



Flouting of Grice's Maxims in the Humorous Utterances in American Situation Comedy *2 Broke Girls*

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Abstract

In daily life, when people interact, they sometimes use humorous utterances in the conversation. Humor may occur because the speakers flout Grice's maxims. This study aims to describe how Grice's maxims flout in the humorous utterances in American Situation Comedy *2 Broke Girls* in Season 6 Episode 3-9 and the humorous utterances usually contain laughter. The finding of this study shows that all types of maxims were flouted by the actors and there are different language styles involved in the conversations. The maxim which is flouted the most is quantity and the language style which is found the most is hyperbole. The contents of situation which cause the actors to flout Grice's maxims are as follows; the actors flout maxim of quality when they say something which is blatantly untrue or they lack adequacy. Then, in flouting of maxim of quantity, the actors sometimes give too little information and too much information. The third, the actors flout maxim of manner when they say ambiguous, sometimes being obscure. Last, the actors flout the maxim of relation if they say something irrelevant in responding to the previous topic. This study can be concluded that Grice's maxims flouted in humorous utterances and the language styles are also found. The most dominant maxim flouted is quantity.

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INTRODUCTION

In social interaction, people like to get together and do interaction. In this case, language has a role as a medium to make interaction around those people. They can express their feeling, tell someone about something, and the importance is they can communicate with one another. In communication, people must know what the meaning or the purpose of the conversation is, so it will not lead to misunderstanding between the speaker and the interlocutor.

According to Grice (1989), there is a principle that has to be followed by the speaker and hearer to have a successful conversation, namely Cooperative Principle, which says: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which you are engaged" (Grice, 1989, p. 26). The rules of talking to each other are known and applied by all human beings to keep the conversation going smoothly (Cook, 1992). One of the most basic assumptions is people must make successful communication where both people in a conversation are cooperating and this is called the Cooperative Principle. Without cooperation, human's interaction will be more difficult. Therefore, the Cooperative Principle and the Grice Maxims are not only specific for conversation but also for verbal interactions in general.

The cooperative speakers may intentionally disobey the maxims, as long as a person or the context sets enough indicators for the listener to notice it. This is called flouting of a maxim and it is used to convey information indirectly. Levinson (1983) argues that the flouting of maxims occurs when individuals wittingly stop to apply the maxims to entice their listeners to decide the hidden meaning behind the utterances; that is, the speakers apply the implicature.

In flouting of maxims, the entrants of the conversation look like uncooperative, but actually they do. The participants themselves have certain intentions of flouting of maxims. There are same intended meanings and certain aims which are delivered by the speaker behind

the utterance where flouting of maxims occur. Hence, by flouting of maxims, the participants are not said to be uncooperative in a conversation. It is because flouting of maxims are a way to carry out the listener seeks the true meaning through what is said indirectly by the speakers. In some matters, sometimes the cooperative principles flout in many reasons like for jesting or getting politeness. Like these study that focus on flouting of Grice's maxims which have been conducted by Safitri and Faridi (2017); Khosravizadeh and Sadehvand (2011); Machali (2012); Alduais (2012); Monica (2015); Mehawesh and Jaradat (2015); Aisya and Fitrawati (2019)). Their studies mention that flouting of maxims happen in which the speaker deliberately does not explicitly show what people intend so all of the maxims cannot execute normally.

The phenomenon of flouting of maxims can be seen not only in real life but also in Movie, Situation Comedy, Standup Comedy, Talk Show, etc. Detrianto (2018); Chadafi (2014); Amiana and Putranti (2014); Nofitriana, Ratnadewi, and Wijaya (2017); Zebua, Rukmini and Saleh (2017) conducted their studies on Grice's maxims that are flouted in the humor in Indonesian Drama Comedy. The humorous effects were caused by the actors whose utterances were not relevant to the spoken topics. Then, the back sound in this drama-comedy supported that the situations when one of the characters flouted the maxims were in a funny situation. The maxims flouted but it did not lead the conversations into the end. The flouting of maxims might make the conversation lively and friendly, sometimes the maxims flout also caused the humorous effects. Other research from Dynel (2017): Listiyaningsih, Rukmini, and Sutopo (2019); Hu (2012); Ibraheem and Abbas (2015); Puri and Baskara (2019); Puspasari and Ariyanti (2019); Ulfah and Afrilia (2018) have the same background of research, humor, but in different case of problems. Ross (1998, p. 7) states that the context for humor is crucial for determining whether an individual finds something amusing or not. For this reason, in the study of linguistics, humor is discussed not only in syntax and

semantic, but also in pragmatics, in which the context is the central point (Ferrar in Kehinde, 2006). Another study in humor from Xue and Hei (2015) describe that the maxim has an important role in creating a humor. The finding explains that flouting and violating are the most frequently to be used to create humor. It has beneficial affect for L2 learners of Mandarin.

This study is quite different from the previous studies because this study analyzes the flouting of maxims and also the kinds of language style in the American Situation Comedy 2 Broke Girls.

METHODS

This study is a descriptive qualitative study. The data were taken from American Situation Comedy 2 *Broke Girls* in Season 6 Episode 3-9. The data of humorous utterances are those spoken by the actors in the situation comedy that cause laughter and only those flouting of Grice's maxims are used as the data for analysis. Before reporting the final result, the researcher identified the data first. After that, the data were classified into some categories in each utterance. Then, the researchers interpret based on the research problems. The last, the researcher took conclusion about the findings and discussion. There are totally 122 data, and they are further analyzed based on the language styles (hyperbole, metaphor, banter, sarcasm, and irony).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Thomas (1997, p.19) stated that flouting of maxims is a situation in which a speaker bluntly flops to keep track of a maxim, not with any purpose of deceiving or misleading, because the speaker hopes to tell the hearer to search a meaning which is not the same as from the expected meaning. The only reason is that the speakers hope the listeners get the meaning of the speakers, either the literal expressed meaning or the hidden meaning. Here, the speaker can deliver the dissimilar meanings from the literal meaning of the dictum. Then, the speaker

assumes that the hearer is adequate to decide the implied meanings of the speaker.

Flouting of Grice's Maxim of Quality

The second type of flouting of maxim is quality. Grice proposed some formulations in flouting of maxim of quality, among which is "Do not say what you believe to be false" (Grice, 1989, p. 16). This flouting of maxim happens when people do not tell the true information. Then, another formula from Grice is "do not say that for which you lack of adequate evidence" (Grice, 1989, p. 18). There is an example of flouting of maxim of quality which is uttered by Earl in the situation comedy. The example can be seen here.

Sophie : well, thank you so much. I would pay you, but I know you're proud to take the money.

Earl : *Uh, actually, the medical bills are pilling up, Sophie.*

Sophie : well, see you later.

Earl : And I could really use

Sophie : (to people around) If you need a free babysitter, that guy.

In the previous scene, Earl was taking care of Barbara, Sophie's baby. Sophie asked Earl to do it because she wants to rest a while. In short order, Barbara's diaper is full of crap. There is a doll near Earl and it yelled to him and asked him to change the diaper. Suddenly, Sophie comes and wants to go with her baby, Barbara. She is very thankful to Earl and happy that it is free. In the dialogue, Earl complains; he takes care of Barbara is not for free.

Earl intentionally flouts maxim of quality because he exaggerates his statement by not telling the real situation. His responses by saying that the medical bills are pilling up (as seen from whole story in the sitcom). He tells untrue statements. Obviously, his medical bills are not pilling up. Earl intentionally fails quality maxim to implicitly tell Sophie that he wants a fee. The 'believe to be false' formulation occurs in this conversation.

Flouting of Grice's Maxim of Relation

Another type of the flouting of maxim is relation. This flouting happens when someone

gives a response that is irrelevant towards the prior utterance. The utterance is here.

Caroline : I'm more nimble, so you distract Father Kozac while I grab the holy water.

Max : *nice jug.*

Caroline : max, I've been waiting six years for you to say that.

This situation happens in the Church. Caroline and Max come to realize their plan. They want to take the Holy water for the baptism that will be held in the dessert bar. They still want to do the baptism although Mrs. Golishevsky, the Barbara's Grand Mother, cancels Max and Caroline become the Godparent, because they are not serious the rehearsal. In that church, Caroline explains that Max will distract Father Kozac's sight. Suddenly, Max comments on the jug which is brought by Caroline. In that case, the statement which is said by Max flouts the maxim of relation. The utterance that's given is irrelevant to the main topic. In that conversation, Max flouts the maxim of relation to change a topic and it causes a humor.

Flouting of Grice's Maxim of Manner

People are said to flout the maxim of manner if their speakers are being obscure, being ambiguity, being brief (avoid unnecessary proxolity), and being orderly. An example of the conversation that contain flouting of maxim of manner is given.

Oleg : you want me to give up my sexy Yaris for a minivan? Why don't I just in a uterus with wheels?

Sophie : *I'm not asking you to buy a Prius.* Oleg, all we have to do now is sell the Yaris.

This conversation happens in Max and Caroline dessert bar. Oleg is sitting in front of the bar. He looks unhappy. Max and Caroline are still having a video call with Randy. Afterwards, they end the call. Oleg tries to express his feelings to Max and Caroline. He is depressed. He tells that his wife, Sophie, asks him to sell his beloved car. Soon after that, Sophie comes with her car with her driver in a drive-thru area. Oleg is shocked because he sees the car that Sophie drives and wants, a Minivan. Then, in an annoyed tone, he asks again to her that he should give up the beloved car for it. From that conversation, it can

be seen that Sophie's response does not directly answer yes or no, but she tells that she does not ask Oleg to buy a Prius. She is being obscure instead.

Language Style Resulted from Maxim Flouting

There are some language styles involved in the conversation. They are Hyperbole, Metaphor, Irony, Sarcasm, and Banter. These kinds of language styles are used in the conversation. Some characters in this situation comedy sometimes use these by flouting the maxims.

These are examples of conversations that contain difference language style. And here is an example of conversation that contains hyperbole.

Oleg : we did it, Sophie. We baptized little bohus ... Barbara.

Sophie : Awww, she's smiling. *She can tell that she avoided an eternal hell fire.*

This situation happens in Caroline and Max's bar. They are doing baptism for Sophie and Oleg's daughter, Barbara. The baptism is done in the bar because Caroline and Max were are not wanted by Mrs. Golishevsky. Sophie and Oleg feel happy because the baptism keeps going although in the bar. After the baptism, Sophie looks at their daughter who is smiling. Sophie says that Barbara smiles because she avoids the eternal hell-fire.

This conversation contains hyperbole. Sophie exaggerates her statement by saying that eternal hell-fire is a symbol of the worst tragedy and/or the bad habit in life. However, the statement is a reflection that Barbara is happy at that time.

Another conversation that contains hyperbole happens in this conversation.

(knock a door)

Sophie : Oh, it must be Oleg. Hide us.

Max : Hide you? That carriage *can be seen from the space.*

Sophie : All right, tell Oleg I am definitely not in the barn.

This conversation happens when Sophie visits to Max and Caroline's home. Sophie comes to skulk from Oleg, because they still fight. She does not want her husband, Oleg, sees their daughter. When Caroline, Max and Sophie are talking, someone comes and knocks the door. Sophie assumes that is Oleg. She asks Caroline

and Max to hide her and the baby. Therefore, Max says that the carriage can be seen from the space. Max just exaggerates or bombasts. The sentence “can be seen from the space” overstates the carriage. It tells that the thing is too big, and if it is hidden, people are easy to find it.

Last, an example that contains irony will be described here:

Caroline : Han looked pretty unsteady.
Do you think someone should
make sure he gets home okay?

Max : don't worry so much. *He'll be fine. See? Fine.*

This conversation happens in the dessert bar. When Caroline and Max are talking to each other, Han comes and bears down on them. They see that Han's condition is not good. Apparently, he has a chicken pox. Because of it, Caroline feels sorry for Han; she asks him to go home and take a rest. Caroline thinks that Han needs a person who can take him home safely. Max tells Caroline not to worry about him too much. Han will go home safely.

When Max says like that, Han is still standing in front of the door, shortly thereafter, Han fell unconscious. While looking up at Han, Max emphasized that Han is really fine. The utterance made by Max is a positive sentence but the implied meaning is negative. Cutting (2002) also says that in the case of irony, the speaker conveys an expressing of positive sentiment and implies a negative statement and it's difficult to be true and believed.

CONCLUSIONS

This study focused on analyzing Flouting of Grice's Maxim in the Humorous Utterance in American Situation Comedy '2 Broke Girls'. Based on the finding above, there are 122 data flouting of a maxim of quantity, quality, manner and relation in the humorous utterances in American Situation Comedy 2 Broke Girls. The most prominent flouting of a maxim is that of quantity. Sometimes, the actors flout this maxim, they say something less or more than needed or exaggerate their statement. Because of that, usually, humor is created in the conversation. The kinds of language styles involved in the

flouting of Grice's maxim are hyperbole, metaphor, irony, sarcasm, and banter. Almost all of them are found in all episodes analyzed. The results of the analyses is the most prominent is hyperbole.

Flouting of maxims is one of many topics that is interesting to investigate. The subjects of the research usually use film, situation comedy, book, or advertisement. To enrich the study of flouting of maxims, the further researches can use different text or they can collect the data from naturally occurring conversation in different settings such as talk show etc.

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