THE FLOATS OF GRICE’S CONVERSATIONAL MAXIMS
IN “1001 JOKES” HUMOR BOOK
BY RICHARD WISEMAN

PUBLICATION MANUSCRIPT

Presented to
Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Thesis Program
in English Department of Post Graduate Programs of Muhammadiyah
University of Surakarta

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OF SURAKARTA

2014
APPROVAL

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This study focuses on analyzing the floats of Grice’s conversational maxims in “1001 Jokes” humor book. This study is aimed (1) to describe types of Grice’s conversational maxims are frequently floated in “1001 Jokes” humor book, (2) to describe the implicature found in “1001 Jokes” humor book, and (3) to describe the maxim floats lead to funny jokes in “1001 Jokes” humor book. The writer employs descriptive qualitative approach to reach and to conclude the research findings in this study. In collecting data the writer uses documentation method, and to analyze data the writer refers to Grice’s cooperative principle theory. Based on 30 data analyzed in this study obtained from “1001 Jokes” humor book, the writer finds that (1) 21 of the data or 70% float maxim of quality, 4 of data or 13.33% float maxim of manner, 3 of the data or 10% float maxim of quantity, 1 of the data or 3.33% floats maxim of relevance, and 1 of the data or 3.33% floats all maxims. Then, from the implicature the researcher finds that (2) scalar implicature is to show contrast meanings between an utterance to other one, generalized conversational implicature is to explain the utterances used in the “1001 Jokes” humor book that do not need a special context to have humorous meaning, particularized conversational implicature is to demonstrate the utterances needing a specific context to have humorous meanings, and scalar implicature is to describe the joke utterances that have degree of meaning. Afterwards, the researcher finds that (3) there are two aspects making the maxim floats lead to funny jokes in “1001 Jokes” humor book, i.e., relief, and incongruity of the word or the lexis. Besides that the writer also finds that the floats of all maxims make a strong surprising meaning of the joke utterances increasing the degree of funny.

Key words: floats, Grice conversational maxim, humor.
INTRODUCTION

In pragmatics there are many issues which are interesting to discuss, one of them is Grice’s conversational implicature. It is one of the pragmatic theories which is very influential enough in that field of study up to now. In his idea, “utterances can make meanings based on what is implicated referring to some assumptions to the particular utterance. What is implicated is formulated logically by what Grice (1975:45), calls implicatures or conversational implicatures.” Meaning is actually realized from the situation of some utterances while “Grice’s theory of implicature is concerned with the ways in which meaning can be communicated not only by what is said, but also by how it is said” (Levinson, 1983:97).

Then, Grice finds a way to understand the implicature which is called cooperative principles which are necessary for those who want to produce and analyze the conversations logically. According to him, “in a conversation, logically a speaker and a hearer should have cooperation by using four maxims, i.e., maxim of quality, quantity, relevance and manner in order that one can understand what other means” (Grice, 1975:45). If the utterances do not contain one of the maxims they will not be understood by the hearer. These maxims are named cooperative principles.

However in some cases the cooperative principles are sometimes floated for various reasons like for joking or achieving politeness. Floats of the maxims happen in which the speaker deliberately does not explicitly show what he or she means so the four maxims cannot operate normally. For example: excuse me, do you know what time is it? Yes. This conversational text is included in the float of
the quantity maxim because the information that should be given clearly through
the answer is floated by saying “yes”. The normal answer is *it is 10 o’clock or 12 o’clock*, and etc. (as cited in Attardo, 1990:355).

Principally many researchers conducted research on floats or violations of
Grice’s conversational maxims such as research conducted by Palupi (2006:1),
stating that there are eight types of humor found in the Situation Comedy Friends
Episode of *‘the One with that Could Have Been’*. They are Banter, Blunder,
Chain, FreudianSlip, Irony, Mistaken identity, Relapse and Repartee. These types
of humor refer to Audrieth’s humor theory (1998). Then, Rofiq (2012:1), on his
pragmatic study states that there are only scalar implicatures found in the “English
Jokes about Marriage in Internet” and some purposes of making jokes like
informing, alluding, suggesting, and etc. Furthermore, Listiani (2005:1), on the
violations of Grice’s maxims in *Small Villa* film finds that the highest percentage
of the violation of Grice’s maxims is Quality maxim, i.e. 35.7 percentages, and
the lowest percentage of the violation of Grice’s maxims on Quantity maxim,
that is different from Palupi’s study that uses Audrieth’s humor theory. Besides that “1001 Jokes” humor book contains many clean English jokes
based on the Richard Wiseman’s research that has its own characters that certainly produces different research findings from the previous research findings.

Based on the previous explanations, the researcher needs to conduct research further in regard with the floats of Grice’s conversational maxims found in “1001 Jokes” humor book. It is importance not only because humor books are have not been viewed so far from Grice’s cooperative principles but also because humor is very close enough with human life that every human needs very much to do it in order that their life will be happy and balance.

Besides that, in this study the writer focuses on finding out types of Grice’s conversational maxims that frequently floated in “1001 Jokes” humor book, the implicature found in “1001 Jokes” humor book, and the maxim floats leading to funny jokes in “1001 Jokes” humor book.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Floats of Grice’s Conversational Maxims

The flouting of the maxims is difference from the violation of the maxims because “it occurs when the hearer really does not understand with the violated utterances, while the flouting of maxims occurs when the speaker intentionally stops to use the maxims to flatter the hearer to deduce the meaning named implicature” (Khosravizadeh&Sadehvandi, 2011:123).

Dealing with the floating of Grice’s maxims, Nailufah (2008) conducted research entitled “Floating Maxims on Grice’s Maxims in the Drama of the Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller”. This study focuses on how the maxim of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner floated in the drama of “the Death
of a Salesman” and this study used qualitative method. The research findings of this study show that all the four floated can be found in the drama. The utterance floats the maxim of quantity when it is too long, the maxim of quality when it is absurd, the maxim of relevance when it is unrelated topic, and the maxim of manner when it disorders the utterance.

2. Implicature

According to Grice (as cited in Cummings, 2005:9), “implicature is an intended utterance of X to produce some effect in an audience by means of the recognition of this intention.” It is divided into three types, i.e., scalar implicature “concerning the conventional uses of words like ‘all’ or ‘some’ in conversation” (Grice, 1975:25), conventional implicature dealing with “independent of the cooperative principle and its four maxims. A statement always carries its conventional implicature” (Ibid.), and conversational implicature which is divided into particularized conversational implicature regarding “the dependent of the context” (as cited in Martinovski, 1:2013) and generalized conversational implicature dealing with “the independent of the context” (Ibid.).

Regarding implicature, Alvaro’s conducted research (2011) entitled “The Role of Conversational Maxims, Implicature and Presupposition in the Creation of Humor: An Analysis of Woody Allen’s Anything Else”. In this quantitative study, the researcher analyzes on how verbal humor in communication displays the types, characteristics and the usages of the implicature, the conversational maxims and the presupposition used in Woody
Allen’s Anything Else. The research findings show that the use of implicature and non-observation of the conversational maxims and its combination with rhetorical figures is more abundant than the use of presupposition.

3. Conventional Humor Theory

This theory, proposed by Veatch (1998), principally is divided into three groups. The first is superiority theory. According to Barnes (as cited in Muder&Nijholt, 2002:3), superiority theory is that “we laugh about the misfortunes of others; it reflects our own superiority.” In other word, the superiority theory here is dealing with the winner and the loser. The second is relief theory. Relief theory, according to Freud (Ibid., :4), “is that we laugh spontaneously to release tension and psychic energy.” This is made by people who consider that laughter is helpful for their health. Then, the last is incongruity theory. This theory as defined clearly by Schopenhauer (Ibid., :4), is that “the cause of laughter in every case is simply the sudden perception of the incongruity between a concept and the real objects which have been thought through it in some relation.” Thus, the strangeness or the incongruity of the utterance is the main point why the utterance can make the other laugh according to this theory. However, not all incongruities make the utterance funny. This happens because of the condition around the speaker.

In relation to humor theory, Palupi conducted research (2006) from entitled “An Analysis of Humor Types and Grice’s Maxim in the Situation Comedy Friends Episode of ‘the One with that Could Have Been’ (a pragmatic approach)”. In this study the researcher analyzes the types of humor referring
to Audrieth’s humor theory (1998), which appear in this episode and the researcher also defines whether those humors obey or disobey the Grice’s maxims as the standard conversational norms. In this study, the researcher uses qualitative method. The research findings show there are eight types of humor which can be found in this episode. They are Banter, Blunder, Chain, FreudianSlip, Irony, Mistaken Identity, Relapse and Repartee. Concerning with the maxims, it is found that the humors, which are used in every utterances, tend to disobey at least one of the maxims. The researcher also found that there are three non-observances of the maxims, which are done by the characters in delivering the humor. They are flouting, violating, and infringing the maxims.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

Research design for this research is descriptive qualitative study.

Then, the object of the study of this research is types of Grice’s conversational maxims that frequently floated, the implicature, and the maxim floats leading to funny jokes in “1001 Jokes” humor book.

In this research, the researcher uses a non-interactive research instrument by means of documentation achievements or called documentation method to collect the data because the object of the study of this research contains in “1001 Jokes” humor book.

Besides that, Data analysis used here is contrastive analysis by the following steps:
1. Presenting the data

Data are very important thing to know firstly in conducting research because they are as the core of what are being studied. Without them research cannot be conducted. So, that is why the researcher presents the data firstly in the process of data analysis.

2. Checking

To classify the words in “1001 Jokes” humor book into the floats of the maxims or not, the researcher previously finds out the implicature referring to Grice’s implicature theory and the illocution of the speaker by speech act theory and speech context by means of Nunan’s context theory. The researcher detects floats of Grice’s cooperative principle of the events happening in “1001 Jokes” humor book by the formula of cooperative principle. Finally, the researcher determines process of humor by using conventional humor theory proposed by Veatch.

3. Making Percentage Scores

Finally, to know the mostly use of the types of implicatures, the types of the maxim floats and the maxim floats leading to funny jokes, the researcher uses the formula of percentage scores.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

1. Data Analysis

The data analyzed in this section refer to 30 data obtained from the “1001 Jokes” humor book by Richard Wiseman. Some of them are as follows:
a. Datum 02

Man walking down the street meets a friend who has a lobster tucked under his arm. "Are you taking that lobster home to dinner?" he asks. "No," says friend, "he's had his dinner and now I'm taking him to the pictures."

a. Implicature

The utterance above is classified as the linguistic context indicated by the word “to” as a direction showing that the speaker is going to dinner with the lobster.

The conventional implicature happens in the utterance above indicated by the word “to” of preposition functioning as a direction. Commonly a speaker uses “for” in that utterance indicating a purpose that the lobster will be eaten by the friend. However, in that utterance the speaker uses “to” of preposition functioning as a direction. It infers that the friend wants to make a date with the lobster in the movie.

Then, the underlined statement above contains declarative form of the illocutionary speech. The utterance above is stated by the friend to respond the man’s question. By saying “No”, the friend refuses the proposition made by the man thinking that the lobster will be taken to dinner.

b. Grice’s maxim float

The utterance above floats maxim of quality because the friend’s answer to the man’s question, to the pictures, uses overstatement strategy. So, the meaning used in that utterance contains abnormal
meaning according to the most of people’s view that the friend wants to make a date with the lobster in the movie.

c. Funny aspect

The float of maxim of quality above indicated by “to the picture” makes the utterance funny because the speaker here creates the incongruity of the utterance. The speaker here uses the exploitation of lexis to make it strange for the readers. Principally the word “to” lexically is “in the direction of”, but in this case the meaning of the word refers to making a date. Thus, the using of this float maxim of quality here is to make conflict between what is hoped by the readers and what happens in the joke influencing the strange effect that makes them laugh by this effect.

b. Datum 20

Two elderly gentlemen were talking. One says, "Boy, this new hearing aid I got works great! I can hear everything now." The other one says, "That's wonderful! What kind is it?" "It's a quarter past two."

a. Implicature

The speakers of the utterance above are two elderly gentlemen as friends, and the setting of this event here happens when they are meeting in a particular place. Then, the purpose of the underlined utterance is that the speaker wants to inform that he is not deaf again. The communicative event of the utterance is joke. Then, the topic of the utterance is about recovering from deaf, while the background knowledge of the utterance above is that the speaker of the underlined
utterance is still deaf indicated by saying the last utterance. So, the utterance above is categorized as the experimental context.

The utterance “I can hear everything now” is categorized as the generalized conversational implicature. It implies that the speaker previously is deaf. However, he is still deaf proved by the question “What kind is it?” but the speaker responds by a wrong answer “It's a quarter past two”.

Then, the underlined utterance is the representative form of the illocutionary speech acts. It is uttered to inform that the speaker is deaf previously.

b. Grice’s maxim float

The utterance “I can hear everything now” floats maxim of quantity because the utterance is more informative than is required.

c. Funny aspect

The core of the funny utterance is placed in the words “I can hear everything now”. The incongruity of the words happens in that utterance because those words lexically refer to a meaning that the speaker previously is deaf. However, by stating that utterance he feels that he is not deaf again. In the fact, the speaker is still deaf proved by the question “What kind is it?” He thinks that his friend asks about the time. So, he responds by a wrong answer “It's a quarter past two”. The using of float of maxim of quantity here is to make conflict between what is thought by the readers thinking that the speaker can
hear everything and what happens in the joke saying that he is still deaf.

2. Discussion

At least there are three topics of discussion here dealing with the problems of study namely the implicatures, the floats of maxims and the processes of humor in the “1001 Jokes” humor book. Before discussing each problem, the researcher presents some results of data analysis by means of some charts as follows:

Chart 1
The Percentage Scores of Implicatures in “1001 Jokes” Humor Book

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Implicature</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conventional Implicature</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalized Conversational</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Particularized Conversational</td>
<td>79.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scalar Implicature</td>
<td>3.33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the chart above, it can be known that the particularized conversational implicature is mostly used in the “1001 Jokes” humor book reaching 79.92% applied in that book. Subsequently, the generalized conversational implicature gets the second rank by the percentages 13.32%. After that the third rank is fallen in the conventional and scalar implicature both obtaining 3.33%. All these percentages mean that the most jokes used in the “1001 Jokes” humor book are carried to a context with particular
utterance in a particular condition. It happens because it is difficult for the jokers to create something funny in the written works, such as “1001 Jokes”, without using a specific context. Because basically understanding written works is harder than understanding spoken expression in terms of humor.

Based on the explanation above, the results of this study are difference from Rofiq’s study finding that only scalar implicature is used in the jokes, while this research finds that all types of implicatures are used in the jokes.

Chart 2
The Percentage Scores of the Floats of Maxims in “1001 Jokes” Humor Book

The chart above presenting that the most float of Grice’s conversational maxims is fallen in the floats of maxim of quality reaching 70%. Then, these are followed by floats of maxim of manner in the second rank by the percentages 13.33%. The third is falling in the floats of maxim of quantity reaching 10%. Furthermore, the fourth is going to the floats of maxim of relevance and also the floats of all maxims or multiple floats of
maxims achieving 3.33%. This multiple floats of maxims produce a strong surprising effect of the word meaning to create a good joke. In this third ranks, the floats of maxim of quality by using the tautology strategy is a core of the problem making other three maxims floated. If the utterance is floated by the tautology other maxims will be difficult to avoid floating meaning. All these percentages mean that to create a good joke, such as contained in the “1001 Jokes” humor book, the writer needs to consider the float the maxim of quality because the total percentages of the floats of this maxim reach 70%.

Thus, the results of this study are difference from the Listiani’s study. According to Listiani, the highest percentage of the violation of Grice’s maxims is Quality maxim, i.e. 35.7 percentages, and the lowest percentage of the violation of Grice’s maxims is on Quantity maxim, i.e., 14.3 percentages. However, the writer finds that the highest percentage of float of Grice’s conversational maxims is fallen in the floats of maxim of quality reaching 70%, while the lowest one is coming to the floats of maxim of relevance and the multiple floats of maxim achieving 3.33%.
The aspects making floats of Grice’s maxims funny in “1001 Jokes” humor book is clearly described on the chart above that the first rank of the most way used in the process of humor is coming to the incongruity of the word by the percentages 96.67%. Then, the second one is fallen in the relief reaching 3.33%. Furthermore, the third rank is going to the exploitation of superiority reaching 0%. Here, the researcher just needs to explain why the incongruity of the word is mostly used in the data reaching the highest percentage 96.67%. It happens because the strangeness or incongruity is the easiest way used to create a humor as found in “1001 Jokes” humor book. If the word is strange the reader will easily laugh by particular effects making the utterance funny like a surprising effect, ambiguous effect and the conflict effect between what is hoped by the readers and what happens in the joke. The second rank is coming to the exploitation of relief. It means that the jokers alternatively tend to use the exploitation of relief in the humorous texts as found in “1001 Jokes” humor book although the number of this aspect is small. It happens because taboo languages or negative
statements in a specific context, such as in the humor, is easier to create than the superiority that needs a social context that is easier to create in forms of spoken jokes than in the written one. Of course, it is hard for the jokers to do in terms of humorous texts than the incongruity of the word and the relief.

The results of this study are difference from the Palupi’s research. According to Palupi, the aspects making the jokes funny are Banter, Blunder, Chain, Freudian Slip, Irony, Mistaken Identity, Relapse and Repartee. These types of humor refer to Audrieth’s humor theory (1998). However, this research finds the aspects of the floats of Grice’s maxims funny are the relief, and the incongruity of the word because the writer uses the conventional humor theory proposed by Veatch (1998).

CONCLUSION

Based on the previous data analysis and discussion, the researcher can conclude that related to the implicatures there are some types of implicatures occur in the “1001 Jokes” humor book, i.e., conventional implicature, generalized conversational implicature, particularized conversational implicature and scalar implicature. In the book, the using of conventional implicature is to explain the contrast meanings between an utterance to other one, while The generalized conversational implicature is to show the utterances used in the “1001 Jokes” humor book that do not need a special context to have humorous meaning. Then, the using of particularized conversational implicature here is to demonstrate the utterances that need a specific context to have humorous meanings. Finally, the
using of scalar implicature in this research is to describe the utterances that have degree of meaning.

Related to the floats of Grice’s conversational maxims, in the “1001 Jokes” humor book, there are some maxims floated, i.e., maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relevance and maxim of manner. Besides that the researcher also found floats of all maxims or multiple floats of maxims. In the book, the using of floats of maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relevance and maxim of manner basically is to make a surprising effect in order that the readers laugh. However, the degree of the surprising effect is highest when all maxims are floated.

Related to the processes of humor, there are some aspects leading the utterances funny in the “1001 Jokes” humor book, i.e., the relief aspect, and the incongruity of the word or the lexis aspect. In the book, the using of relief aspect is to make one of the speakers release his tension. It is made to make him healthy. Furthermore, the using of the incongruity of the lexis is to make the readers feel strange with the utterance and then they laugh.

Finally, the writer suggests to some people. The first is to the English practitioners, by means of the results of this study they should consider that the multiple floats of maxims can make the degree of the humorous text higher than they just float one of the Grice’s conversational maxims. Then, the second is to the future researchers that the result of this study is still left many problems needed to research by using other theories of pragmatic studies such as non-observant maxim. Finally, it can be the trustworthy reference for the linguists.
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