

THE VIOLATION OF GRICEAN MAXIMS AS VERBAL HUMOR IN *THE BIG BANG THEORY*

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Abstrak

*Sebuah percakapan melibatkan setidaknya dua partisipan, mereka berperan sebagai pendengar dan pembicara. Untuk menghindari kesalahpahaman diantara kedua pihak, harus ada sebuah kesamaan pemahaman dan untuk memastikan kesepahaman tersebut terjadi maka para partisipan harus mematuhi Maxim-maxim percakapan atau yang lebih dikenal sebagai Gricean Maxim. Metode yang diterapkan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode qualitative. Pertama, pelanggaran yang terjadi dalam percakapan antara tokoh di dalam serial *The Big Bang Theory* dianalisis menggunakan teori Cooperative Principle dari H.P grice. Kemudian data yang terkumpul dikategorikan berdasarkan jenis-jenis verbal humor yang ada menggunakan teori umum verbal humour dari Salvatore Attardo. Terakhir, makna yang terimplikasi dianalisis dengan menggunakan teori Conversational Implicature dari H.P. Grice.*

Kata kunci: Gricean Maxims, The Big Bang theory, Verbal Humor, Implikatur.

1. Background of the Study

To make sure the conversation reach its goal and to bring the mutual understanding into existence, the participant should obey the maxim of conversation, or as known as Gricean maxim. If the maxim fullfilled, the conversation is considered succesful. But in some case, the speaker intentionally avoid the mutual understanding or refuse to obey the maxim for some reason such as to hide the truth, expressing uncertainty, expressing sarcasm, or to avoid certain topic by violating Gricean maxim of conversation. After watching *The Big Bang Theory* the fact that in the series Gricean maxims are often violated in order to give a humorous effect to the audiences was found, and due to that fact this movie was chosen as the data of this thesis.

2. Problem of the Study

Based on the background above, there are three problems analyzed in this study. They are as follow:

1. What are the Gricean Maxims violated by the characters in *The Big Bang Theory* series?
2. What are the implied meaning of the violated Gricean Maxims in the *The Big Bang Theory* series?
3. What type of verbal humor is the violation of Gricean Maxims in *The Big Bang Theory* series categorized to?

3. Aims of the Study

The aims of this study are focused:

1. To identify the violation of the Gricean Maxim that occur in *The Big Bang Theory* series.
2. To know the implied meaning of the violated Gricean Maxims in the *The Big Bang Theory* series.
3. To categorize the verbal humor created by violating the Gricean maxims in *The Big Bang Theory* series.

4. Research Method

4.1 Data Source

Data source is the source where the data of this study was taken, there are two types of data source. Firstly, the primary source which is obtained authentically by the researcher himself. Secondly, secondary source is used to support the primary data. To get the conversation in which the Gricean maxim is being violated, the writer uses the primary data source and does not need to conduct interview or field observation. The primary data in this study are eleven episodes of the first season of *The Big Bang Theory* downloaded from www.4shared.com/video/TheBigBangTheory on 8 July 2013.

4.2 Method and Technique of Collecting Data

In composing this study, the methods applied in collecting data is the documentation method. There are some ways in collecting the data. Firstly the writer watches the series while reading the subtitle many times in order to have a deep understanding of the story and conversation along with its context. Then writer identify the promising data from the movie script and give mark by highlighting it so the further analysis was much easier to do. The last step is classifying the data according to the types of the Gricean Maxims that are being violated and the types of verbal humor.

4.3 Method and Technique of Analyzing Data

The collected data were analyzed descriptively by using qualitative method. The theory used in analyzing the data was based on the theory of H.P Grice and Salvatore Attardo. The analysis of this study took several steps : First, the data that was collected were categorized based on their type of violation by applying H.P Grice's theory. Second, the implied meaning inside the conversation was analyzed by using the theory of conversational implicature which was proposed by H.P Grice. Third, categorizing the data based on its type of verbal humor by using Salvatore attardo's theory.

5. Analysis of Anthems and Logos of Manchester United and Liverpool

The maxims are violated in the series for humorous purposes. In more precise terms, on many occasions implicatures are created by means of violating the maxims either deliberately or by mistake.

5.1 The Violation of the Maxim of Quality as Verbal Humour in Bigbang Theory's Conversation

The maxim of quality is violated fairly regularly throughout the whole series, mainly by characters saying something they know to be false by simply lying, by exaggerating or by using figurative language that does not comply even with the reality of the show.

Sheldon : So, what exactly are you trying to accomplish here?

- Leonard : Excuse me?
- Sheldon : That woman in there's not going to have sex with you.
- Leonard : Well I'm not trying to have sex with her.
- Sheldon : Oh, good. Then you won't be disappointed.
- Leonard : What makes you think she wouldn't have sex with me, I'm a male and she's a female?
- Sheldon : Yes, but not of the same species

In the Data above Sheldon intentionally violate the maxim of quality by saying that Leonard and Penny (she) is not from the same species, his statement is proved to be false because Sheldon is fully aware that both penny are human being. Sheldon's respond to Leonard's question considered to be an Eristic type of verbal humour because Sheldon fully aware that his respond is not true but he said it in order to win the argument regardless of the truth and he doesn't have the intention to lie. Sheldon imply that Penny is a totally different type of person from leonard in almost all aspects.

5.2 The Violation of the Maxim of Quantity as Verbal humor in Bigbang Theory's Conversation

The violations of the maxim of Quantity occur for example when a character blabbers things that s/he should not be saying, or when a character gives sarcastic answers to silly questions. It also occurs due to the failure to give an exact amount of information.

- Penny : Do you have any idea what time it is?
- Sheldon : Of course I do. My watch is linked to the atomic clock in Boulder, Colorado. It's accurate to one tenth of a second. But as I'm saying this it occurs to me that once again your question may have been rhetorical.

Sheldon's failure to observe the maxim is due to the superfluous unnecessary information that he provides while Penny just asking about the time, therefore the maxim of quantity is violated because he failed to give an exact amount of information. Sheldon's reply to Penny belongs to the Absurdity types of verbal humor because it involves nonsensical words that actually has nothing to do with Penny's question. Penny implies that Sheldon doesn't visit her in a reasonable time.

5.3 The Violation of the Maxim of Manner as Verbal humour in Bigbang Theory's Conversation

There are several focus in this maxim, the first one is avoid obscurity of expression, it means that don't use words that could make the listener confused. The second one is to avoid ambiguity, we must use a good choice of words to make sure the listener doesn't interpret other message into different meaning. The next one is be brief, make sure to make your sentence or utterance as brief as possible to avoid the unnecessary use of words. The last one is be orderly, if you give more than one information make sure it's served in order.

- Penny : Um, me, okay, I'm Sagittarius, which probably tells you way more than you need to know.
- Sheldon : Yes, it tells us that you participate in the mass cultural delusion that the Sun's apparent position relative to arbitrarily defined constellations and the time of your birth somehow effects your personality.
- Penny : Participate in the what?

In the data above Sheldon failed to observe or fulfill the maxim of manner, he failed to be brief and unable to avoid obscurity by elaborating the definition of horoscope and confuse Penny. Instead of elaborating the definition of horoscope he could just say that Penny believes in horoscope, therefore the choice of words is easier to understand. Sheldon's respond to Penny's statement is considered to

be overstatement because it is an exaggerated definition of horoscope. Sheldon implies that to believe in horoscope is a stupid thing.

5.4 The Violation of the Maxim of Relevance as Verbal humour in Bigbang Theory's Conversation

The maxim of relevance is exploited by making a response or observation which is very irrelevant to the topic in hand.

Penny : Alright, my boss says you either have to order, or leave and never come back.

Howard : What do you recommend for someone who worked up a man-sized appetite from a morning of weight training and cardio-funk?

Penny : A shower.

In the conversation above Howard ask Penny to recommend food that suit a man who just finished work out. But instead of recommending food Penny suggest Howard to take a shower due to his sweat. Penny's reply belong to the Violation of the maxim of relevance. The Respond that penny give to Howard is an example of Insultatio by stating that he need shower, in other words she imply that Howard is smelly.

6. Conclusion

Based on Grice's Cooperative principle, it is discovered that the humor embedded in the conversation of the 11 episodes The Big Bang Theory season 1 characters is mostly created by the violation of Gricean Maxims, it is also found that the character use different types of verbal humor which violate the Gricean maxim in generating the humor. Among all the Gricean Maxim the maxim of quality is violated the most, the characters intended to say the opposite of what they believe to be true to generate sarcasm and also they tend to exaggerate their

expression or description as an object or situation. The second maxim to be violated the most is the maxim of manner in which the character of The Big Bang Theory usually failed to be brief and clear due to use of scientific terms and long explanation which is considered to be obscure by common people. The least maxim violated by the characters in the sitcom are Maxim of quantity and maxim of relevance. As for the most generated verbal humor belong to Hyperbole. The character in the sitcom, especially Sheldon, tend to exaggerate almost everything in the show. In the show humor was usually used as a mean to reduce embarrassment or sometimes also to mock others or imply a message that can not be delivered by using usual word. For the character in the show the verbal humor emerged in the conversation maybe not amusing at all since they were involved in the situation and they might see them as mockery or an attempt to reduce embarrassment or just to achieve a communicative purposes, but for the audiences it is easier to detect the humor because they are not directly involved in the conversation and it is easier for them to find the character's intention when they violate a maxim.

7. Bibliography

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