transition to independent living to prepare for what I like to call [DEEP VOICE.] The Abyss. [CHUCKLES.] I know that sounded pretty scary, and I should stop saying it like that.
[SAM.] I'm not sure if I want to do that.
[ELSA.] Actually, I don't think we need a group. I made an appointment for Sam with Dr.Brob.
[MS. WHITAKER.] Oh, I follow her on Instagram. She is fun. [LAUGHS.]
[DOUG.] The group sounds interesting. And we'll think about college.
[ELSA.] Doug? We agreed about the college plan, like, over a year ago.
[DOUG.] Things change. Right, Elsa? I mean, you of all people should know that.
[SAM SCRIBBLES.]
[ELSA SIGHS.]
[SILENCE.]
[MS. WHITAKER.] Well, that's the bell. [SCHOOL BELL RINGING.] There it was. You know, I jumped the gun. [CHUCKLES.]
[STUDENTS CHATTERING.]
[DOUG.] That was nice, huh?
It smelled like radiator in there.
[DOUG.] You know something, it did.
[ELSA CHUCKLES NERVOUSLY.] Alright. Well, I'll see you later. Have a good day. Okay? Sam, honey, I know we haven't talked much since you found out about what happened between me and your dad.
And I totally get it. But if you ever want to ask me anything, I'm here.
[SAM.] Nope.

Conversation 23
[DOUG SIGHS.] I love grilled cheese. Hey, what do you like more, Sam, grilled cheese or pizza?
[SAM.] Grilled cheese. It's firmer, so it's easier to eat with one hand.
[DOUG.] That's true. That is very true. So, are you okay? That must've been scary, getting hit by a car.
[SAM.] It was fine. Beth was barely driving. She's not a real driver yet.
[DOUG.] And you ran out of class?
[SAM.] It was too loud.
[DOUG.] Want to talk about how you're feeling, Sam?
[SAM.] No, I don't.
[DOUG.] Yeah, I understand. I don't like to talk about my feelings either. [SPATULA CLATTERS.] It's hard. So, I looked up the peer group that the guidance counselor was talking about. They're meeting later if you want to try that.
[SAM.] Why would I want to talk about my problems with a bunch of random people that just want to talk about their stupid problems?
[DOUG.] Well, they're not random people. [SAM SCRIBBLING.]
[DOUG.] Sam, they're kids like you with autism that are graduating soon.
[SAM.] You burnt my grilled cheese.
[DOUG.] Yeah, I know.

Conversation 24
[MS. WHITAKER.] So, Lily, you said you had something you wanted to talk about.
[LILY.] Yeah, I always go to the same dentist, Dr. Ruth Swan. But last time my mom said I couldn't go to her anymore.
[MS. WHITAKER.] Why not?
[LILY.] Because she retired.
[MS. WHITAKER.] Well, so what are you going to do?
[LILY.] I'll let all my teeth fall out.
[SAM CHUCKLES.] That's pretty dumb.
[MS. WHITAKER.] Sam, we try not to judge in this group.
[AMBER.] Yeah, Sam. We don't judge in here.
[MS. WHITAKER.] Okay, Amber. Try not to judge Sam judging.
[LILY.] I know it's dumb, but I can't see a different person. I just I just can't.
[JASPER.] Well, if you wait long enough, I can do it. I want to be a dentist.
[MS. WHITAKER.] Oh! Change can be very difficult. For everyone. Does anyone in here find it difficult to deal with change? Okay, anyone else want to share about changes they're dealing with?
[SAM.] I do. The changes that I'm dealing with are that my mom left home, and my sister doesn't go to my school anymore. And my therapist won't see me, and my ex-girlfriend wanted to have a casual relationship, and then no relationship. And, well the reason prey animals hang around in a pack is for safety. So they don't get eaten. And I was feeling like a prey animal with no pack. And on top of all of that, I'm graduating into The Abyss. And that's scary. That's all.

[MS. WHITAKER.] Yeah, forget what I said about The Abyss. I was just being dramatic.
[SAM.] I liked it. It's an accurate description.
[MS. WHITAKER.] Well, okay. Anyways, all of your feelings, Sam, they make a lot of sense.
[LILY HUFFS.] I didn't think it made sense at all.
[SAM.] More sense than letting all your teeth fall out.
[ALL CHUCKLE.]
[LILY.] True.
[MS. WHITAKER.] Okay, so change is inevitable, right? But how do we deal with it? One way is we can ask for help when we need something. For example, colleges are required to make accommodations for students with autism, but you have to self-identify. In fact, okay, let's make this our assignment for the week. Ask for something you need. One thing, even if it's tiny. Okay? Great.

Conversation 25
[SAM.] Paige.
[PAIGE.] Oh, hey, Sam. Oh, my gosh. I just got out of a yearbook meeting. No one could decide on a font. And I'm sorry, but Helvetica gross, we are way better than that.
[SAM.] I need to ask you for help with something.
[PAIGE.] Okay, shoot.
[SAM.] Well, I know we're not boyfriend and girlfriend, or even in a casual relationship anymore. But I was wondering if sometimes we could walk down the hall together still, specifically between 3rd and 4th period, when traffic flow is particularly high?
[PAIGE.] I would be honored.
[SAM.] Good.
[PAIGE.] Okay. So I have history 2nd period, so we'll meet outside Mr. Bowers' class, unless I text you because sometimes I stay a little bit late to talk about wars with other Warheads

Conversation 26
[ELSA.] Hey. I know I didn't give you two hours, but
[DOUG.] What's up?
[ELSA SIGHS.] I think we need to talk. I waited at Dr. Brob's office for almost an hour for you and Sam. And I get it, you're mad at me. I understand it's completely my fault, but we still need to be able to schedule things for the kids. And I need you to follow through if you say you're going to do something.
[DOUG.] I agree.
[ELSA.] You do?
[DOUG.] Yeah. Sam and I thought it would be better to go to group. So we did that, but [PLATE CLATTERS.] I should have told you.
[ELSA] Thank you.
[SAM.] Good, you're both here.
[ELSA.] Hi, honey.
[SAM.] Hi. I was thinking about that group. And, at first, it was dumb and then it was kind of nice to be a part of it. And a lot of those kids are just as strange as me, and if they can do it.. I decided I want to go away to college.
[DOUG.] Really?
[ELSA.] Wow.
[SAM.] And I know there might be stuff that's hard or scary, but everything is changing here anyway, so I can handle it. And if I need help I'll ask for it. Because change is inevitable and I'm not going to let all my teeth fall out.
[LSA.] Your teeth?
[SAM.] Yes. And I'm going to graduate whether we like it or not, so I might as well get ready for The Abyss. Sorry, Mom.
[ELSA.] Oh, Sam. It sounds like you really have thought a lot about this, and if this is something you want to do, then I support you.
[SAM.] Good. Where's that cat?
[ELSA.] It's gone.
[SAM.] Good. I don't want to step on it.

Season 3 episode 1:

Conversation 27
[SAM.] Hurry!
[PAIGE.] Sam! [COUGHS.] You just dropped a huge bomb on me. Before we go to that lock-in, I need to process in silence.
[SAM.] Okay, but - Now can we
[PAIGE.] Nope.
[SAM.] I know they lock you in, but do they lock you out?
[PAIGE.] Sam!
[SAM.] Sorry.
[PAIGE.] Okay, Sam I have my answer.
[SAM.] To what?
[PAIGE.] Sam Gardner, your timing is terrible telling me that you love me right before we both go off to college where we're gonna be separated not only by hundreds of miles, but also by the cultural differences dictated by our specific institutions.
[SAM.] What?
[PAIGE.] And my summer is so packed: my internship, babysitting. I leave for my camp job in six weeks. I gotta find someone to take care of my plants while I'm away. My mom certainly can't handle them all.
[SAM.] Okay.
[PAIGE.] But even with all that, I accept.
[SAM.] Accept what?
[PAIGE.] We can get back together. But, Sam, I want a summer of love. Okay, every day packed with adventure and romance, every moment dreamy and perfect.
[SAM.] Okay. Can we go inside now?
[PAIGE.] Sure. Let the romance commence.
[LOCK RATTLES.]
[SAM.] We're locked out.

Conversation 28
[BRIGGS.] All right, huddle up, let's do this. Now, we've never met, but you all seem a lot nicer than the girls track team. [LAUGHS.] [SIGHS.]
[SAM.] You're not Miss Whitaker.
[BRIGGS.] No. No, I am not. Thanks for noticing. I'm Coach Briggs. Miss Whitaker is on her honeymoon, but unfortunately, there was a hurricane.
[LILY.] She's dead?
[BRIGGS.] No! No, not at all. Just a flight delay. Sorry. Maybe I should have led with that. But I got 16 credits toward my social work degree, so I figured I'm the next best thing. So if there's anything you wanna know
[NOELLE.] How tall are you?
[SABRINA.] Do you wanna hear me sing? [SINGS HIGH NOTE.]
[SAM.] If you're gonna blow that whistle, can you warn us first?
[JASPER.] Nice teeth. Strips?
[BRIGGS.] Okay, why don't we stick to me asking the questions? Miss Whitaker left me a list. How's everybody's summer?
[SAM.] Excellent. Paige wanted a summer of love, and I'm very good at it. So far, we've had three picnics, two moonlit walks and one blow job.
[BRIGGS.] Whoa, whoa, whoa! Next question. How's everybody feeling about life beyond high school?
[JASPER.] Good. I've already got the layout of the Denton dentistry department memorized.
[BRIGGS.] You're going to Denton? That's my alma mater. Anybody else here? Nice! Teammates. You could all hang out.
[LILY.] We're all in different departments. I'll never see them.
[SAM.] Agreed. This is where it ends.
[BRIGGS.] Okay, well, I'm sure you'll do great wherever you go.
[AMBER.] Probably not. I read that four out of five students with autism don't graduate college. And there's six of us.
[SAM.] Four out of five? That's a lot.
[AMBER.] Yep.
[SAM.] Four out of five. Four out of five. Four out of five. Four out of five. Four out of five. Four out of five. Four out of five. Four out of five. Four out of five. Four out of five

Conversation 29
[ZAHID.] Sam, check it. They look great on my tuchus and the wrinkle twins can dance free all day.
[SAM.] You should be wearing your Techtropolis shirt.
[ZAHID.] Gotcha covered, rule book. Now, Sammy, listen up, all right, this is important, maybe the most important thing I have ever said. Nursing school is about to begin, and I know myself. Beneath this chiseled jawline and happy-go-lucky personality lurks a deep self-destructive streak.
[SAM.] So?
[ZAHID.] So you cannot let me screw up nursing school.
[SAM.] Oh, okay.
[ZAHID.] You promise?
[SAM.] Yes, I promise.
[ZAHID.] I need you to say the words: I promise not to let you screw up nursing school.
[SAM.] I promise not to let you screw up nursing school.
[ZAHID SIGHS.] Awesome. Okay, that's a load off. So, what you up to? What you scribble scrabbling?
[SAM.] It's too upsetting. I can't talk about it.
[ZAHID.] Lay it on me. I'm a healer. Not only of bodies, but souls.
[SAM.] Four out of five students on the spectrum don't graduate college within four years. That means my chances of success are very low and I'm basically doomed.
[ZAHID.] Ah, yes. Okay, well, first, let's close the serial killer doodles, yeah? Great. And now a parable. There once was a young lad, let's call him the Dragon. One day, an establishment opened up down the street from the Dragon's home, a weed dispensary. Obviously, the Dragon was there opening minute to peruse the premises and sample the wares.
[SAM.] Wait, are you the Dragon?
[ZAHID.] Doy. The shop was bigger than he expected, so many options: bud and drops and edibles as far as his glasses could see. And he felt in that moment doomed. He would never be able to sample everything. There were just not enough hours in the day.
[SAM.] So what did you do?
[ZAHID.] The Dragon got organized. He planned. He prepared. He set aside a four-day weekend to lie prone on his couch and watch the VHS of Fantasia over and over, and you know what he did? He conquered.
[SAM.] Smart Dragon.
[ZAHID.] That's right. So get organized, plan, be prepared, you'll be fine. And if not, I know a place I can take you where you can get high as hell.

Conversation 30
[SAM.] Hi, Paige.

[PAIGE.] Hey, Sam. I wanted to let you know there's been a slight change in the itinerary for our "Most Romantic Movies of All Time" film festival, aka Smooch-a-palooza. [LAUGHS.] We're gonna watch When Harry Met Sally tonight and then Love Actually tomorrow. [SIGHS.] It just feels like a Meg Ryan day.
[SAM.] Four out of five. Four out of five. Sorry, Paige. I can't come over today. I have something I have to do.
[PAIGE.] Ah, well, no problem, that's okay. You know, I actually prefer to watch Meg alone anyway. I pretend it's just the two of us sitting on my couch talking about boys.

Conversation 31
[ELSA.] Hey. Dinner's ready.
[DOUG.] Oh, this looks good.
[ELSA.] You know, I was thinking the next time you hang out with your peer group maybe I could come.
[DOUG.] Okay, well, we're meeting at a bar later this week, but they're kind of Megan's friends. One of them still calls me Dave.
[ELSA.] Well, they're meeting at a bar, so a bar's a public place. I can go to a bar.
[DOUG.] Yeah, okay.
[ELSA.] Okay.
[ELSA.] Case, where's your brother?
[CASEY.] Um Oh, he's not in there, so I'm out of ideas.
[SAM.] Feast your eyes. My official Denton student ID. You can now call me Denton student 9783210.
[ELSA.] Aww, honey.
[DOUG.] Ha, look at that smile.
[ELSA.] College! This is so exciting.
[DOUG.] Yeah, it is.
[ELSA.] Casey, take a picture of us.
[CASEY.] Okay, no reason I should be in it as a member of this family. [CAMERA SHUTTER CLICKS.] Beautiful.
[DOUG.] So you went to campus?
[SAM.] Correction, I spent all day on campus. I walked the routes to my classes. I picked up a complimentary copy of the freshman survival guide, and I scoped out the best cafs.That's college for cafeteria.
[CASEY.] Oh, I was so confused.
[SAM.] Oh, and I stopped by the bookstore and got a new soft hoodie.
[ELSA GASPS.] Sam G the bumblebee. [BUZZES.]
[DOUG.] I need to get one of those. Denton Dad.
[SAM.] Now, all I have to do is register for classes on the 27th when online scheduling starts.
[ELSA.] Honey, you know you can qualify for early registration through disability services. Your appointment's not for a few weeks, but I can call and move it up.
[SAM.] No need. I'm completely prepared for normal registration. Roald Amundsen said, "Victory awaits him who has everything in order."
[CASEY.] So does a smack in the head.
[ELSA.] Case! Honey, why aren't you eating?
[CASEY.] I have a stomachache.
[ELSA.] Oh, I see.
[CASEY.] What do you see? Why are you saying it like that? [CHUCKLES.]
[ELSA.] Nothing, it's just that ever since you were little, whenever you get stressed about something, you get a tummy ache. First dance recital, tummy ache. Kindergarten spelling bee, tummy ache. First ever track meet, you guessed it, folks, tummy ache.
[DOUG.] Can someone pass the peas, please?
[ELSA.] I'm just saying as someone who has known your tummy since it was born, it's a pattern and
[CASEY.] Can I borrow these? There's a noise that's bothering me.
[SAM.] No!
[CASEY.] Yeah, I just need them for a sec. Come on, we share.
[SAM.] These are mine!
[CASEY.] Come on. [CLEARS THROAT.] Carry on.
[SAM.] Ugh! Can't wait to go to college!
[DOUG.] Does it ever occur to you to just leave your brother alone?
[CASEY.] Never.

Conversation 32
[PAIGE.] Hi, Sam. I need to talk to you, and you didn't answer my last text so thought I would just toodle over.
[SAM.] I've been busy getting ready for college, and my sister had an organ removed, so it's been a lot of chaos in the house to block out.
[PAIGE.] An organ?
[SAM.] Appendix.
[PAIGE.] Oh, okay, well those are useless. I was born without one, you know? That only happens to one out of a hundred-thousand people. We Hardaways are just constantly bucking statistics.
[SAM THINKING.] *Four out of five. Four out of five. Four out of five.*
[PAIGE.] Anyway, I've been thinking, and our summer so far has been dreamy.
[SAM THINKING.] *Four out of five.*
[PAIGE.] Which I really needed. I wanna put my best foot forward in college.
[SAM THINKING.] *Four out of five. Four out of five.*
[PAIGE.] I really doubted myself in high school.
[SAM THINKING.] *Four out of five*
[PAIGE.] Hid my light under a bushel. Which I know is hard to believe because it shines so bright anyway, but that was me at a six.
[SAM THINKING.] *Four out of five. Four out of five. Four out of five.*
[PAIGE.] But no more.
[SAM THINKING.] *Four out of five.*
[PAIGE.] College means I get to be my most authentic self, Paige-ier than ever. Time to let Paige out of the cage. And I just cannot have any unfinished business hanging over my head, so [SIGHS.] I want us to have sex.
[SAM.] *Four out of five. Four out of five.Four out of fi* Y-You wanna have sex?
[PAIGE.] I wanna have sex.

Conversation 33
[PAIGE.] It was in Zahid's shoe? No.
[ELSA.] Sam, honey, we're home.
[CASEY.] I'm bored.
[PAIGE SIGHS.]
[TV PLAYING.]
[PAIGE.] Dad, I thought you were watching the game at the bar.
[PAIGE'S DAD.] They're out of wings. That's a no go. Commercial break, gotta pee.
[PAIGE.] This is ridiculous. No one in history has ever had this much trouble having sex. I'm leaving for my camp counselor job on Saturday morning. I mean, it is like the universe is conspiring against us.
[SAM.] I haven't seen your dad since the Olive Garden. He looks shorter.
[PAIGE.] Sam, that's it, the Olive Garden. We have bad romantic karma from when you broke my heart into a million pieces at my favorite pasta haven. We need to take back the Olive Garden.
[SAM.] Like, go there for dinner?
[PAIGE.] And appetizers. Friday night, my parents are at their Zumba class on Fridays so we can just come back here after dinner. [SIGHS.] It'll be our last chance. That sounded really dire, like in a horror movie, but it kind of is.

Conversation 34
[PAIGE.] Hi, Sam! Are you ready to take back the Olive Garden? Oh, I can feel it, the gods of love are pleased with us. Good news. Your mom said that she can babysit my succulents while I'm gone.
[SAM.] Good.
[PAIGE.] I know! It's so exciting, isn't it? Oh, our sex-iversary, June 28th. Probably around 9:45 p.m., I need an hour to digest.
[SAM.] Wait, June 28th? I missed the first day of registration for classes!
[PAIGE.] Wait, no! Where are you going?
[SAM.] There's gonna be no good ones left, and then I'm gonna get the hard ones and then I'm gonna fail.
[PAIGE.] No, no, Sam, sit back down. Okay, we can still salvage this. Please, just not here. Have a breadstick. They're warm.
[SAM.] This is all your fault. You distracted me with your sex talk. I can't wait for you to leave!
[PAIGE.] We were gonna take back the Olive Garden! I'm sorry. [SIGHS.]

Conversation 35
[SAM RUMBLING, STOMPING.]
[CASEY.] What are you doing stomping around like a water buffalo?
[SAM.] Thanks to Paige, I missed the first day of registering for classes.
[CASEY.] And that's Paige's fault?
[SAM.] Yes, yes, because she distracted me with the promise of sex.
[CASEY.] Hmm. So this is the problem with the fact I slap you so often is that it no longer has meaning. Right now is when you really deserve it. I'll do it anyway. Hey! She wasn't trying to distract you, dumb-ass. She loves you, and she wanted you to be her first. And you acted like a total dude about it and got distracted on your own.
[SAM.] No. Maybe. Oh. Yeah.
[CASEY.] Look I will make fun of Paige and her silly talkity-talk and her hair bows all day long, but that lady gets you, and you're lucky to have her.
[SAM.] Did they let you keep your appendix in a jar?
[CASEY.] Is that an option? Damn it.

Conversation 36
[PAIGE.] Oh, hello. Come to tell me how I've ruined your life again?
[SAM.] I definitely don't think that.
[PAIGE.] Well, all of Olive Garden thinks that you do. And the fact that I got free dessert does not make it better.
[SAM.] Paige, I'm sorry. I got stuck thinking about the four out of five, and then I got stuck thinking about sex, and sometimes it's hard for me to think about more than one thing at a time.
[PAIGE.] I know. And I'm sorry that I distracted you. I know you've been worried about college. Sometimes I just forget that you have challenges that I don't even think of.
[SAM.] It's okay.
[PAIGE.] Did you get all the classes you wanted?
[SAM.] All except one. I ended up having to take a sociology course called "Ethics." Sounds dumb.
[PAIGE.] Well, I leave tomorrow, and my parents are downstairs, so sex is definitely out until I come home for Thanksgiving. It'll give us more to be thankful for.
[SAM.] Okay.
[PAIGE.] And, Sam I know you're gonna be the one out of five. 'Cause you're my one in a million.
[SAM.] That doesn't really make sense.

Season 3 episode 2:

Conversation 37
[ELSA.] There's my college boy. Did Edison have anything to say to you this morning?
[SAM.] Of course not, he's a tortoise.
[ELSA.] Well, he might not be excited, but I am.
[SAM.] Orientation is a waste of time, especially if you've adequately prepared on your own, which I have. But I know what to expect so it shouldn't be a bad experience.
[CASEY.] Where are my running shoes?
[ELSA.] Oh, honey, I don't think it's a good idea to go running just yet.
[CASEY.] Where'd you hide 'em?
[ELSA.] Sam, don't forget you have your appointment with disability services today at 1:00 in the Taft Building. It's with a very kind-sounding man named Rudolph. Don't make any reindeer jokes. I did, it didn't go well.
[SAM.] Okay.
[CASEY.] The doctor said to wait six weeks, it's been six weeks.
[ELSA.] It's been five weeks, five days. I bet you're still sore. Let me see your scar.
[CASEY.] Hey! My body. Bad touch. Now give me my shoes. Where'd you put 'em?
[ELSA.] Sam. This is everything you need for your appointment today. Sure you don't want me to go with you?
[SAM.] No, thanks.
[ELSA.] Why not?
[CASEY.] Because he's a grown-ass man.
[SAM.] For once she's right, 'cause I'm a grown-ass man.
[DOUG.] Casey, why are your sneakers in my t-shirt drawer?
[CASEY.] Yes!
[ELSA.] I was hiding them.
[DOUG.] Oh, well, you should let me know next time.
[SAM.] I'm done.
[DOUG.] All right, well, good luck. I'm proud of you, Sam.
[SAM.] I don't need luck, I'm prepared.

Conversation 38
[SAM NARRATING.] *Every year after mating season, penguins lose their feathers and get a new coat. This little guy might not look like much right now, but pretty soon he'll be sleek, streamlined and fully waterproof.*
[ZAHID.] Whoa, Nelly, what happened to that sad sack? Syphilis? Is it syphilis?
[SAM.] Zahid, what are you doing here?
[ZAHID.] Just finished up orientation at the Margaret B. Rosenkrantz School of Nursing. Turns out Margaret B. was quite the fox. "B" actually stands for aboia-oia-oia-ing.
[SAM.] I'm going to my orientation in a few minutes.
[ZAHID.] Awesome. Who are you gonna be?
[SAM.] What?
[ZAHID.] It's a whole new world, Sammy. These people know nothing about you. You can be whoever you want. I was a sexy anthropologist who wanted a career change. Oh, and I wear suspenders now. You can always trust a guy in suspenders.
[SAM.] I'm fine with my current wardrobe.
[ZAHID.] Inexplicable, but okay. The point is, now is the perfect time to reinvent yourself. You can be whoever you want. That's what college is for.
[SAM.] I'm not looking to reinvent myself. All I want is to not fail, to not be the four out of five. I'm perfectly fine doing that as my same old self in my same old clothes.
[ZAHID.] You're gonna do great.
[SAM.] I agree.

Conversation 39
[SAM NARRATING.] *Molting looks painful. And maybe it is, I don't know. I'm not a penguin. I'm a bee.*
[EVELYN.] Welcome to the hive. Here's a freshman survival guide detailing everything you need to know to be the best Denton Bee you can be.
[SAM.] I don't need one. I have one. I've read it so many times that I've memorized it.
[EVELYN.] Okeydokey, tuna poke-y.

Conversation 40
[SAM NARRATING.] *I wonder if molting penguins stand in front of other penguins and get embarrassed about all their feathers falling out.*
[EVELYN.] Okay, bees, take a seat. Icebreaker time! Whoop-whoop! We'll all say an adjective starting with the first letter of our name, then our name, then a funky dance move that goes with that adjective. Watch and learn. I'm Excited Evelyn. Excited Evelyn! Okay, who's next?
[SAM NARRATING.] *The thing is, as a penguin, you really have no choice.*
[SAM.] I'm Standing Sam.
[EVELYN.] Yes.
[MAN 1.]
Nice one, man. Dude, that was iconic. Totally subversive.
[SAM.] I called ahead to see what the icebreaker was going to be and I thought they might keep it a secret, but they told me right off the bat.
[MAN 1 LAUGHING.] You're hilarious.
[SAM.] I am? I am.
[SAM NARRATING.] *The thing about molting is you just have to get through it.*

Conversation 41
[SAM.] Nice suspenders. Can you help me find the Taft building?
[WOMAN 1] Hey, Standin' Sam! I'll have you know that 43 kids later, Standing Sam remains choice, my dude.
[SAM.] Thank you. I normally don't like icebreakers, which is ironic because I love ice.
[WOMAN 1 LAUGHING.] You're the best. I declare that from this moment forward, Sam's our guy.
[MAN 1.] Let's call ourselves the Tasty Trio.
[WOMAN 1.] Yes!
[SAM.] Why?
[MAN 1.] It's dope, and I'm starving!
[WOMAN 1.] Hey, do you wanna hang out with us? Maybe get something to eat?
[MAN 1 GASP.] Yeah.
[SAM.] I can't. I have an appointment.
[WOMAN 1.] What? You mean we gotta hang out with someone else? Bummer.
[MAN 1.] Yeah, everyone else here is just spazzes and weirdos.
[MAN'S VOICE.] *Spazzes and weirdos. What a loser. Spazzes and weirdos, spazzes and weirdos, spazzes and weirdos* [LAUGHING.] *spazzes and weirdos*
[MAN 1.] Skip your meeting! [GASPS.] Skip it - Skip it
[SAM NARRATING.] *I don't usually skip things. I don't usually break rules, but it's college. Maybe it is time to reinvent myself.*
[SAM.] I'm going to skip my meeting.
[MAN 1 & WOMAN 1 TOGETHER.] Yes! Yes! Yeah!
[SAM.] I'm Skipping Sam now.
[MAN 1 LAUGHING.] He's still got it. Oh, this guy.

Conversation 42
[MAN 1.] Oh, my God, these are the best chicken fingers that I have ever eaten.
[WOMAN 1.] Yeah, and he's super picky. He only eats crunchy things.
[SAM.] I sampled the chicken fingers at all the different eateries on campus. This one definitely has the crispiest breading.
[WOMAN 1 LAUGHS.] You're the best.
[MAN 1.] Okay, we gotta bounce. Time for me to go fall asleep in the quad for three or four hours, but hang later?
[WOMAN 1.] Yeah, what dorm are you in?

Conversation 43
[SAM.] I wanna live in the dorms.
[ELSA.] Wow, I'm assuming orientation went well.
[SAM.] Very.
[ELSA.] Well, hon, I hate to tell you, but you missed the deadline for student housing this semester.
[SAM.] Wrong. I already went to the housing office, and lucky for me, someone got hit by a car. He just broke his legs. He'll be back next semester, but his room is available.
[ELSA.] Dorms? On campus? Not home? What does Rudolph think of all this?
[SAM.] I don't know, I skipped my meeting.
[ELSA.] What? Why would you? –
[SAM.] I don't need it. I'm doing great at college without services.
[ELSA.] Okay, we're not finished with this conversation.

Conversation 44
[DOUG.] Hey. What's going on?
[ELSA.] Casey punched a milkshake and my folder.
[SAM.] I'm living in the dorms.
[DOUG.] Yeah? Wow, I loved living in the dorm. What do you mean, "punched a milkshake?"
[ELSA.] You have to stop punching things.
[DOUG.] I agree.
[CASEY.] Oh, do you? 'Cause someone punched a hole in the wall. Maybe we can hang a Merry Christmas sign on Nate's milkshake, huh? Okay, bye.
[DOUG.] Yeah, better "okay, bye."
[SAM.] Can you do me a favor and put the microwave and the toaster in a box? Thanks.
[DOUG.] At least we'll have half of them living in the house.

Conversation 45

[CASEY.] What the hell?
[SAM.] Do you think Edison's terrarium will fit in here? I think he'll like dorm life. He's always been a bit of a night owl.
[CASEY.] Yeah, I'm pretty sure they don't allow pets at Denton.
[SAM.] What? Why would they not allow pets? I'm sure they do.
[CASEY.] Yeah, no. No waterbeds either. And definitely no pets on waterbeds. That would be a disaster.
[SAM.] But I need Edison. The last time I tried to sleep away from Edison, I got arrested.
[CASEY.] So stay at home. Why do you wanna live in the dorms anyway?
[SAM.] Because the freshman survival guide says that students who throw themselves into dorm life are more likely to succeed. And I wanna be close to the Tasty Trio.
[CASEY.] Who?
[SAM.] My new friends. I'm reinventing myself as funny and cool.
[CASEY.] Why? You're already fine ish.
[SAM.] No.
[CASEY.] Well, maybe fine's overstating it, but, you know, you're decent.
[SAM.] This is who I was. I don't wanna be that guy anymore.
[CASEY.] Fine. I'll help you.
[SAM.] Good.

Conversation 46
[CASEY.] Wow, okay. Turns out you just need an official letter and you can get your dumb tortoise registered as an emotional support animal.
[SAM.] That is the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard.
[CASEY.] Yes, and it's great. Mark my words, if I find one drop of turtle feces in my duffel bag, I will poop on your bed.
[SAM.] That seems fair. So I guess I'm moving into the dorms.
[CASEY.] Hey, it's gonna be great.
[SAM.] You don't know that. I don't know that. Maybe this is a terrible idea.
[CASEY.] How about we go case the joint?

Conversation 47
[SAM NARRATING.] *When a penguin molts, they're no longer waterproof.*
[CASEY.] Why do you have your sweatshirt? It's 80 degrees outside.
[SAM.] So people know I belong here.
[SAM NARRATING.] *Forcing them away from the place they feel most at home.*
[ANOTHER SAM.] Yo, what's up? I'm Sam.
[SAM.] W-What? Your name can't be Sam. I'm Sam.
[ANOTHER SAM.] Cool. Two Sams. I'll be Sam G.
[SAM.] I'm Sam G.
[CASEY.] We're off to a great start then.
[SAM.] Do you have a middle name? Maybe you could go by that.
[ANOTHER SAM.] Okay, well, welcome to our room. I gave you the bed near the window because it's better, and this one had a weird stain on it.
[CASEY.] Hmm.
[POUNDING, CLACKING.]
[SAM.] Do they play that game a lot?
[ANOTHER SAM.] Only till, like, 1:00 a.m.

Conversation 48
[CASEY SIGHS.]
[SAM.] Is it always this squeaky?
[ANOTHER SAM.] I'm not sure. I mean, I usually don't open and close it 35 times, but you do you.
[CASEY.] Pretty soon you're gonna want him to do someone else.
[ANOTHER SAM.] I'm gonna go grab dinner with my lacrosse team. You got friends here, or do you wanna join us?
[SAM.] I have friends here.
[WOMAN 1 AND MAN 1 LAUGHING.] Tasty Trio! Tasty Trio! Tasty Trio!
[SAM NARRATING.] Molting requires that you look a lot worse before you can look better.
[MAN 1.] Sorry, dude, 15 tamales means 15 tamales. Digest it.
[WOMAN 1.] Now you gotta pay the price. A tasty trim by the Tasty Trio.
[WOMAN 1 & MAN 1 TOGETHER.] Tasty Trio! Tasty Trio! Tasty Trio!
[CASEY.] What the hell am I watching?
[SAM.] Hi, Tasty Trio.
[MAN 1.] Aw, hey, Stan.
[SAM NARRATING.] *Even though every penguin molts, they rarely molt together. It's universal but lonely.*

Conversation 49
[SAM.] I guess they weren't my friends.
[CASEY.] Good. Those guys are incredibly, incredibly lame.
[SAM.] I thought by preparing for college, it'd be better than high school, but it turns out it's the same. I can't reinvent myself.
[CASEY.] Sam despite what Mom would have you believe, the universe doesn't revolve around you. I mean, this transition would be hard for anybody. You think the guy who just got his haircut's having a good time?
[SAM.] I didn't ask him, but his hair looked terrible.
[CASEY.] Did I ever tell you about my first day at Clayton? I couldn't figure out how to buy food. I cried three times in three different bathrooms. It was awful.
[SAM.] I'd say you're doing better, but you punched a milkshake.
[CASEY.] Bopped. Hey, if you want we can be each other's emotional support animal.
[SAM.] That role is reserved for Edison, but maybe you could be my emotional support human.
[CASEY.] Fine.
[ANOTHER SAM.] Hey. You forgot your sweatshirt. Later, Sam.
[SAM.] He remembered my name.

Conversation 50
[ELSA.] Hey. For the dorms. I've been over-watering you, metaphorically, so if this is something you really want, go for it.
[SAM.] Thank you, but I've decided not to start sleeping there just yet. I think Edison will be more comfortable at home.
[ELSA.] Okeydokey.
[CASEY.] You're trying not to, but you're smiling so big right now.
[ELSA.] No, I'm not. Hey, Casey. It was sweet of you to go to Denton with your brother today.
[CASEY.] I have no idea what you're talking about.
[ELSA.] I get it, you just had to help. You know, you're not as different from me as you'd like to believe.
[CASEY.] That is the meanest thing you've ever said to me. And I'm not above bopping that tea.
[ELSA.] Oh, well, I know you're not.

Season 3 episode 3:

Conversation 51
[SAM NARRATING.] *As any seasoned explorer will tell you, timing is everything. On Ernest Shackleton's Nimrod Expedition, he was so worried about his team falling behind that he fed them cocaine pills every hour. I don't take cocaine pills, but I do have an extra bowl of sugar cereal in the morning if I know it's gonna be a big day.*
[TEACHER.] Just so there's no confusion, this class is not intended to be an easy A or B or C. It will be an easy D, though. Now, look to your left. Look to your right. Look at the sweaty guy walking in late on the first day. Some of you are not gonna make it. Let's all take guesses on who.
[SAM.] Sorry I'm late. I had two and a half hours between this class and my class before this, which is too long to hang out on campus, but not long enough to go home, so I went to my scientific illustration class to draw, and I lost track of time and, you know, running and lacrosse teams and - stairs.
[TEACHER.] Mm-hmm. So you're late because you had too much time to get here?
[SAM.] Exactly.
[TEACHER.] Per the syllabus, this class will focus on the study of normative ethics, - i.e.
[LAPTOP CHIMES.]
[TEACHER.] Of course, by being late, somebody missed my announcement that I have a no laptop policy. If the thought of writing with your hand overwhelms you, go back to first grade. [CLEARS THROAT.] Normative ethics is the study of how one ought to act, morally speaking. Will we touch on metaethics? Yes. Applied ethics? Inevitably. Historically, there are multiple Oh, excellent. I'm just tickled to hear from you again.
[SAM.] Thank you. Can you please slow down and can you repeat the definition of normative ethics? And slow down.
[CLASS LAUGHS.]
[TEACHER.] Sure. In fact, you know, why don't we all stop until you're ready?
[SAM.] Great.
[TEACHER.] Historically, there are multiple opinions on how to accurately answer a moral question with virtue ethics being more character-based, whereas consequentialism and deontological ethics focus more on the role itself.

Conversation 52
[SAM.] College makes no sense. My schedule changes every day. There are no bells between classes, and thanks to Archibald Denton's poor planning, the campus is not on a grid. I don't know how people do it.
[ZAHID.] You wanna hear my schedule? 10:50, kiss my ass, 12:10, still in bed, 3:45, getting high, and by 6:00, I'm scoring chicks. Except on Tuesdays and Thursdays when I'm in class all day, because brother takes that shit seriously.
[SAM SIGHS.] I'm not used to being bad at school. Even taking notes is harder in college. Look, these are the notes that I took in my ethics class.
[ZAHID.] "The potato."
[SAM.] It was a story, something about a well.. A potato fell down a well I don't know.
[ZAHID.] Ah, yes, the old potato in a well dilemma. Look, if taking notes is a problem, I am your guy. I am bonkers good at it. It's all about filtering out the garbage. Observe. Hey, hunky Bob. How was your weekend? Take notes.
[BOB.] Gosh, it was sort of a blur. On Saturday, Lorna went out with the Tim and Freya. Those are her work friends. And I stayed home with Bobcat. Bobcat's my cat. We played outside. He got into a bit of a tussle with a squirrel, and they knocked over a neighbor's lavender plant. So I brought him in and then the two of us fell asleep, watching old episodes of Shark Tank.
[ZAHID.] I'll take 100% equity in that weekend.
[BOB.] We like to have fun. Thanks for asking.
[ZAHID.] So what'd you get?
[SAM.] Nothing, I spent the whole time wondering how to spell Lorna. What did you get?
[ZAHID.] Simple. Bob's cat has a dope-ass name, and his wife is cheating on him.

[SAM.] What?
[ZAHID.] She was out with her "work friends"? Please. Freya was just there so Tim and Mrs. Bob wouldn't feel as guilty.
[SAM.] How do you do that?
[ZAHID.] It's a gift I picked up watching Indian soap operas growing up. I used to think that people always burst into song after doing the deed. It's why I do it.

Conversation 53
[PAIGE.] And it sounds a little risque, I know, but yesterday, I officially joined Bowdoin's Peeping Club. Don't worry, it's just for students who enjoy looking at fall foliage. But guess what club members are called? Peeps. Isn't that so cute?
[SAM.] Can you repeat everything after "but yesterday"?
[ELSA.] Sam, you took my calendar!
[SAM.] Elsa, I needed to put my stupid school schedule on it.
[ELSA GASPS.] You erased all of my appointments and errands!
[CASEY.] I don't think the world will end if a bake sale doesn't get their lemon squares.
[ELSA.] Do you just pop in to say snarky things?
[CASEY.] When I get the timing right, yes.
[DOUG.] What's going on?
[ELSA.] Sam took my calendar.
[SAM.] I'm working on time management. I'm also working on note taking. Paige is a peeper.
[PAIGE.] Oh, you did get it. Hi, everyone.
[ELSA.] Hey, Paige.
[DOUG.] Hi, Paige.
[ELSA.] Honey, time management is tricky for everyone. That's why I have this board in the kitchen where it belongs.
[CASEY.] I love when Sam's selfishness collides with your selfishness.
[ELSA.] If you would just have your appointment with Disability Services, this is something they can help you with.
[SAM.] No need. I can do it on my own.
[ELSA.] There's no shame in getting services, Sam.
[DOUG.] If he thinks he can do it, he can do it. I think he can do it, he thinks he can do it.
[PAIGE.] I think he can do it.
[DOUG.] We all think he can do it.
[CASEY.] I'm on the fence. Just at least put your schedule on your phone like a normal human. Not like whatever this thing is.
[SAM.] Oh, good idea. I can even set alarms. It will be just like the bells in high school.
[CASEY.] Whoo-hoo!
[ELSA.] Great. I am taking you home.

Conversation 54
[DOUG.] Hey, there's my college student. You heading out?
[SAM.] Nope, not time yet.
[DOUG.] You know, my freshman year, I never had classes on Friday [CELL PHONE CHIMES.] and the only –
[SAM.] Goodbye.
[DOUG.]Are you going you're leaving? Have a good day.
[DOOR OPENS, CLOSES.]
[SAM NARRATING.] *Even with all that cocaine, it wasn't enough to get Shackleton's men through an expedition. He also kept them on a strict schedule.* [PHONE CHIMES.] *When it was time to collect ice specimens, you collected ice specimens.*
[PHONE CHIMES.] *When it was time to kill a seal, you killed a seal. Poor seal. And when it was time to go to sleep*
[PAIGE.] And can you believe that I'm the only one that's memorized our school fight song? [LAUGHS.] Sometimes I just wonder, "What is wrong with these slackers?" It's Forward the white On through the fight - Emblem of honor, peerless and -
[PHONE CHIMES.]
[SAM NARRATING.] *You went to sleep. Or at least you tried.*

Conversation 55
[ELSA.] Hey, Sam. What are you doing up?
[SAM.] Couldn't sleep.
[ELSA.] I like your salmon.
[SAM.] It's a cod fish. You can tell by the two anal fins.
[ELSA.] Right. I forgot to check the anal fins. You know, you're always this way. Whenever you had a big transition, you'd have trouble sleeping. I'm like this, too. It's why I'm up now.
[SAM.] You don't have any transitions.
[ELSA.] Well for me, your transition is a transition.
[SAM.] So what did we do when I was little and I couldn't sleep?
[ELSA.] Well, sometimes we would sing the alphabet song.
[SAM.] No.
[ELSA.] Sometimes we'd go in the backyard and dig for dinosaurs.
[SAM.] No.
[ELSA.] Sometimes we'd watch a soothing video.
[SAM.] That last idea isn't terrible.
[ELSA.] Thank you.

Conversation 56 (Sam is dreaming this)
[WOMAN ON TV.] For six months, the sun never set, but now, as Earth's closest star slowly disappears below the horizon, the inhabitants of this frigid continent seemed well aware that it will be the last light they'll see until spring.
[JULIA SIGHS.] It's beautiful as you always described it, Sam.
[SAM.] I think we'd make better time on the dog sled. You in the mood to mush? [PHONE CHIMES.]

Conversation 57
[SAM GRUNTS.] Oh, no, no, no, no! No, no, no, no, no! Oh, no, no, no! [THUDS.]
[ELSA.] Honey, everything okay?
[SAM.] No. Thanks to you, I slept great! [DOOR SLAMS.]

Conversation 58
[SAM NARRATING.*] Despite Shackleton's best efforts, by the time he and his men made it back to the Nimrod, they were over 30 days behind schedule. Some had snow blindness.* [PHONE BEEPS.] *Most had dysentery from eating bad pony meat.*
[PHONE CHIMING.] *You can do all the right things and sometimes you still fall prey - to the brutal atmospheric conditions.* [PHONE CONTINUES CHIMING.]
[ANOTHER SAM.] You're sure you're okay?
[SAM.] That might be the most athletic thing I've ever done.
[ANOTHER SAM.] I'm sorry about plowing into you. I get into the zone, and it's hard to see anything else around me.
[SAM.] I get it. I close my eyes when I drive. That's why I don't drive.
[ANOTHER SAM.] I think you'll be fine. Just don't fall asleep. You may have a concussion and then you'll die.
[SAM.] I may never sleep again.

Conversation 59
[DOUG.] You feeling better? Guys on the team said you took the hit like a champ. And if you feel like talking, I'm always here, Sam.
[SAM.] Okay. When I first heard the four out of five statistic from Amber, I was scared, but I thought I could do it. But now I'm starting to think maybe the reason that so many kids with autism don't graduate is because college isn't meant for them.
[DOUG.] Well, I don't think that's true.
[SAM.] It is true. It's a fact, it's a statistic.
[DOUG.] Yeah, well, I just don't think it's true for you. In fact, I'm almost positive it isn't. Sam, you are resilient. You're like a I don't know, what's resilient?
[SAM.] A cockroach?
[DOUG.] I was trying to think of something less gross, but sure. I don't know if you should get services or not. That's gonna be your decision. But if you wanna keep going on your own, why don't you think about dropping a class or something? I dropped a class my first semester.
[SAM.] Yeah. I could drop a class. I need to do something. You know, cockroaches are actually very impressive. They can live for a week without their heads.
[DOUG.] Really?
[SAM.] Yeah.
[DOUG.] That's cool.

Conversation 60
[SAM NARRATING.] *The truth is that no expedition goes exactly as scheduled.*
[SAM.] I'd like to apply for services, please. I'm Sam, I have ASD.
[RUDOLPH.] I'm Rudolph. I have MS. All righty, let's see here. Very organized. Good on ya.
[SAM NARRATING.] *Sometimes you get lost. Sometimes you eat bad pony meat.*

Conversation 61
[SID.] You can call me Sid.
[SAM.] Okay.
[RUDOLPH.] Great, off to a good start. Have fun.
[SID.] Okay, so couch, bean bags and study desk. This is basically it.
[SAM.] Okay.
[SID.] You're cute.
[SAM.] Thank you.
[JASPER.] Sam, I was wondering when you were gonna show up.
[SAM.] Hey, Jasper.
[JASPER.] Hey. Hey, Sid.
[SID.] I'm showing him around. If you wanna show Sam around, then become a student volunteer.
[JASPER.] I'm gonna help you. We're friends.
[SID.] Oh.
[JASPER.] So what services are you gonna sign up for?
[SAM.] I don't know. There's a lot.

[SID.] Oh, and some that aren't even on the list, like if you show your student ID at Burger King and cry, they'll give you free fries.
[SAM.] So you guys just come here whenever you need help?
[SID.] Yeah, that's what it's here for.
[JASPER.] And even if you don't use the services, you can still use the bean bags.
[SAM NARRATING.] *Even the coolest explorers in history had problems. Confronted by obstacles they never saw coming. Forced to eat all kinds of weird stuff. And yet they put aside their fear of the unknown. Whether that meant their ultimate failure or hopefully eventual success.*

Conversation 62
[TEACHER.] Well, look who made it on time.
[SAM.] Feel free to talk as fast as you want. I have an anonymous note taker now, but I'm pretty sure it's Excited Evelyn. All the exclamation points were a giveaway.
[EVELYN.] I don't know what he's talking about. And it's just Evelyn.
[SAM.] I prefer Excited Evelyn.
[TEACHER.] I'd prefer you to stop talking. All right, subjectivism. Fasten your seat belts.