

**HUMOR STYLE AND THE APPLICATION OF FLOUTING
MAXIM USED BY JAMES CORDEN IN *HONEST HEADLINE*
SEGMENT OF *THE LATE LATE SHOW***

THESIS



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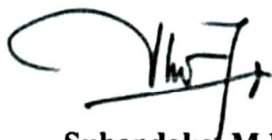
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humor can make the speaker be “clown” just to captivate someone. Based on the function, the speaker can talk too much, be irrelevant or tell lies. This kind of situation means that the speaker becomes uncooperative. It is because the speaker does not follow the guide to be cooperative. The way how to make people be cooperative is explained in linguistics, especially in the pragmatic field. It is called the cooperative principle.

H. Paul Grice was the first linguist who introduced the cooperative principle in 1975. He states that in order to get a successful communication, the speaker must be relevant, clear or not ambiguous, informative as it is required, and being truthful. When the speaker becomes relevant, it means that the speakers follow the maxim of relevance. When the speaker speaks clearly or not ambiguously, it means that the speaker follows the maxim of manner. When the speaker becomes informative as is required, it means that the speaker follows the maxim of quantity. When the speaker tells something truthfully, the speaker follows the maxim of quality.

In delivering humor, the speaker does not always obey the maxims. Sometimes, the speaker breaks the maxims. Maxim contains the particular rules that should be followed by the speaker to make a successful conversation. In previous studies, flouting maxim is found to be the most frequently used in creating humor. A situation called as flouting maxim is when the speaker intentionally disobeys maxim principle in the hope that the interlocutor will get the implied meaning that was hidden behind the speaker utterances (Levinson, 1983). It means that the speaker adds another meaning besides the real meaning.

Several studies have been conducted in an attempt to analyze flouting maxim in various fields, such as movies (Aziz, Mustafa & A'la, 2019; Ibrahim, Arifin & Setyowati, 2018; Kurniati & Hanidar, 2018), novels (Noertjahjo, Arifin, & Ariani, 2017), situational comedies (Anggraini, 2014; Amianna & Putranti, 2017; Fawaida, 2019), comics (Andresen, 2013), television series (Dornerus, 2005), talk shows (Zebua, Rukmini & Saleh, 2017) and online media (Soedjarmo, Pangestu & Wartinah, 2016). From various previous studies above, the researcher found that flouting maxim is related to humor. Amianna and Putranti (2017) stated that the humorous situation in the situational comedy they analyzed is created by violating and flouting maxim done by the characters. Fawaida (2018) also pointed out that the verbal humor she analyzed tend to disobey the maxims to create humor. By flouting maxim, the speaker can create humor.

In communication, sometimes, people used humor to create exciting conversations. Humor could also lead the speaker to flout maxim. Numerous researches have been conducted to shed light that humorous situations can be created by flouting maxim (Amianna & Putranti, 2017; Dornerus, 2005; Fawaida, 2018; Puspasari & Ariyanti, 2019; Qadir & Juma', 2018; Soedjarmo et al., 2016). Fawaida (2018) noticed that each humorous statement that is uttered by the character she analyzed deviates one of or all the maxim of Grice. She pointed out that those verbal humor disobey those maxims to create the humor. Puspasari and Ariyanti (2019) also emphasized that humor could be made by flouting maxim. She stated that the flouts of the maxim that have been done by both Indonesian

and American stand-up comedians she analyzed are proven to contribute to joke technique to arouse laughter.

Long before Fawaida (2018) and Puspasari and Ariyanti (2019), Dornerus (2005) has analyzed violating and flouting maxim in the comedy-drama series. Dornerus noted that for scriptwriters, breaking maxim is necessary for the character to produce and develop a humorous and dramatic situation in verbal interaction. Similar to Dornerus (2005), Qadir and Juma' (2018) stated that it is necessary for the playwright to have characters break the cooperative principle to create and develop a humorous situation. Soedjarmo et al. (2016) added the use of reference on how to make jokes work. Soedjarmo et al. (2016) stated that the speaker and the hearer need to have the same referent to refer to when talking about the same thing.

Besides, Amianna and Putranti (2017) found three ways of how a humorous situational comedy is created. The first way is when some of the violating and flouting maxims contain incongruent ideas between what people expect and what actually occurs in the conversation. The second way is when some of the violating and flouting maxims contain the act of being hostile to someone, especially by mocking or humiliating other's inferiority. The third way is when some of the violating and flouting maxims contain particular released emotions of the characters that elicit together.

Several previous studies mentioned above show that flouting maxim is commonly uttered in breaking maxim. However, none of them analyzed flouting

psychological well-being (Martin, 2003). “I am standing in line in a supermarket and when my friends in the same supermarket, they always greet me with ‘hey, what are you doing here?’. I am like ‘Uhm, sorry, do you think I am here to hunt elephant?’.” is one example of self-enhancing humor. That is because the speaker talks about the humorous things in life. The speaker may feel uncomfortable when his/her friends ask the same questions that, of course, has the obvious answer. However, the speaker throws it into a joke that shows the speaker has a positive emotion by keeping being nice.

2.1.3 Aggressive Humor

According to Martin (2003), someone who is in aggressive humor tends to throw sarcasm, teasing, ridicule, derision, put-down, or disparagement humor. This humor can also be an implied threat of ridicule to others if they consider it. Someone tends to say it when they have anger, hostility or aggression (Martin, 2003). Other functions of this humor, according to Michzo and Welter (2006), are to vent feelings of hostility, send a “corrective” message to those who are violating group norms, and enhance them to feel being superior over others.

“Your head is so glowing. I think I do not need any lamp if I’m with you.” is one of the examples of aggressive humor because the speaker teases the interlocutor.

2.1.4 Self-Defeating Humor

According to Martin (2003), self-defeating humor is humor which the speakers disparage themselves to captivate someone or have their approval on something. Martin (2003) states that they even can be a “butt” for someone to

cooperative principle, Qadir (2018) stated that breaking the maxim is one of the mechanisms which arise humorous sense in a comic situation. Raskin and Attardo (cited in Anggraini, 2014, p. 14) state that humor, on the one hand, involves some degrees of violation of the Cooperative Principle, but, on the other hand, humor is also a cooperative act because it can convey information.

2.4 Cooperative Principle

Communication needs the effectiveness and efficiency of delivering the contribution of information that is easier for the speaker and the addressee. In 1975, the cooperative principle was introduced by a philosopher of language, Grice and Yule (2006) state that “cooperative principle is about making the speaker contribution such as is required, at the stage in which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you engage.” Based on the cooperative principle, the speaker and the addressee should be cooperative. In cooperative principle, there are sub principles that the speaker has to obey to respond to each other and make an exchange in a conversation. If the speaker and hearer follow the cooperative principle, they will get a successful conversation.

2.4.1 Maxim

Maxim is part of the cooperative principle. Maxim is a general principle underlying the efficient cooperative use of language, which jointly expresses a general cooperative principle. Maxim is a basic guideline that should be obeyed by the speaker and the hearer to make a successful conversation. According to Grice (1975), the maxim is classified into four types. The four types of the maxim

2.4.2 Flouting Maxim

A situation called as flouting maxim is when the speaker intentionally disobeys maxim principle because the speaker assumes that the hearer is able to infer the implied meaning of what is said (Amianna & Putranti, 2017). It means that the speaker adds another meaning besides the literal meaning. The conversational implicature added when flouting is not intended to deceive the recipient of the conversation. The purpose is to make the recipient look for other meanings (Thomas, 1995). Flouting a maxim also signals to the hearer that the speaker is not following the cooperative principle (Cruse, 2000).

2.4.2.1 Flouting Maxim of Quantity

The speaker is categorized as flouting the maxim of quantity when the speaker intentionally gives information more or less than is needed. One of the examples of flouting maxim quantity is when Majid and Ali are talking on the phone. Ali says, “where are you, Majid?” and Majid answers, “I’m in my clothes”. Majid’s answer is indicated as the maxim of quantity. That is because Majid’s answer is insufficient for Ali because it does not answer Ali’s question even though Majid tells the truth that everyone is always in their clothes and because Ali seems to notice that Majid tries to joke.

2.4.2.2 Flouting Maxim of Quality

The speaker is categorized as a flouting maxim of quality when the speaker intentionally says something untrue or something that has inadequate evidence. For example, “I married a rat” (Cruse, 2000). In this case, the hearer of

3.2.2 Data Source

In this research, the data was taken from utterances by James Corden in *The Late Late Show*. *The Late Late Show* is an American late-night talk show that is hosted by James Corden on CBS. The subject of this study is James Corden. James Corden is an actor, comedian, writer, and host. He has hosted *The Late Late Show with James Corden* since 2015. The data was taken from Youtube uploaded by *The Late Late Show with James Corden*. The researcher chose the honest headline segment in *The Late Late Show*. The researcher took 15 videos. Each video duration is about two (2) up to five (5) minutes. The total duration of the videos is 46 minutes, 27 seconds.

3.2.3 Instruments

The instrument of this research was the researcher herself. It is because the researcher was the one who collected the data, analyzed the data, described the data, and drew the conclusion. The researcher needed a laptop to watch and transcript utterances of James Corden in *The Late Late Show*. The researcher also needed data connection to access and download videos of *The Late Late Show* on Youtube.

3.2.4 Data Collection Techniques

The researcher did the following steps to collect the data. First, the researcher searched *The Late Late Show* with James Corden on Youtube. Second, the researcher downloaded videos gotten from *The Late Late Show* with James Corden in 2018-2019. Third, the researcher watched the videos several times.

Fourth, the researcher transcribed what James Corden said in the honest headline segment. Fifth, the researcher underlined the sentences that are included as humor.

3.3 Data Analysis

In the data analysis, the researcher applied the following steps. The first step was identifying data. The researcher identified humor style according to Martin's (2003) humor styles: affiliative humor, self-enhancing humor, aggressive humor, and self-defeating humor. The researcher underlined words, phrases, clauses or sentences, which are categorized as humor. The researcher also used codes to mark the humor style. They are A.F. for affiliative humor, S.E. for self-enhancing humor and A.G. for Aggressive humor, and S.D. for self-defeating humor. The speaker is indicated to use affiliative humor if the speaker tells about funny thing that everyone may find it funny or the speaker makes joke about everyday life or animal. The speaker is indicated to use self-enhancing humor if the speaker makes joke using the negativity of the speaker but the speaker looks at the negativity from a different, more humorous angle. The speaker is indicated to use aggressive humor if the speaker throws sarcasm, teasing, ridicule, derision, put-down or disparagement humor to someone. The speaker is indicated to use self-defeating humor if the speaker disparages him/herself to get acceptance of someone.

After identifying humor style, the researcher then identified flouting maxim in the humor. In identifying the data, the researcher used codes to mark the flouting maxim. They are FQn for flouting the maxim of quantity, FQl for flouting the maxim of quality, F.R. for flouting the maxim of relation, F.M. for

flouting the maxim of manner and FMO for flouting more than one maxim. The speaker is indicated as flouting maxim of quantity if the speaker intentionally said something more or less informative than is required. The speaker is indicated as flouting maxim of quality if the speaker intentionally tells lie or something that the speaker has lack of evidence. The speaker is indicated as flouting maxim of relation if the speaker intentionally says something unrelated to the topic. The speaker is indicated as flouting maxim of manner if the speaker intentionally uses obscure language, the speaker intentionally does not say briefly or orderly or the speaker intentionally uses ambiguity. The following excerpt is an example of identifying the data.

James: Here is one from ABC News. That reads, 'man uses a pair of tongs to rob a Whataburger.' That is the headline, but the honest headline is 'whataburglar'. (A.F., FM)

The second step in analyzing the data was classifying. In classifying the data, the researcher classified the data into some categories that are based on the humor style and types of the maxim that are flouted. The researcher also attached minutes on the video and date of the video publication.

The third step in analyzing the data was drawing a conclusion. The researcher drew a conclusion from the result of the data. The conclusion is the simplified answers to the result.

Data 40 (03/19/19)

- 00:00:20 Here is one from CBS.
 00:00:29 The headline says ‘there is now only one Blockbuster left on the planet’.
 00:00:34 That was the headline.
 00:00:35 The honest headline should have read, ‘you haven’t won yet, Netflix’.

Blockbuster is an American-based provider of home movie and video game rental services through video rental shop, DVD-by-mail, streaming, video on demand, and cinema theater. Blockbuster was famous. In 2004, Blockbuster has 9,094 stores. Netflix is also an American media-services provider, but Netflix only offers online streaming. In the honest headline above, Corden said something ambiguous. He said that Netflix had not won yet. Corden implied that Blockbuster still existed, and Netflix had to beat Blockbuster to win or become the world’s video services provider.

Data 41 (03/19/19)

- 00:01:30 Here is one from CNN that said a man bought \$540 in cookies so these girl scouts can escape the cold.
 00:01:38 That was the headline.
 00:01:39 The honest headline should have read ‘sure, buddy, that’s what they all say’.

In winter, there is a program called girl scout cookie. In the program, the girl sells cookies. The program is for improving their skill in goal setting, decision making, money management, communication, and business ethics. In the honest headline above, Corden said something ambiguous ‘that’. Corden implied that the girls might use a business trick to attract the customer. They made the customer feel bad if they did not buy the cookies and it made the customer ended up buying it.

Data 42 (05/01/19)

- 00:00:23 Here is a headline from BBC news.
 00:00:25 It reads ‘French mayor issues ban on ‘excessive dog barking’’
 00:00:30 That was the headline.
 00:00:31 The honest headline should have read ‘bark at me like one of your French dogs’.

Bark at me like one of your French dogs was inspired by a famous line from Rose in *Titanic* “draw me like one of your French girl”. In the honest headline above, Corden said something ambiguous that is “bark at me like one of your French dog”. He implied that the dog should not bark excessively. It is identified as a flouting maxim of manner.

Data 43 (05/01/19)

- 00:00:35 Here is a headline from The Huffington Post.
 00:00:40 It reads “‘distracted driver’ turns out to have 250-pound pig on lap”.
 00:00:47 That was the headline, the honest headline should have read “man has massive hog”.

In the honest headline above, Corden said something ambiguous that is ‘hog’. Hog means two things. The first meaning is a pig that weighs more than 120 pounds. The second meaning is a large penis. It made the audiences laugh because the hog could mean two different things, but the hog Corden meant was the 250-pounds pig. He also said the only man to make it more ambiguous. It is identified as a flouting maxim of manner.

4.1.2.5 Flouting More than One Maxim

The speaker, sometimes, flouts more than one maxim. He flouted 2 until 3 maxims in a time. Flouting more than one maxim is found to be used 19 times by James Corden in the honest headline.

something several times that he lacks evidence to make humor. This is in line with Soedjarmo et al. (2016) that regarding the flouting maxim of quality, the researcher found out the way James Corden not telling the truth could create humor since the audiences did not expect the utterance was spoken.

The least flouting maxim Corden used is a flouting maxim of quantity and relation. He attempted to say something relevant and say something as informative as required. Agreeing with Soedjarmo et al. (2016), the researcher found that the humor James Corden delivered was made when James Corden's statement was not related to the definite object of the original headline.

Nevertheless, the audience could still understand the implicit meaning of James Corden's utterance. The implicit meaning includes presuppositions and implicature. Presuppositions depend on shared knowledge between the writer and the reader (Hassan, 2011). This shared knowledge was known by both James Corden and the audiences. Hassan (2011) stated that the concept of implicature is built on deliberately flouting one or more cooperative maxims. In the honest headline, James Corden implied meanings that were beyond what he said.

For the relation between humor and flouting maxim, the researcher points out that the humor James Corden delivered in the honest headline segment was created by flouting the maxim. In flouting the maxim of quantity, the researcher found that when James Corden said something more or less than is required, it made the *honest headlines* humorous. When James Corden told lies, for example telling that animal could also speak, said something obscure in attempt to flouting

Regarding Soedjarmo et al. (2016), the researcher found that the reference took an important role in the humor James Corden delivered. Both James Corden and the audiences have the same reference to refer to. It was the reason why the jokes worked.

In the honest headlines, the researcher found that James Corden flouted maxim of quantity, quality, manner, and relation. Corden also flouted more than one maxim several times. Flouting maxim of manner is mostly used. It is because he often said something obscure or ambiguous. The second most frequently used is flouting maxim of quality. Corden told lies and something he lacks evidence. Corden deliberately told lies that could make humor because the audiences did not expect Corden would say such a statement. Flouting maxim of quantity and relation are rarely used by James Corden in the honest headline. It means that he attempted to, as much as he could, say something related and say something as informative as required. Even though Corden flouted the maxim, the audiences could still understand the implicit meaning he wanted to deliver because the shared knowledge was had by both James Corden and the audiences.

In the Islamic perspective, joking is permissible, but there are things that are permitted in joking. First, telling a lie in joking is not permitted. It means that we are not permitted to flout the maxim of quality in joking, Second, mocking or ridiculing someone is also not permitted. It means that aggressive humor is not permitted for us, Muslims.

Because little to no research has specifically analyzed humor style and flouting more than one maxim, it is significant to consider the findings of this

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