AN ANALYSIS VIOLATION OF GRICE’S COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE IN HUMOR AS FOUND IN THE AMERICAN SITCOM “SABRINA THE TEENAGE WITCH”

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Abstract
Humor is a kind of communication which tends to break cooperative principle. Humor which resulted from the violation of cooperation principle often occurs in the conversation among friends and colleague (Holmes and Mara, 2002). Based on these phenomena the writer described how the characters in the American sitcom “Sabrina the teenage witch” violate the cooperative principle in order to cause funniness. In this research the writer uses contextual meaning and pragmatig theories. The writer also uses observation method and note taking technique in collecting data, then uses pragmatics identity method to analyze the data. In presenting the data uses informal method. SFrom the analysis, it was found the violation cooperative principle consists of violation maxim of quality by being lying, ironical and exaggerating. Maxim of quantity violate by being economical with the truth, too much unnecessary information and less informative response intentionally. Maxim of relevance violate when speaker makes some irrelevant comment in order to refuse to answer some question. And the last, maxim of manner violate by saying something extremely long winded and ignoring the issue, topic and occasion. Maxim that commonly violate in order to causes funniness in sitcom “Sabrina the teenage witch” is maxim of quality, the second highest frequency is maxim of relevance and the third position is violation maxim of quantity. Violation maxim of manner is the rare occur.

Key word: Cooperative principle, Conversational maxim, Violation conversational maxim, Context, “Sabrina the teenage witch”.

Introduction
Humor play an important role in human life, humor is a social instrument that provides an effective way to reduce psychological distress, communicate a range of feeling and ideas and enhance relationship. People often use humor in communication as entertainment and even critics without causing serious confrontation between participants.

Raskin (1985) defines humor as a non-bona-fide (NBF) mode of communication which does not tolerate the cooperative principle. Cooperative principle is a theory that proposed by Grice (1975) ; He assumes that in order to have successful conversation we have to give proper contribution at the stage at which it occurs and by accepted purpose or direction of the talk in which we are engaged. In this theory, Grice states four conversational maxims as instruction for the speaker and hearer to complete cooperative principles; which consist of maxim of quality, maxim of
quantity, maxim of relevance and maxim of manner.

In conversing, misunderstanding and humor might be generated when any of the four maxims are violated. Humors that come up from the violation of cooperative principle often founds in the conversation among friends.

Based on the descriptions above, the writer interested and attempts to identify humor in communication that violate Grice’s maxims in cooperative principle. The writer focuses the study on violation of conversational maxim with the aim to produce humorous effect in conversational between characters in the American sitcom “Sabrina the teenage witch”. Data of this research are utterances that contains of humor indicated with how the listener or audience bursts into laughter after hearing this.

**Research methodology**

This research is a qualitative study which data is analyses violation of cooperative principle in the American teen sitcom “Sabrina the teenage witch”. The writer’s study focused on violation cooperative principle in humor using theoretical basic proposed by Grice. The data are explained in verbal form and are analyzed without using statistic technique. The data taken from the American sitcom “Sabrina the teenage witch”. The data are the utterances in conversation among the main characters and others characters in this sitcom that indicated as violation of conversational maxim.

In collecting the data, in this research the writer applies observation method that proposed by Sudaryanto (1993). Observation method is the process of collecting data analysis by doing observation of language. The writer watches the movies several times, looks for and brows the transcription of the movies in internet. Then, the writer identify all utterances that containing Grice’s maxim violation. In collecting the data the writer based on the following procedures:

1. Collecting the data related to the topic.
2. Selecting them, that related to the topic.
3. Reading and comprehending the data carefully
4. Grouping and dividing the data that are assumed as violated maxim.

In analyzing the data the writer describe the data based on its context then identifying the side of conversation that violates the maxim and deciding to what type of maxim it is violated, then determine the
purpose of the speaker violates the maxim. For supporting theory, Yule’s theory on context is used.

In representing the result of the data analysis, the writer applies informal method that proposed by Sudaryanto (1993). Informal method is the way of presenting the result of analysis in the form of descriptive text using usual word or sentences or what the data itself.

**Result and analysis**

This chapter presents some data which refer to the research questions, those are violation of maxims of cooperative principle, and possible reason in violating those maxims found in the conversation among characters in the American sitcom “Sabrina the teenage witch”. The writer firstly describes the context of conversation, and then chooses the side of conversation that violates the maxims, and decided to what type of maxims is violated. Finally determines the purpose of the speaker violate the maxims.

### 1. Violation maxim of Quality

Maxim of quality tends to be violated by: lying, irony (this is the way of conveying information by saying the opposite of what speaker means in order to make fun or tease someone else), exaggerating (make something seem larger, more important, better or worse than it really), or minimizing the major problem Brown and Levinson (1987: 221-223).

1.1. Irony (this is the way conveying information by saying the opposite of what speaker means in order to make fun or ridicule someone else)

Jenny: I know what it’s like I was the new kid last year.
Sabrina: So, can I ask you a question? Do you ever feel like you don’t fit in?
Jenny: Only all the time but I don’t want to fit in. I researched it and awkward people tend to be much more successful later in life. I look at… Libby, I see tragedy.
Mr. Pool: Oh look girls, you’ve you’ve bored your frog to death.
Well, slice and dice.
Sabrina: Oh I hate doing this. If only there was some way I could bring these frogs back to life. I think his heart is somewhere around…here.

The conversation occurs in Sabrina’s biology class where Mr. Pool as her biology teacher discusses about frog. He explains frog is a cold blooded vertebrate and in this class they will dissect this amphibian and study its structure. The student asked to choose their lab partner and dissect their dead frog. As a new kid, Sabrina got little difficult to find lab partner and finally Jenny ask her...
to be her lab partner because Jenny also know how feel to be a new kid in this school last year.

But during the class they just talk each other and do not doing anything with their dead frog. As a teacher Mr. Pool tries to remind them about their exercise to dissect the frog “look girls, you’ve-you’ve bored your frog to death” it is assumed his utterance has violated maxim of quality by being ironical. Irony refers to strategy that the speakers express something that is completely different from what the speaker means in order to make fun or ridicul someone else (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 221).

Properly Grice’s maxim of quality expects speakers to say something which is speakers believe to be true with adequate evidence. It is mean that in conversing they have to make their conversational contribution which does not consist of lie (Cutting, 2002). But Mr. Pool’s utterance “Oh look girls, you’ve-you’ve bored your frog to death”, express something that completely different from the fact and completely different from what he actually means. He actually means to remind Sabrina and Jenny to start their labor task or they going to run out of the time. According to Grice’s maxim of quality Mr. Pool should give a contribution such “Girl you should start your task or you will run out of the time”, instead of saying “Oh looks girls, you’ve-you’ve bored your frog to death”.

By violate maxim of quality it is obvious that Mr. Pool try to ridicul Sabrina and Jenny who did not doing anything with their dead frog and it was impossible a frog died because of feeling boring and these make this conversation become a joke.

1.2. Lying, excuse and pretending

The conversation between Zelda and Hilda happens in Spellman kitchen. They were getting ready to attend a parent’s night at Sabrina’s school. But Hilda really does not want to attend it and try to make some excuse that permitted her to stay at home. She pretended have a fever and stomach.

From the conversation above it can be seen Hilda’s utterances “Zelda feel my head, I think I have a fever. I can’t go to school. But I hate school. Oh my stomach hurt.” assumed has violate maxim of quality by being lying and pretending. Properly Grice’s maxim of quality expected a speaker to say something which speakers believe to be true with adequate evidence. It means that, in conversing someone has to make their conversational contribution does not consist
of a lie. But in this conversation Hilda has fail to comply it. Hilda makes an excuse to make her keep staying at home instead of going to school. She actually does not want to attend parent’s night, she is lazy to go to school, it can be seen from her utterances “but I hate school”. From all of her utterances portray that Hilda behave like a kid, she makes some excuses to make her keep staying at home instead of going to school. She violate maxim of quality with the purpose trying to emphasize an opinion and make her look innocent so that her sister will no longer force her to go to school. In this conversation Hilda violate maxim of quality by lying and pretending. She makes some excuses that permitted her to stay at home instead of going to school.

2. Violation maxim of quantity

According to Cutting (2002) the speaker violate the maxim of quantity if she/he are being economical with the truth. They do not give the hearer enough information to know what is being talked about, because they do not want the hearer to know the full picture. The quantity maxim also violated when people give too much unnecessary information, less informative response, intentionally.

2.1. Too much unnecessary information

Sabrina : Who are you?
Harvey : Who? Who is but the form following the function of what and what I am is a man in a mask.
Sabrina : oh...I can see that.

There are two participants involve in this conversation above, they are Sarina and Harvey. This conversation happen in Harvey’s house when they have a halloween party. Harvey wearing a custom with a mask, so Sabrina can not recognize him. After clashing, Harvey come close to Sabrina, suddenly Sabrina question him.

From the conversation above it can be seen that Harvey intentionally violate maxim of quantity. According to Cutting (2002) maxim of quantity also violated when people give too much unnecessary information. In the conversation above Harvey give more information than situation requires by saying “who? Who is the form following the function of what and what I am is a man in a mask” He makes the answer more informative and longwinded. Properly to Grice’s maxim of quantity Harvey just need to say I am a man in a mask.

2.2. Being uninformative

Mr. Pool : (Cont.) Thank you for joining us Miss Spellman. I was just about to tell the class what mitosis is, do you know?
Sabrina : It’s a...science thing
Mr. Pool : listen closely; you just might learn something...

This conversation occurs in Sabrina’s biology class where Sabrina slips in late after
being on the phone and tries to sneak to her desk without being seen but even with his back to the class Mr. Pool has that sixth sense that all teacher seem to possess. As a punishment of being late Mr. Pool asks Sabrina a question about the subject that he will explain to his class. Because it was a new subject it is obvious that Sabrina has no clue about what mitosis is and does not give the right information.

Sabrina’s utterance “It’s a....science thing” assumed has violate maxim of quantity by giving too little information about what mitosis is. As stated by Grice (1975) when speaker does not relate their contribution to the quantity of information to be provide she/he is said to violate maxim of quantity. Besides, in violating this maxim the speaker also being economical with the truth (Cutting, 2002).

In this case, Sabrina deliberately answer Mr. Pool question by being uninformative because she actually do not know what mitosis is. Her answer “it’s a science thing” that obvious make this conversation a joke, because everyone knows biology is part of science.

3. Violation maxim of relevance

Maxim of relevance violated when the speaker makes some irrelevant comment in order to refuse to answer some embarrassing question.

Icebreaker, sometimes people will say something that is irrelevant to the current context to avoid silent and awkward moment being produced between or among interlocutors. Changing the topic of the conversation in order to divert attention from the current situation or to show they are not interested in previous topics.

3.1. irrelevant statement

Sabrina : Do you really think you’ll find something here?
Jenny : worth a shot. One thing is true of all government the most reliable record are the tax record.

There are two participan engaged in this conversation, there are Jenny and Sabrina. The conversation takes place in the tax office where Sabrina and Jenny try to get information about tax report for their economic task. They believe that the tax office is the right place to get information.

After arriving in the tax office Sabrina feel dubious wheter what they have done will be useless. Sabrina asks Jenny to make sure herself over jenny’s plan to find something about the reliable information record of the government in the tax office. Sabrina hopes that she can get a certain answer but unfortunately, Jenny just gives an uncertain answer toward her question.
In this conversation Jenny violate maxim of relevance by saying something which has no connection with the topic which is required. Sabrina dubious over Jenny’s plan to find the reliable information record of the government in the tax office, that is why she asks Jenny “Do you really think you’ll find something here?”

Sabrina hope Jenny can make a certain answer over her question so that she can make sure herself whether they are doing are not useless. Nevertheless, Jenny gives an irrelevant answer over Sabrina question by saying “worth a shot. One thing is true of all government the most reliable record are the tax record”. This answer indicated violate maxim of relevance to make her answer relevant with Sabrina’s question, she properly give the answer by saying “yes I do”.

4. Violation maxim of manner

This maxim stated the speaker should be perspicuous, being clear, orderly, briefly and avoids ambiguity when conversing (Grice, 1975). The speaker fails to observe maxim of manner she/he says something extremely long winded and ignoring the issue, topic, occasion, misusing or abusing the grammar of language. Sometimes people do not talk in orderly way because they are eager to explain something or accuse someone of what he did before.

4.1. Do not talk in orderly

Sabrina : Hi, you found it.
Harvey : yeah, you should have just said it’s the house with the flying duck on the mailbox.
Sabrina : you really notice mailboxes don’t you.
Harvey : yeah, so how’s the baby sitting
Sabrina : excellent, the baby’s sleep, so it’s just two of us. Not that I planned it that way it’s just, you know the baby was really tired so. Hey look, they’ve got a TV

This conversation occurs in Carol and Jerry’s living room where Sabrina has to baby sit their son Rudy while they go out to dinner. Sabrina invites Harvey to come over so they could study together while the baby sleeps. Sabrina felt a little nervous because she likes Harvey and she felt it’s just like their first date.

From the conversation above it can be seen Sabrina’s utterance.” Hey look, they’ve got a TV” assumed has violate maxim of manner because she do not talk in orderly. Relate to our theory, Grice’s maxim of manner stated the speaker should be perspicuous, being clear, orderly, briefly and avoids ambiguity when conversing (Grice, 1975). But in this case sabrina obvious fails to observe maxim of manner because she says something extremely long winded and ignoring the issue, topic, occasion, misusing or abusing the grammar of language. She do not talk in orderly way because she eager to
explain something, and she felt a little nervous because she likes Harvey and she felt it’s just like their first date.

4.2. Without brief utterance

Hilda : Sabrina...
Sabrina : yes...
Hilda : “for the God’s shake, can’t you play something the dog doesn’t know?”

This conversation occurs in Spellman living room, Sabrina was practicing the violin while his aunt Helda trying to read. The family dog was at there too and on hearing the screeching sounds began to howl. Aunt hilda listened to the dog and the violin for as long as she could. Then she jumped up, slammed his newspaper on the floor and yelled.

From the conversation above, Hilda’s utterance “for the God’s shake, can’t you play something the dog doesn’t know” has assumed violated maxim of manner. She has created an obscurity with her sentence and trying to say an implicit meaning behind her utterance. In her utterance she is liable to mislead and in other side generates and implication that she consider Sabrina does not have a skill playing the violin and she wants Sabrina to stop playing it or playing another thing which is not produces the bad sounds. Grice (1975) stated that in maxim of manner the speaker should be perspicuous, being clear, orderly, briefly and avoids ambiguity when conversing.

Hilda saying so because she want deliver her message indirectly without hurting her niece feeling and hopes her niece unrstands what she actually implied. Sabrina plays the violin very badly, so that it produces the screeching sounds and disturbs the dog which is sitting around there, automatically the dog will get angry and begin to howl then bite anything around there including hilda. Hilda break the maxim of manner with the purpose to make her utterance sound less offensive.

Conclusion

From the analysis before, it was found that there are many utterances as found in the American sitcom “Sabrina the teenage witch” that violate the cooperative principle. The violation, consist of violation maxim of quality by being lying, ironical, exaggerating. Violation maxim of quantity by being economical with the truth, give too much unnecessary information, less informative response intentionally. Violation maxim of relevance, violate when the speaker makes some irrelevant comment in order to refuse to answer some embarrassing question. And the last, violation maxim of manner violate by saying something extremely long winded and ignoring the issue, topic, occasion, misusing
or abusing the grammar of language. Sometimes people do not talk in orderly way because they are eager to explain something or accuse someone of what he did before. The violating of the cooperative principle in humor does not occur in consciously, but it can create in order to cause funniness.

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