



Humor in Brooklyn Nine-Nine Sitcom Episodes: A Study of Cooperative Principles in Pragmatics

Kadek Dinda Dwi Mahadewi, Luh Putu Laksminy, Made Detriasmitta Saientisna

Universitas Udayana, Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia

Email korespondensi: mahadewidinda28@gmail.com, putu_laksminy@unud.ac.id, detriasmitta@unud.ac.id

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Corresponding Author:
Kadek Dinda Dwi Mahadewi
Email:
mahadewidinda28@gmail.com

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Abstract

Humor is often used as a way to express emotions about specific topics. It is commonly delivered in the form of jokes and is frequently used in shows that portray the daily life of the characters, especially the ones that use verbal humor. This article aims to fill the gap in the study of the subject of the Cooperative Principle in Pragmatics, which is a complement to the issue analyzed. This study uses qualitative research to approach the data collected from a sitcom series, Brooklyn Nine-Nine. The study used the theory of the Cooperative Principle proposed by Paul Grice. The result of this study shows: (1) the TV series delivers humor by violating four of the Maxims, and (2) the violation of Maxims is required to help the contribution of the conversation in the TV series leads to be related to the audience.

INTRODUCTION

These days, all of us are familiar with humor daily. In social interaction, humor is a complex and dynamic phenomenon frequently occurring in everyday conversation and institutional settings (Çopur & Atar, 2022). Humor divide into two forms, namely, in writing and speaking. The form that uses frequently is in stand-up comedy, movies, and videos. So, written examples of humor are comic strips and memes (Nabila et al., 2022). Commonly, humor appears in daily conversation, representing the situation as a satire or an actual event. People often use succinct, hilarious, dramatic, exaggerated, and

sarcastic methods to express their opinions and ideas to create specific results. As a result, individuals may feel amused and happy (Pan, 2012).

Humor is part of the comedy and often expresses emotions about specific topics. It uses for entertainment shows, especially in the focus of situational comedy, which has a fictional character that portrays how and what people usually do in their daily life. (Hu, 2012) her study described situation comedy as a TV series with a fixed actor/actress as the character, which portrays their routine in daily scenes. It is similar to drama in that the cast can get real-time feedback

through the audience's laughter or reactions.

People find situational comedy entertaining, which causes it to be frequently used in shows to make them readily accepted by the audience. This study reviewed the situational comedy used in the Brooklyn Nine-Nine show of the characters' conversation and then analyzed them. This sitcom (re: situational comedy) shows consist of several seasons and episodes in each of the seasons. The show presents the daily life of the precinct somewhere in Brooklyn, where the story center around a team called Brooklyn Nine-Nine. In the show, several characters portray the daily activities and conversations of police life.

Humor uses mainly to represent the interaction between the characters, and sometimes, its application violates the practical value of the cooperative principle. The way it often uses sensitive topics as the material of the humor is a thing that will discuss in this study. Somehow humor delivered to the audience is spontaneously spoken. Instead, it does not have to have formation to make it proper for the audience to convey the message. However, its meaning must be comprehensively understandable to deliver the humor since a humor conversation could be more successful. A successful conversation fulfills the goals of delivering it and appropriately stating the conversation, which can be rated pragmatically (Awwad et al., 2019). Thus, a pragmatic study rules how to conduct the conversation.

Humor itself is divided into two; situational humor and verbal humor. Based on (Hakim & Indah, 2022), when people deliver jokes during their interaction, especially during a conversation where the speaker uses language to deliver it, it could be classified as verbal humor. Brooklyn

Nine-Nine Sitcom uses verbal humor in it. The sitcom is nearly only possible with the occurrence of verbal humor. The level of humor between people might have differences; it depends on their tastes. Humor usually occurs in the conversation between characters in the sitcom, in this case, Brooklyn Nine-Nine.

The characters in the series build communication with the knowledge that they have, based on the topic, that could link them to achieve the conversation finally. They usually elaborate their conversation with a specific utterance that, as a result, it produces humor intentionally or unintentionally. With the connection that each character has, humor often has the role of making the conversation enjoyable, reducing conflict, and the increase of interpersonal connections. Only some people can accept certain humor uttered by somebody; that is why to produce humor successfully, one has to go through the complete process of humor. Strategies are essential when a speaker assumes that the audience will comprehend what they mean implicitly. It might indicate whether or not other people can understand the message that wants to be displayed (Aisyah et al., 2022).

Even if the process of humor first has to be delivered by the speaker, the receiver also participates in it. Thus, having something similar or related between the speaker and receiver is essential to connect them, which could make the humor acceptable. When a conversation that consists of humor happens, then not everyone can understand it because it is context-based. The context could be unfamiliar to people (Putri & Rahayu, 2022). Context does not only refer to the time and location that the speaker specifies; it can also refer to the speaker's and hearer's identities and the topics of discussion (Subagyo, 2023).

In principle, each speaker should aim to convey personally relevant and sufficient information regarding ostensive stimulus to the listener. However, only if both the speaker and the listener may maximum relevance be equivalent to optimal relevance if they share the same contextual setting (Tian-yu, 2021). The relation could be in their experience or knowledge level to fully achieve humor in a conversation to avoid misunderstanding. It is because when it happens, the interaction between the parties occurs with conversational meaning, which creates hidden meaning that leads to a humor effect (Feng-shuang, 2021). In addition, paying attention to the attitude used in creating humorous conversation is essential, so it will not be offensive to the receiver's feelings.

This article aims to fill the gap in studying the Cooperative Principle in Pragmatics. Among all the research that exists, this article will be a complement to the subject analyzed. Formerly, many scholars have researched how humor works from the point of view of Pragmatics, especially on the Cooperative Principles subject. The cooperative principle is the effort the speaker and the hearer make to make their conversations relevant and effective. However, those scholars studied different genres of Sitcoms with different types of humor uttered.

Therefore, in this article it will try to answer these research questions: (1) What Cooperative Principle features that violated to deliver humor in the conversation of Brooklyn Nine-Nine? and (2) How are conversations in Brooklyn Nine-Nine Sitcom with the Maxims qualities that violated could achieve humor?

These problems occur as a gap in the Pragmatics field of study and become essential to study because there are

specific ways to express humor and how the Brooklyn Nine-Nine Sitcom brought the serious topic yet still able to use humor to deliver the message.

METHOD AND THEORY

This study will use a qualitative research method to approach the data. This study imported the data from the Netflix sitcom series Brooklyn Nine-Nine, specifically the English subtitle transcription of its series from selected episodes. The data chosen required and matches the subject that will be analyzed. Also, taking the data from the subtitle transcription will give a clear source for the study.

This study collects the data by observing the documentation. The documentation conducted from the source of data as mentioned before with the following steps: (1) Identify the data from the Sitcom Brooklyn Nine-Nine, which is first will be transcribed into text to get the content to be analyzed, (2) understand the conversation context after the series has transcribed, (3) find out and identify the content of the series episode (4) take notes based on the classification and the research purpose.

After data collection, it is continued with the data analysis to answer the research question with the theories of the subject chosen. The result of the study has to answer the research questions. This analysis method will be through several steps: (1) Identify the data collection considering the selected theories, (2) Choose the identified data to analyze through the theories of the Cooperative Principle, (3) Analyzed the data of the study that considered appropriate data according to the previous steps.

Previously, several articles have studied the Cooperative Principles used in humor. The Cooperative Principle is an effective method for investigating how

to create verbal humor (Wen, 2021). Even with slight differences, the former studies used to review how humor is adapting the rule of the Cooperative Principle. Here is a review of several articles with a similar focus.

First, the analysis of the Verbal Humor in a Stand-Up Comedy Concert entitled "Oh My God" by Louis C.K. was conducted (Syauqillah & Setyaningsih, 2022), focusing on the point of Pragmatic Strategies implemented in Verbal Humor. Besides the strategies, the author also analyzed the function of the Stand-Up Comedy by Louis C.K. was conducted. The framework employed in the study is based on the theory by Raskin and Attardo (1992) about the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) and by Grice (1975) about the maxim of the Cooperative Principle to complement the study. The result of this study, which used a descriptive qualitative method to analyze the data, answers that the jokes delivered by Louis mostly violate the value of the maxim of quantity. However, the highly found maxim of quantity violation in the show was how the jokes' message could be delivered. For the following research, the author suggests exploring humor even further ahead, more than just verbal humor, like studying how jokes follow by other elements such as gesture, the intonation of the speaker, and tone of voice, potentially resulting in laughter. The current study has a different subject from the former study, in which the current study reviewed sitcom series scripted from the beginning compared to direct jokes by comedians on the stage.

Second, the study entitled "Interpretation of Conversational Implicature in the Film Green Book from the Perspective of the Cooperative Principle" was conducted by (Ye, 2022). Through the theory of the Cooperative Principle by Grice, the author analyzed

the dialogues of the conversation between Dr. Donald Shirley and Tony Lip in the film. The purpose of the study is to deeply understand the conversation between the characters, which shows how it can reveal the characters' personalities and define how it conveys a humorous message. The result of this study by Ye found that those characters' dialogues primarily violated the Cooperative Principle theory, as stated by Grice, which led to conversational implicature. However, it is how the dialogues subtly shape and define the characters' personalities. The violation and implicature that the conversation creates are how the message of the communication is well interpreted, which could help many audiences to understand the film better. The difference shown in the study can be seen from its focus on interpreting the conversation with the theory of implicature and violating the Cooperative Principle. While the current study happens significantly analyzed how humorous conversation between characters violates the Cooperative Principle theory.

Last, the study conducted by (Liang, 2023) entitled "Study of Humor Research from the Perspective of Cooperative Principle and Politeness Principle in Comic Sketch "Huan Bu Huan." Liang analyzed the humorous dialogues in the comic sketch through the theory of the Cooperative Principle by Grice with the addition of the Politeness Principle for further analysis. The study aims to raise people's awareness about comic sketches language, emphasizing how it can be appreciated more for its unique artistic and aesthetic value. The result of the study shows that the lines of the dialogue in the comic sketch violate the rules of the Cooperative Principle and the Politeness Principle to achieve the effect of humor itself. Although using the same theory as Grice's Cooperative Principle,

the subject used in this study will differ from the current article. While this study uses the dialogues from comic sketches, which adapt the writing humor, the current article is analyzed speaking humor from the conversation between characters.

The result from previous scholars shows that humor is commonly delivered to the audience when the maxim in the theory of Cooperative Principles is being violated. There is proof that violating the four maxims explains how it affects linguistic humor mechanically. In sitcoms, violation of CP can produce a humorous effect and promote the plot's characterization and development (Jing, 2020). The note is that the issuer and the receiver in the conversation have to have a specific connection to make familiarity between them so that the humor can be appropriately delivered.

To achieve humor in conversation, Grice stated that specific qualities could be used to determine whether humor is acceptable or violates the existing qualities. The cooperative Principle is a part of the Pragmatics subject that studies how the interaction between people in the community is essential to have something as a term to build interaction that could make the conversation go smoothly and successfully delivered.

It states in the Cooperative Principles, "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" from Grice in (1975). In conversation, we should contribute what is necessary and to the place where it appears with the good purpose of the conversation in which to engage with what information we exchange, not crossing the border.

(Grice, 1989) analyzed the cooperation of a conversation involves Four Maxims that consist of Maxim of

Quantity, the Maxim of Quality, the Maxim of Relation, and the Maxim of Manner. The last maxim is about how to say things; the previous three are about what to say. If everyone who participates in the conversation follows the guidelines, it will be most effective and rational. However, this is only sometimes the case; people constantly interact, breaking one or more adages (Li, 2023). Those Four Maxims are explained in detail below:

Maxim of Quantity

The contribution given by the speaker should be equal to or more information than it should produce in the conversation. Give the contribution as informative as it requires. To make sure that the hearer understands the information that is delivered.

Maxim of Quality

The speaker of the conversation should deliver accurate information, not convey false and lack evidence-based statements. Give the contribution based on the information that the speaker is well acknowledged.

Maxim of Relation

The speaker has to focus on the purpose of the conversation's conduction. The information that is delivered has to be relevant to the exchange topic so that the hearer can understand clearly the direction of the conversation.

Maxim of Manner

The contribution has to be to the point of its conversation. The speaker must convey the information concisely, not ambiguous, and in order. It helps the hearer avoid the obscurity of the information.

The theory of the Cooperative Principle does not rule out the possibility that there might be a violation of qualities

in the conversation. Violation of a maxim is when the speakers do not consciously follow or obey the four sub-maxims. When speakers know that their audience is deceived and will only perceive the words' superficial meaning, they are said to be breaking a maxim (Zebua et al., 2017). Grice conveys that this 'implicature,' or in specific 'special conversational implicature,' could occur intentionally violate the Cooperative Principle. This implicature defines that even when the speaker is crossing the border of the conversation, the hearer can still understand the point of it. That is how to produce verbal humor due to the implicature. As mentioned in the former research, the generation of humorous jokes from the angle of violating Grice's conversational principle (Attardo, 1990).

When the violation of one or more maxims in the theory of the Cooperative Principle is at a certain level, it creates a humorous effect. This article aims to analyze the Cooperative Principles theory of Grice with the Four Maxims to examine the correlation of the theory in achieving humor in the Brooklyn Nine-Nine Sitcom.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Considering the proposed problems, the study's result explained the use of humor in the series Brooklyn Nine-Nine Sitcom. Here are the answers to the previous research questions: (1) After the data samples are collected, the data are examined with Grice's theory of the Cooperative Principle if they violate the theory's value and quality. The data samples show that the production of humor violates the value instead of qualifying the proper conversation. Of all the data samples, every humorous conversation conducted violates the value of four Maxims, yet the humor is

delivered well to the audience even when the contribution is inappropriate.

Then, (2) The achievement of humor in the conversation of the series Brooklyn Nine-Nine Sitcom because of the fidelity of how to drive the topic. However, it has to do with violating Grice's four Maxims in the Cooperative Principles theory. As the topic of the main series is supposed to be severe and not commonly familiar, the manner used to deliver the message to relate to the audience's daily is to use puns, sarcasm, joke, etc. The variations maintain that the conversation is smooth and can comprehensively reach the audience. Thus, to create humor in conversation, the contribution of it should be flexible. In this case, highlighting that the series is a situational comedy, it has to be as related as it could to the days of its audience.

Discussion

This study further researches the humor in Brooklyn Nine-Nine using the Cooperative Principal theory by reflecting on the previous studies with relevant subjects. Thus, to analyze the Cooperative Principal theory, this article uses conversations of the characters in Brooklyn Nine-Nine transcribed from the TV series on the Netflix platform as the corpus of the study.

The violation of the Maxim of Quantity

In a conversation, the quantity of information should answer the question clearly, not more or less.

Data 1

Context: Amy is working on a criminal case and needs to catch the bad guy. While the sketch artist is unavailable, Amy asks Sargent Jeffords to draw the guy instead. Amy has to wait a few times for the sketch to be done and plans to clear the case in short to impress Captain Holt.

Season 1: Episode 4 (11:07 – 11:20)

Amy: Sarge, all of these are fine. How much longer are you going to work on this?

Jeffords: It is questions like that that made Van Gogh cut off his ear. You cannot put a clock on art!

Amy: [stares at Sarge Jeffords]

Jeffords: Ten minutes.

Amy: Great.

In data 1, the violation of the Maxim of Quantity happens. Since Amy races against time to finish the case she handles, she is rushing Sarge Jeffords about when it can be done and handed over to Captain Holt. Otherwise, Sargent Jeffords paid extra attention to the details of his sketch, which is caused by his perfectionist trait, and his ideology of art has to be made wholeheartedly. This caused him to be upset by Amy's question about rushing time and not paying attention to the perfect result of his art.

Instead of answering Amy's question with the estimated time, which Amy expects, Sargent Jeffords answers her with cynicism because it offends him. He connects it with the historical issue about Van Gogh and the tragedy, related to his satire that art cannot be rushed for. The question about how many times to take to finish art is such a cursed question for Jeffords as an artist.

However, Amy is not rushing his time to finish the art, but to confirm if it is OK to be not perfect for her request. After realizing it from her stare, Jeffords finally answers her with the estimated time, which should be the answer from the beginning.

This conversation between the characters that violate the Maxim of Quantity makes the line funny for the audience. The use of satire and negative response from Sergeant Jeffords, even if the value of the Maxim of Quantity is

wasted, the extra information given is like the punchline of the humor.

The violation of the Maxim of Quality

This maxim's term is about contributing truthfully, informatively, and evidence-based.

Data 2

Context: In the morning, when Jake goes to the precinct with a bright face, he walks into Amy, that sits at her desk, wrapping presents. Amy greets Jake and immediately shoots into Jake's bright face.

Season 1: Episode 11 (1:18 – 1:30)

Amy: You look happy. Let me guess: your egg sandwich fell on the floor and they gave it to you for free?

Jake: No. They do that? Why doesn't everyone just drop their sandwich on the floor?

Amy: I was trying to insult you.

Jake: And instead, you gave me an amazing life hack!

In data 3, Amy's contribution to the conversation violates the term Maxim of Quality. Amy questions Jake's emotion in the morning and compares it to the reason that possibly makes people happy in the morning, just after having breakfast. Unfortunately, the information Amy conveys in the conversation is misleading and not based on the fact. This point has violated the Maxim of Quality term, successfully creating the humor delivered to the audience.

Amy delivers information that is new to Jake, which is fake information. Then, as a result, Jake acts like taking it seriously, believing it was what happened and starts to question it. This has violated the maxim, but this is what can create humor when the audience receives it. The confusion occurs from this conversation and makes Jake looks silly, while in reciprocal, Amy is the one that being fooled by Jake from his response to

Amy's satire. This situation successfully creates humor when the audience understands the confusion within Jake's fake response to living the satire.

The violation of Maxim of Relation

In this maxim, the term is to make sure the point of the delivered conversation should be in line and relevant to the actual purpose from the start.

Data 3

Context: Rosa is leading a task force, one of which is dealing with drug dealers. She assigns Jake and Charles to work on it and starts by coming to the USPIS office for further clues.

Season 2: Episode 8 (2:18 – 2:31)

Rosa: Hey, work this thing hard. We're under a lot of pressure with the task force, so we could really use a win.

Jake: You got it. You're my friend and I won't let you down. I'm gonna push you up, just like a bra.

Rosa: What?

Jake: No, I meant like a brassiere, which is totally different.

Rosa: Come on, man.

In data 3, Jake violates the Maxim of Relation by intentionally slipping the main topic with another focus. Here Rosa is the task force leader, commanding Jake and Charles to work the task seriously and give their best to make it work. In a severe manner, Rosa also tries to remind them that the case they have to do is essential to mark their win. However, in return, Jake replies to Rosa otherwise. At first, Jake confirms that he will work hard for this case, but he also adds a joke about the irrelevant topic and has no relation to the main topic.

This data shows how the humor created here, even violates the Maxim of Relation, is still acceptable for the audience and successfully delivers the humor. The way Jake switches the topic

in one line and all of a sudden. Also, the topic that he slips with is unexpected. The point is that he finds the same concept with the main topic as the joke, while Rosa is not getting the point that Jake tried to tell her. This proves that violating the maxim could be done to project humor in conversation but only situational and still has to have a point, even if it is unrelated.

The violation of the Maxim of Manner

In this maxim, the speaker has to convey the conversation point concisely to avoid ambiguity in the information delivered.

Data 4

Context: Having a new captain in the 9-9 precinct, all the team have to adapt to new rules by the captain. During the meeting in the morning, the new captain commanded every person to own a pad that tracks each person's activity. Rosa Diaz feels it is unfair for her to get herself tracked all day.

Season 3: Episode 1 (5:23 – 5:32)

Rosa: Sarge, I don't need to be monitored all day long. I'm not a toddler. This is stupid.

Jeffords: I know you're not a toddler, because my toddlers know that "stupid" is a no-no word. Keep that Dozer-pad on you at all time.

Rosa: Fine, but I am gonna play the hell out of some backgammon. Watch me.

In data 4, the conversation between Rosa and Sargent Jeffords is about her objections to the new rule conducted in the precinct. Through the conversation, the contribution of the characters violates the Maxim of Manner, which conveys the information in their lines not concisely and possibly causes ambiguous meanings in the result. However, with this violation, the characters' contribution produces humor. When Rosa has an objection toward the new rule, she talks

about it with Sargent Jeffords. She conveys the information in an upset tone, delivering the main message, but then followed by additional information that is ambiguous.

Rosa adds that she is not a toddler, which is true, but then continues with the idea that the new rule is stupid. This is unnecessary information, but by adding it, the contribution of Rosa's line becomes humorous. Even more, when Sargent Jeffords responded to her about the toddler thing and connected it with the "stupid" word, it was also unnecessary information to be spoken. This could be the attempt for Sargent Jeffords to reply to Rosa's grunt, supporting the situation to lead the conversation as humor.

With proves that the contribution of the characters in data 4 violated the Maxim of Manner; it is also proved that the violation was created intentionally to build up the humor situation of the scene. The first line that Rosa conveys with additional unnecessary information, it shifts the actual purpose of the conversation. It shows that the complementary topic of the conversation, which Rosa started, is continued even after the lines and shifts the focus to the complementary topic.

The data above that have been analyzed from the characters' brief conversations, we could say most of the humor in their conversation violates the terms of maxims based on what Grice's proposed. Intentionally or otherwise, when violated maxims create humor, it can be more natural and doesn't seem stiff as jokes.

CONCLUSION

From the study conducted in this article, we can conclude the examination of the conversations above with the theory of the Cooperative Principle that humor can still be achieved. A

conversation is likely happening when the speaker and the hearer can reach a successful conversation with adherence to the Four Maxims. To conclude, what this article is trying to answer is outlined below.

Firstly, Cooperative Principles features, the Maxims qualities, commonly appear in delivering the humor produced in the conversation. The four Maxims appear to be violated to produce the humor delivered in the conversation or the contribution of the characters.

Secondly, the humor in Brooklyn Nine-Nine Sitcom is successfully achieved with the violation of the theory Cooperative Principle in it. Thus, the existence of the Cooperative Principle, instead of being implicated in the humor that is produced, is more likely to violate Maxim's qualities. The conversation between the characters in Brooklyn Nine-Nine Sitcom might violate the Four Maxims qualities, but that does not mean the message they want to deliver is failed. Otherwise, the violations that occur in the conversation seem to deliver the humor that they produce successfully.

The findings are relevant to other former scholars that convey how humor is often produced by violating the qualities of Maxims.

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