

## Analysis of Maxim Violations on Japanese Comic Strip “*Kariage Kun*” Vol 49 and its Indonesian Translation

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**Abstract** – Humor could be created by violation of maxim of the cooperative principle as proposed by Grice. In *Kariage Kun*, a well-known Japanese humor comic, it is challenging to analyze what maxim violation is explored to create humor, as it represents a co-interplay between a series of images and text. This study aimed to analyze the pattern of maxim violation in source text from *Kariage Kun* vol 49 (from word level to sentence level) and to compare whether the pattern of maxim violation is similar or shifting in the Indonesian version. The result of this study shows that the author of the comic explored the violation of maxims to create humor. The violation took place on a single or combination of the maxim of quantity, the maxim of quality, the maxim of relevance, and the maxim of manner. Compared to the target text, there are not many (less than ten percent) shifting of the pattern of maxim violation in the target text. The shifting mostly occurred when the violation dealt with the ambiguity of typical cultural load in the source text, preservation of acceptability and readability for target readers in terms of translation technique, and limited space of speech balloon.

**Keywords:** *Grice’s cooperative principle, maxim violation, shifting, translation.*

**Abstrak** – Humor dapat tercipta melalui pelanggaran maksim dari prinsip kerja sama sebagaimana dikemukakan oleh Grice. Pada komik *Kariage*, sebuah komik humor Jepang ternama, sangat menarik untuk dikaji pelanggaran maksim yang ada untuk mengkreasi humor, mengingat bahwasanya komik merupakan interaksi bersama antara serangkaian gambar dan teks. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana pola pelanggaran maksim pada tuturan dalam komik *Kariage Kun* vol 49 (mulai dari level kata sampai dengan level kalimat) serta untuk membandingkan apakah pola pelanggaran maksim tersebut sama atau bergeser pada versi bahasa Indonesianya. Hasil studi ini menunjukkan bahwasanya penulis komik banyak menggunakan pelanggaran maksim, baik tunggal maupun kombinasi, antara lain maksim kuantitas, maksim kualitas, maksim relevansi, dan maksim cara. Dibandingkan dengan teks sumber, tidak banyak ditemukan (kurang dari sepuluh persen) pergeseran pola pelanggaran maksim. Pergeseran pola pelanggaran banyak ditemukan ketika pelanggaran maksim tersebut berhubungan dengan muatan budaya yang khas pada teks sumber, pemertahanan aspek keberterimaan dan keterbacaan oleh pembaca terkait teknik terjemahan yang diambil, serta terbatasnya ruang tulis dalam balon percakapan.

**Kata kunci:** *Prinsip kerja sama oleh Grice, pelanggaran maksim, pergeseran, terjemahan*

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, the daily use of humor in society is increasing, such as comic strips, memes, stand-up comedy, and comedy movies. As it makes people laugh, humor is also could be functioned to entertain, build a good relationship in society, and even deliver a message of social criticism in a satirical way. A unique thing that can trigger humor in a conversation is by violating the rules of language use (Puri, 2019). Additionally, Ross (1998) defined the word 'humor' as something that makes people laugh or smile as a result of violations made by the participants. Ross's definition of humor is also underlined by Attardo (1994: 47) stating that the violation of the cooperative principle between participants in the conversation could form the situation of humor.

Grice (in Wijana, 2003) argued that communication takes place on the basis of a cooperative principles, which is containing maxims to obey. There are four maxims to obey, namely the maxim of quantity, the maxim of quality, the maxim of relevance, and the maxim of manner. The maxim of quality exists where one tries to be as informative as one possibly can, and gives as much information as is needed, and no more. Next, the maxim of quantity persists where one tries to be truthful, and does not give information that is false or that is not supported by evidence. Meanwhile, the maxim of relevance requires one to be relevant and says things that are pertinent to the discussion. Furthermore, the maxim of manner exists when one tries to be as clear, as brief, and as orderly as one can in what one says, and where one avoids obscurity and ambiguity. Maxims are principles to obey by participants of a speech in interaction, both textually and interpersonally to create effective communication.. However, violation of cooperative principles frequently takes place. This violation makes the information provided becoming excessive, incorrect, irrelevant, and convoluted. As a result, they make incongruity situations which people commonly used to produce a humor. In this regard, Padmawati (2021:83) considered the cooperative principle as a determinant to success conversation, however in practice, often violated. Occasionally, violation of

maxims of cooperative principles often makes conversation more interesting and funny, for instance, conversation in Kariage Kun comic strip.

Kariage Kun is a famous Japanese humor comic strip. The comic depicts the uproar caused by Kariage Kun, a mischievous office worker in the sales department of an anonymous Japanese company, Honyara Industry. He has a genius inspiration for mischief, finds mischievous seeds from everyday trivial matters, and is well-talented to harass others. With such consistency in producing humor, it won a grand prize of a gold plaque and a medal in the 45<sup>th</sup> Japan Cartoonists Association Award in 2016, a prestigious award among Japanese cartoonists since 1972.

Although the comic is very famous in Japan, especially dealing with the humor inside, not all Indonesian readers can comprehend the humor. The comic writer explores violations of maxims to create humor. However, Low (in Yuliasri, 2019:122) stated that "if a joke is not translated as a joke, then the translation is bad". As a consequence, the comic translator surely has a big task preserving the humor in the target text, as well as considering its acceptability and readability for the target readers. Hence, the translator makes adjustments through translation techniques applied in translation. Considering these adjustments, the pattern of maxim violations might probably shift. Therefore, as a translation study, this study aimed to analyze maxim violations in the Japanese version compared with its Indonesian version to see if there are any shifting in the pattern of maxim violation.

## 2. Research Method

The research method is essentially a scientific way to obtain data with specific goals and uses (Sugiyono, 2019:2). Moreover, Sugiyono (2019:2) stated that four keywords of the research method are the scientific method, data, purpose, and specific usability. The scientific method regards to the scientific principles, such as being rational, empirical, and systematic. Hence, the research method could be defined as a scientific method to obtain data for certain aims and uses.

This study was conducted in a qualitative study as it describes the actual phenomenon by using scientific procedures to answer any actual problems (Sutedi, 2018:58). This study is a comparative study (as proposed by Sutedi, 2018:62), as it compares two variables to find if there is a similarity or a significant difference. Then, it figures out the factors of the similarity or the difference, and finally make a conclusion that a factor will determine the existence of a phenomenon. This study compared maxim violation of text between Kariage Kun vol. 49 Japanese version and its Indonesian version. The data was gathered from a totally of 235 stories of Kariage Kun Vol 49, which have been confirmed the humor by a Japanese native. All data was then observed, identified, and finally classified by comparing the original text in Japanese with the translation in Indonesian. Moreover, the original text in Japanese was then transcribed (began with the symbol 「」 and /) and translated into English to show the meaning (by the symbol of < and >) (as proposed by Sutedi, 2019). The Indonesian version was also translated into English to show the equal meaning in English. Furthermore, the analysis of maxim violations both in the source text and target text used Grice's theory to determine the pattern of maxim violations. Finally, the result of the analysis will figure out whether there is any shifting in maxim violation between the source text and target text.

### 3. Theory

According to Grice's cooperative principle, people ideally communicate cooperatively to make communications effective. The principle states "*make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged*" (Grice, 1975:45). The principle then was classified into four maxims, namely maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relevance, and maxim of manner. When there is a violation of one maxim, it is assumed that the violation is deliberately created to make a conversational implicature. However, in daily communication, people do not always keep the

cooperative principle as it could be in an intention of a politeness reason (Grice in Sako, 2008), or for humor reason. Moreover, in creating humor, Attardo (1993:528) stated that there was a consensus in humor studies that maxim violation might be involving single or multiple maxims. This possibility was also taken into account, especially in making the category of a pattern of maxim violation.

This study focused on the humor intention of the comic. In analyzing maxim violations on humorous verbal expressions both in source and target text, this study used Grice's theory of maxims and submaxims (Grice, 1975) as follows.

1. Quantity
  - a. Be informative
  - b. Do not be more informative than is required
2. Quality
  - a. Do not say what you believe to be false.
  - b. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence
3. Relation
  - a. Be relevant (make your contribution relevant)
4. Manner
  - a. Avoid obscurity.
  - b. Avoid ambiguity.
  - c. Be brief.
  - d. Be orderly

In addition, as a story in the comic is presented in only four panels, it is necessary to show what the situational context within every story. Situational context (in Sari, 2019:714) refers to the thing that the speakers and hearer know about what they can see around them and what things that they are talking about. Therefore, showing the situational context would help to figure out the maxim violation in every story.

### 4. Results and Discussion

From 235 expressions of each story taken from the comic, there are 172 expressions (73.19%) violating the same maxim(s), and 42 expressions (17.87%) not violating any maxim(s). Hence, there is no shifting in the pattern of maxim violation between the source text and target text. Like most stories in this category display common

sense of humor, especially which is coming from daily trivial matters, the shifting of maxim violation is rarely taking place. It can be drawn mostly from the category of the violation on the maxim of relevance as the majority (85 expressions) and the category of no maxim violation in both source and target text.

Meanwhile, the maxim violations pattern of 21 expressions (8.94%) is shifting. They are classified into Target text violating different maxim(s) and Target text violating no maxim. Commonly, in case of shifting of pattern, Source text has engaged with image and context with a typical cultural load. On the other hand, the message of humor in Target text is not delivered or delivered partially through translation techniques applied by the translator to maintain its acceptability and readability. In addition, the message in the target text is also depending on the space of the speech balloon. Somehow, the balloon does not fulfill the translation, so therefore, the translator sometimes made a footnote or explanation on the other space in which the sense of humor does not come out spontaneously. For the discussion of this study, each category will be given an example of expression dealing with maxim violation.

### Source Text and Target Text both violate the same maxim(s)

#### Example of title:

「<sup>み</sup>三<sup>ほし</sup>つ星 レストラン / *mitsuboshi resutoran*」  
<three stars restaurant>

#### Situational context:

Kariage was listening to his friends talking about three-star restaurant. In common, star-leveling of a restaurant is identically dealing with the level of menu and service. As an annoying person, he pretended to know a three-star restaurant to go to for lunch. Curiously, the chief clerk wanted to join him as she had never gone to any three-starred restaurant before. In the 4<sup>th</sup> panel, she was annoyed (shown by her facial expression) founding that the three stars symbol is only

functioned as a mark showing the restaurant's branding (first star: fast, second star: cheap, and third star: tasty).

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#### Source text (page 57):

「さて <sup>ひる</sup>昼 <sup>は</sup> <sup>み</sup>三 <sup>つ</sup> <sup>ほし</sup>星  
レストランのランチでもくいいいくか /sate, hiru  
wa *mitsuboshi resutoran demo kui ni iku ka*」

<Well, for today's lunch, I'm going to take that **three stars** restaurant>

#### Target text (page 53):

*Siang nanti makan di restoran **bintang tiga** itu, ah*

<Well, for today's lunch, I'm going to take that **three stars** restaurant>

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#### Discussion:

Three stars commonly relate to the service level of a restaurant. However, the phrase 'three stars' is ambiguous. The phrase may belong to: 1) Shape: an object, a decoration, a mark, etc., usually with five or six points, whose shape represents a star; 2) Mark of quality: a mark that represents a star and tells you how good something is, especially a hotel or restaurant (see [https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/star\\_1?q=star](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/star_1?q=star)). Hence, this ambiguity coming out from the phrase 'three stars' is regarded as a violation of the maxim of manner. Furthermore, the contribution of Kariage by stating three stars dealing with restaurant is irrelevant, especially when it comes to the end of the story representing the disappointment of the chief clerk. This irrelevancy is stated as violating the maxim of relevance. In this story, the violation of maxim is taking place at the level of phrase and violating two maxims at once (relevance and manner) by both source text and target text.

### Source Text and Target Text are both not Violating any Maxim(s)

#### Example of title:

「キャッチアンドリリース /*kyacchi ando ririisu*  
」  
<catch and release>

Situational context:

One day, Kariage saw a man catching a fish when fishing. Wisely, the man released the fish into the water. It is common for people to catch and release fish when fishing by means of animal preservation. However, when it comes to Kariage going fishing, he incidentally caught a boot (as a trash material). Considering the concept of catch and release (in a wrong way), he made mischief by releasing (throwing away) the boot, annoying someone who immediately prevent Kariage to throw the boot away.

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Source text (page 80):

「キャッチアンドリリース /*kyacchi ando ririisu*」

<catch and release>

Target text (page 76):

*Tangkap dan lepaskan*

<catch and release>

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Discussion:

Catch and release is a conservation practice within fishing where after capture, often followed by a fast measurement and weighing of the fish. The following step is taking photography as proof of the catch, and then the fish are unhooked and returned alive to the water. However, for mischief Kariage, the concept of catch and release is shifted to create humor by his action to throw away the trash boot. On this occasion, the expression of phrase-level 'catch and release' stands for the title only, and has no violation of any maxim. The violation later took place by Kariage action of throwing away the boot (without saying any expression). As a conclusion, the source text and target text both do not violate any maxims as the humor is created by a series of images from the first panel to the fourth panel.

**Source Text and Target Text are both Violating Different Maxim(s)**

**Example of title:**

「ブルーレイ /*buruu rei*」  
<blue ray>

Situational context:

Kariage's friend was watching a video with high-quality pictures. He thought that it must be from the quality coming from the blue ray of the disk. Then, Kariage asked about the design of the disk, and his friend answered that the disk might send a sign with blue light. By mischief way, in the fourth panel, Kariage compared and generalized the system of blue rays of the disk to be similar to the system of traffic lights (red, yellow, and green).

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Source text (page 90):

「なんでも <sup>あおいろこう</sup>青色光 で <sup>しんごう</sup>信号 を <sup>おく</sup>送  
るんだそうで /*nande mo aoirokou de shingou o okuru n da sou de*」

<It seems to send a sign with **blue (green) light**>

Target text (page 86)

*Kalau tak salah..cakramnya mengirimkan sinyal dalam sinar berwarna biru*

<If I'm not mistaken, the disk sends a sign with **blue light**>

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Discussion:

Kariage generalized the system of blue rays with the system of traffic lights through color similarity. The generalization is irrelevant because a video compact disk (VCD) with blue light is not the same as a traffic light. Both source text and target text were representing equal irrelevancy in terms of violation of the maxim of relevancy. They both discussing of the connectivity of light in any color. However, in the source culture, people notice that the Japanese adjective for blue and green is the same ( <sup>あお</sup>青い [*aoi*] ) (see: <https://cotoacademy.com/japanese-color-blue-green-aoi-midori-青い-みどり/>). Conditionally, this ambiguity could also create a humor effect as



the concept of 青い<sup>あお</sup> could be explored in many contexts (in this story between disk and traffic light). On the other hand, the ambiguity of the adjective is not clearly stated in the target text. The translator might include paraphrasing of 青い<sup>あお</sup> [aoi] in the term of footnote for instance. As a result, the shifting of violation took place as the source text violate two maxims (relevance and manner) while the target text violates one maxim (relevance).

### Source Text Violates Maxim(s) while Target Text does not Violate any Maxim(s)

#### Example of title:

「かわら<sup>わ</sup>割り /kawara wari」  
<breaking roof tile>

#### Situational context:

Once wearing a costume of Judo martial art, Kariage stepped forward to try breaking roof tile. Every people seeing him hesitated if he could break the piling up roof tile. However, by moving his foot, the roof tile brook. Eventually, people equalized the technique used by Kariage to the technique in Judo martial art, named *kouchigari*. However, the technique (to break the tile) is irrelevant, because the tile broke as a consequence of being dropped deliberately. While in Judo, this technique is used to drop the opponent.

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#### Source text (page 91)

「こうちが<sup>こうち</sup>, 小内<sup>こうち</sup>だ /*kouchigari da*」

<that's minor inner reaping>

#### Target text (page 87)

*Jurus oouchigari.*

<Ouchigari stance>

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#### Discussion:

In source culture, people will comprehend the meaning of *kouchigari* within Judo technique as minor inner reaping (see: <https://judoinfo.com/kouchi/>). The irrelevancy occurred when Kariage moved his foot to make the

tile drop. Without any words, he moved his foot as if practicing the technique of *kouchigari* in Judo. By this technique, the opponent could fall as the foot is functioned as likely as bait. On this occasion, the source text of the people (in the fourth panel) is violating the maxim of relevancy (human vs roof tile). On the other hand, the target text could not represent the irrelevancy of *kouchigari* concept in two different contexts, unless the translator makes such a footnote of *kouchigari* description or short explanation within the speech balloon. The target text also shows a typo (typed: *oouchigari*). Hence, the target text does not violate any maxims compared to the source text.

### 5. Conclusion

Humor could be created by maxim violation of the cooperative principle of Grice. The author of Kariage Kun mostly used maxim violation to create humor, with co-interplay between image and text. Based on the findings and discussions of the study, only 21 expressions of 21 stories (from 235 stories) had shifted their pattern of maxim violation in the target text. The translator often considers maintaining the acceptability and readability aspect, and somehow relies on the image as it “talks more” than the text. The limited space of speech ballon also made the translation task to be challenging. However, the ambiguity by context with specific cultural load sometimes is not included in the target text. Therefore, for further translation projects on translating Japanese humor comics, this study recommends adding more footnotes, even glossaries on the additional page, containing a short description relating to the context to preserve the humor message of the source text, and also to enrich readers’ knowledge in comprehending Japanese culture.

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### 7. Appendices

**Table 1. Shifting of pattern of maxim violation on Grice's cooperative principle**

N <sup>o</sup>	Maxim violation		Qty	%	Remarks
	Source Text (ST)	Target Text (TT)			
<b>ST and TT both violating the same maxim(s)</b>					
1	Quantity	Quantity	32	13.6	No shifting
2	Quality	Quality	11	4.68	No shifting
3	Relevance	Relevance	85	36.1	No shifting
4	Manner	Manner	24	10.2	No shifting
5	Relevance + Manner	Relevance + Manner	16	6.80	No shifting
6	Quantity	Quantity	1	0.43	No




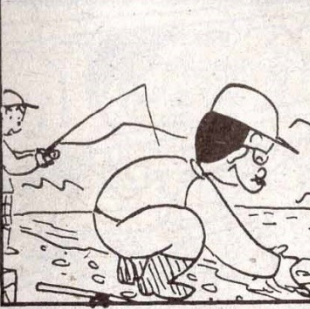
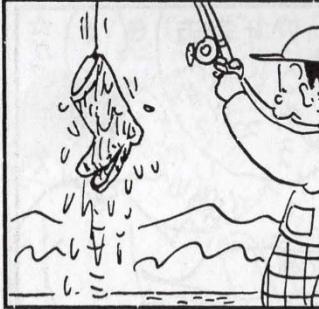

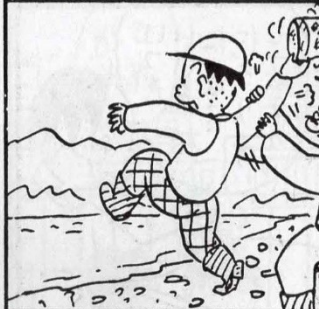
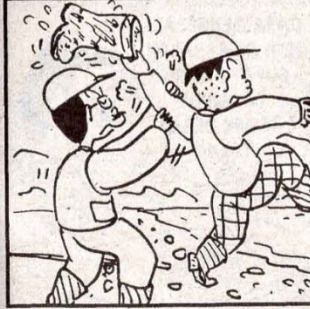
7	+ Manner Quality + Relevanc e	+ Manner Quality + Relevanc e	1	0.43	shifting No shifting
8	Quantity + Relevanc e	Quantity + Relevanc e	2	0.85	No shifting
			17	73.1	
			2	9	
<b>ST and TT both not violating any maxim(s)</b>					
8	No violation	No violation	42	17,8	No shifting
<b>Sub-total (no shifting)</b>			21	91.0	No shifting
			4	6	
<b>ST and TT both violating different maxim(s)</b>					
	Relevanc e + Manner	Manner	6	2.55	Shifting
	Relevanc e + Manner	Relevanc e	4	1.70	Shifting
	Quantity + Manner	Quantity	1	0.43	Shifting
			11	4.68	Shifting
<b>ST violating maxim(s) while TT not violating any maxim(s)</b>					
	Relevanc e	No violation	5	2.13	Shifting
	Manner	No violation	4	1.70	Shifting
	Relevanc e + Manner	No violation	1	0.43	Shifting
			10	4.26	Shifting
<b>Sub-total (shifting)</b>			21	8.94	Shifting
	<b>Total</b>		23	100	
			5		



**Table 2: Examples of Maxim Violation Category**

**Source Text and Target Text both violate the same maxim(s)**



Source Text and Target Text are both not Violating any Maxim(s)	
Source Text	Target Text
<p>キャッチアンドリリ!</p> 	<p>TANGKAP DAN LEPAS</p> 
	
	
	

Different Maxim(s)	
Source Text	Target Text
<p>ブルーレイ</p> 	<p>BLUE RAY</p> 
	<p>MEMANG STRUKTURNYA BAGAIMANA?</p> 
	<p>WAH... ITU, SIH, AKU JUGA NGGAK TAHU</p> 
	<p>KALAU TAK SALAH... CAKRAMNYA MENGIRIMKAN SINYAL DALAM SINAR BERWARNA BIRU</p> 
	<p>OH</p> 
	<p>BERARTI, NA BIGA KIRIM SI DALAM RED RAY YELLOW R SEPERTI II DONG?</p> 

Source Text Violates Maxim(s) while Target Text does not Violate any Maxim(s)

Source Text Target Text

Source Text and Target Text are both Violating



