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Humor in Conversation: Flouting Maxims in the 'Close the Door' Podcast

¹Syafina Zelianti*, ¹Agwin Degaf, ¹Fuad Baswarudin, ¹Guktomo

¹English Literature Department, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author:

Email: syafina.zelianti@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study analyzes an episode of the "Close the Door" podcast by Deddy Corbuzier, featuring comedian Komeng, with a focus on Grice's cooperative principle and Attardo's humor theory. The research aims to identify instances where conversational maxims—quantity, quality, relevance, and manner—are flouted to create humor. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the study examines transcribed segments of the podcast episode. The findings reveal that the maxim of relevance was the most frequently flouted, appearing in 44.4% of cases, followed by the maxim of quantity at 33.3%. The maxims of quality and manner were each flouted in 11.1% of instances. These floutings often served to introduce humor through unexpected or exaggerated responses, engaging the audience and enhancing the podcast's entertainment value. This analysis contributes to the understanding of how conversational norms are strategically flouted in comedic contexts to generate humor. Further research is suggested to explore these aspects across different cultural and media settings, potentially incorporating quantitative methods to broaden the scope of analysis. This study provides insights into the linguistic strategies employed in digital media to engage audiences, highlighting the role of humor in communication.

Keywords: Attardo's humor theory; Conversational implicatures; Humor production; Grice's cooperative principle theory; Podcast communication

INTRODUCTION

In the digital age, entertainment is everywhere, touching every part of our lives. In the past, people mainly relied on traditional mediums like television, radio, or live performances to meet their entertainment needs. Families would gather around the TV for their favorite shows, listen to music and news on the radio, or go out for live performances. These activities were tied to specific times and places, creating shared experiences for communities. However, the internet has dramatically changed the entertainment landscape, with podcasts emerging as a significant new medium.

Podcasts are downloadable audio shows that people can listen to at their convenience, whether they are commuting, exercising, or relaxing at home. This flexibility and on-demand nature have made podcasts a popular entertainment source for millions worldwide. The word "podcast" combines "iPod," the digital music player from Apple, and "broadcast," linking it to

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traditional radio broadcasting (Berita Satu, 2023). Since their inception in the early 2000s, podcasts have grown rapidly from a niche hobby for tech enthusiasts to a mainstream medium embraced by major media companies, celebrities, and experts in various fields.

The appeal of podcasts lies in their diverse range of topics, from true crime and comedy to educational content and in-depth interviews. This diversity allows listeners to find shows that match their specific interests, making podcasts a highly personalized form of entertainment. Many podcasts are available for free on platforms like Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and Google Podcasts, which further enhances their popularity. Beyond entertainment, podcasts have revolutionized information sharing by providing a voice to those who might not be heard in traditional media, fostering a sense of community among listeners. As a result, podcasts have become not only a major entertainment medium but also a powerful tool for education, advocacy, and cultural exchange.

This broad appeal is reflected in the diverse demographics of podcast listeners. For example, as of the third quarter of 2021, Indonesia had the second-largest percentage of podcast listeners globally, with 35.6% of internet users aged 16 to 64 tuning in (Databoks.katadata.co.id, 2022). This widespread adoption underscores the importance of podcasts in modern media consumption. For various stakeholders—including content creators, advertisers, educators, and politicians—understanding this trend is crucial. Insights from studying podcasts can provide a clearer picture of their role in the broader digital media landscape. As digital technologies continue to evolve and on-demand content grows in popularity, podcasts are likely to remain integral to digital life, shaping how we share and consume information. Therefore, exploring trends in podcast usage is essential for understanding their long-term implications and potential.

A prominent example of the podcast phenomenon in Indonesia is "Close the Door," hosted by Deddy Corbuzier. With 17.2 million subscribers on YouTube and Spotify (Kompasiana, 2022), this podcast covers a wide range of topics, featuring guests from various fields, including politicians, celebrities, and social media influencers. Among the notable guests is comedian Komeng, whose humor often involves flouting conversational maxims—intentionally breaking conversational rules to engage and entertain the audience. This use of humor aligns with established communication theories, where violating conversational maxims creates implicatures and enhances comedic effects.

Humor, as a universal aspect of human communication, has significant academic value. Attardo's humor theory (1994) provides a robust framework for analyzing humor in various contexts, supporting the idea that humor is a universal aspect of human language and interaction (Apte, 1985). One mechanism for creating humor is flouting conversational maxims, which are guidelines for effective communication. Grice's (1975) maxims—quantity, quality, relevance, and manner—serve as these guidelines. When a speaker deliberately breaks these rules, it often leads to humor as the listener seeks an alternative meaning (Cutting, 2008). Examples include providing too much or too little information, saying something untrue, making irrelevant comments, or being unclear (Oktaviabri & Degaf, 2023).

Numerous studies have explored the flouting of maxims in different contexts. For example, Malau et al. (2023) analyzed Denny Sumargo's podcast featuring Najwa Shihab, noting how they often flouted maxims to give more detailed answers, enriching their storytelling. Similarly, Sabrina (2023) found that Indonesian comedian Fajar Sadboy frequently used irrelevant or exaggerated responses to engage audiences humorously. Zahra and Arianti (2022) studied conversational implicatures in educational textbooks, highlighting the frequent violation of maxims, especially in international books. Gultom (2022) examined teacher-student interactions, revealing that both parties often broke maxims of quantity and manner, with teachers providing detailed explanations and students giving insufficient information.

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Furthermore, research by Suastini and Putra (2022) on the comedy movie "Warkop DKI the Movie" found that the relevance maxim was most frequently flouted, followed by quality, quantity, and manner. This study illustrates how humor in film often relies on seemingly irrelevant responses to create comedic effects. Given the popularity of humor and podcasts in Indonesia, it is common for podcasts to feature comedians who use humor to engage listeners, often involving the flouting of conversational maxims. While many studies focus on Grice's cooperative principles (1975), this research also incorporates Attardo's humor theory (1994) for a more comprehensive understanding. Building on previous studies, this research aims to provide valuable insights for future studies and enhance the theoretical framework.

The main goal of this study is to analyze how humor is created in podcast conversations through flouting conversational maxims. Specifically, it seeks to answer these questions: How are conversational maxims flouted to create humor in the "Close the Door" podcast featuring Komeng? What do these floutings reveal about humor in spoken discourse?

METHOD

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach to examine conversational implicatures and the flouting of conversational maxims, specifically within the context of a popular podcast. The qualitative method was selected for its capacity to explore the nuanced and subjective elements of communication, especially in analyzing how humor is created through deviations from typical conversational norms (Rahardjo, 2010). The data were gathered from the "Close the Door" podcast channel on YouTube, which has 23.1 million subscribers and over 1,650 videos. A particular episode featuring a conversation between host Deddy Corbuzier and comedianturned-politician Komeng was chosen for its rich humorous content, making it an ideal subject for analyzing instances where conversational maxims are intentionally flouted.

The episode, lasting fifty-four minutes and fourteen seconds, was transcribed verbatim to capture the full range of spoken words, pauses, and notable non-verbal cues. This transcription was crucial for an accurate representation of the conversation and the subsequent analysis. The unit of analysis in this study was the conversational turn, specifically focusing on instances where conversational maxims were flouted. Each conversational turn was scrutinized to identify deviations from the expected communication norms, which are defined by Grice's (1975) maxims of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner.

Following transcription, the data were systematically analyzed to classify each instance of flouted maxims. This involved coding the data based on which specific maxim was violated—whether it was providing too much or too little information (quantity), saying something untrue (quality), making irrelevant comments (relevance), or being unclear (manner). The coding process was methodical, ensuring that each instance was accurately categorized according to the nature of the conversational deviation.

After classification, the researchers interpreted the implicatures—implied meanings—behind these flouted maxims. This interpretation was conducted within the broader context of the conversation and the cultural nuances, which are essential for understanding how these deviations contribute to humor. The interpretation was aimed at uncovering the underlying comedic effects and how they align with established theories of humor and communication.

To validate the findings and ensure reliability, the research incorporated triangulation by cross-referencing the results with existing literature on conversational maxims and humor. This step ensured that the interpretations were not only grounded in the data but also consistent with established theoretical frameworks and previous studies. This comprehensive and systematic

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approach allowed for a detailed understanding of how humor is constructed in the "Close the Door" podcast through the intentional flouting of conversational maxims, offering insights into the creative manipulation of conversational norms in spoken discourse.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The analysis of the podcast episode reveals interesting patterns in the use of conversational maxims. The findings indicate that the Maxim of Relevance is the most frequently flouted in this podcast episode. This maxim was commonly flouted during the conversation between the podcast host, Deddy Corbuzier, and the guest, Komeng. In contrast, the Maxims of Quality and Manner were flouted less frequently. According to Grice (1975), the cooperative principle includes four maxims: (1) the Maxim of Quality, (2) the Maxim of Quantity, (3) the Maxim of Relevance, and (4) the Maxim of Manner, which are essential for effective communication.

Maxim of Quality

The Maxim of Quality requires that the speaker's response be accurate, truthful, and provable (Yule, 1998). When someone makes a statement like, "Yes, something is being covered," without providing evidence, they flout the Maxim of Quality (Cutting, 2008). For instance, if we are walking in the park with a small child who points to a cat and asks, "What is that?" we would correctly respond by saying it is a cat, not a horse or a bird, thus adhering to the Maxim of Quality by providing an accurate and truthful answer (Degaf, 2020).

Example 1

Deddy : Anda ini satu-satunya orang yang merubah teori dan teknik pencoblosan.

(You are the only person who changed the theory and technique of voting.)

Komeng : Kan Bapak sendiri yang bilang, kalo bikin gerakan jangan sampai orang

tahu. (You're the one who said that if you make a move, don't let people

know.)

Deddy : Kan lu enggak gerak masalahnya. (The problem is you didn't move.)

In this exchange, Deddy's statement, "Kan lu enggak gerak masalahnya" ("The problem is you didn't move"), flouts the Maxim of Quality. This maxim requires speakers to provide accurate and truthful information. Deddy accuses Komeng of inaction without presenting any evidence. This lack of substantiation makes the statement inaccurate and unreliable, thereby violating the Maxim of Quality. According to Attardo (1994), humor often arises from incongruity, where an expectation is set up and then violated. In this case, the humor stems from the unexpected accusation from Deddy, which lacks evidence. This incongruity between expectation (evidence-based statement) and reality (lack of evidence) creates humor.

Example 2

Deddy : Tapi tetap budaya dan seni? (So, it's still culture and art?)

Komeng : Iya, mau gak mau. Makanya saya gak bisa meninggalkan. Kata orang-

orang "berarti kalo udah ke dunia ini, dunia lama ditinggal" gak bisa, karena masih berhubungan ke situ. Kalo saya tinggal, saya gak bisa. (Yes, like it or not. That's why I can't leave. People say, "if you go to this world, you leave the old world behind," No, I can't, because I'm still

connected to it. If I leave, I can't.)

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In this conversation, Komeng states a very long answer that lacks accurate and reliable evidence: "Makanya saya gak bisa meninggalkan" ("That's why I can't leave"). However, he does not provide any evidence to support this claim, failing to meet the requirements of the Maxim of Quality. Here, humor is created through the violation of the expectation of a straightforward, evidence-based response. The incongruity lies in Komeng's long-winded and unsupported statement, which contrasts sharply with the expectation of a clear, concise answer.

Maxim of Quantity

Effective communication requires that the speaker provides neither more nor less information than is needed (Yule, 1998). For instance, if asked "Are you hungry?" a concise "yes" or "no" is appropriate. Overloading the response with unnecessary details, such as "I've eaten some bread and drunk a cup of tea," flouts the Maxim of Quantity (Cutting, 2008).

Example 1

: *Ohh*, *bener*. (Oh, right.) (*tertawa*) Deddy

Komeng : Kalo enggak bener saya enggak di sini pak, udah di kantor Bapak

proposnya. (If it's not true, I'm not here, I'm already in your office.)

In this exchange, Komeng states, "Kalo enggak bener saya enggak disini pak, udah di kantor Bapak proposnya" ("If it's not true, I'm not here, I'm already in your office"). This statement flouts the Maxim of Quantity because it is convoluted and provides more information than necessary. Komeng's response is ineffective and does not align with the context of the conversation. According to Attardo (1994), humor can arise from overstatement or understatement. In this case, Komeng's excessive detail and convoluted response create humor through overstatement, which violates the expectation of a simple, direct answer.

Example 2

Deddy : Ini itu beneran saya ingin tahu, setelah diteliti oleh badan intelejen. (This

is what I really want to know after being investigated by the intelligence

agency.)

Komeng : Justru saya kalo cerita nanti Bapak pindah haluan jadi konsultan. (If I

tell you about it, you'll become a consultant later.)

In this conversation, Komeng's response, "Justru saya kalo cerita nanti Bapak pindah haluan jadi konsultan" ("If I tell you about it, you'll become a consultant later"), flouts the Maxim of Quantity. The answer is ineffective and off-topic, providing excessive information that does not directly address Deddy's question. The humor in Komeng's response arises from the incongruity between Deddy's serious inquiry and Komeng's irrelevant and excessive reply. This unexpected twist in the conversation creates a humorous effect.

Maxim of Relevance

According to Grundy (2008), the Maxim of Relevance requires the speaker to provide information pertinent to the question. For instance, if someone asks, "What time is it?" a relevant answer would be "It's 6 o'clock," not "It's Sunday morning" or "It's a wonderful day."

Example 1

: Sebuah kebanggan kedatangan seorang pejabat yang sibuk sama Deddy

handphonenya sendiri. (It was an honour to have a pejabat busy with his

own mobile phone.)

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Komeng : (tertawa) **Pejabat... Pelawak Jawa Barat saya.** (Pejabat... I'm West Java comedian.)

In this exchange, Komeng's response, "Pejabat... Pelawak Jawa Barat saya" ("Pejabat... I'm West Java comedian"), flouts the Maxim of Relevance. His response is irrelevant to Deddy's statement about being busy with a mobile phone. This irrelevant answer, meant as a joke, does not meet the requirements of the Maxim of Relevance and disrupts the conversational flow. Here, humor is generated through the incongruity between the expectation of a relevant response and the actual irrelevant and humorous reply from Komeng. This unexpected deviation creates a comedic effect.

Example 2

Komeng : KPU minta foto lagi buat kertas suara, tapi saya enggak kasih, karena

waktu saya pegang tuh kertas enggak ada suaranya. (The KPU asked for more photos for the ballot paper, but I didn't give them, because when

I held the paper there was no sound.)

Deddy : Enggak ada suara, bener. (There's no sound, really) (tertawa).

In this conversation, Komeng states, "KPU minta foto lagi buat kertas suara, tapi saya enggak kasih, karena waktu saya pegang tuh kertas enggak ada suaranya" ("The KPU asked for more photos for the ballot paper, but I didn't give them, because when I held the paper there was no sound"). This response is irrelevant to the topic at hand. The Maxim of Relevance is flouted as Komeng's humorous but irrelevant answer diverges from the logical flow of the conversation. Komeng's response creates humor by violating the expectation of relevance. The incongruity between the serious context of the conversation and the absurdity of his reply ("no sound") results in a humorous effect.

Maxim of Manner

The Maxim of Manner requires the speaker to be clear, orderly, and easy to understand (Yule, 1998). Responses should be concise and unambiguous, such as "I have been at the market, buying some clothes for the party tomorrow," in response to "Where have you been?"

Example 1

Komeng : Bapak bangga punya anak, gini-gini. Bapak harus bisa manfaatin dong,

lu kerja yang baik, yang ini, yang ini. (You're proud to have children, like this. You have to be able to take advantage of it, you have to work well,

this one, that one.)

Deddy : Tapi kan harus ada support dari orang tua kan. (But there must be support

from parents.)

Komeng : Lah iya pak. (Yeah, right)

Deddy : Makanya harus ada support dari pemerintah. (That's why there has to be

support from the government.)

Komeng : Nah itu, makanya. Saya dari luar mulu gak bisa-bisa, apakah perlu di

dalem nih? Saya gitu maksudnya pak. Gak tau nanti di dalem takutnya saya dikunciin ga pulang-pulang malah stress. (Well, that's why. I can't do it from the outside, is it necessary to be inside here? That's what I mean. I don't know if I'll be locked in the room, I'm afraid I won't come home

and I'll get stressed.)

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In this exchange, Komeng's statement, "Nah itu, makanya. Saya dari luar mulu gak bisabisa, apakah perlu di dalem nih? Saya gitu maksudnya pak. Gak tau nanti di dalem takutnya saya dikunciin ga pulang-pulang malah stress" ("Well, that's why. I can't do it from the outside, is it necessary to be inside here? That's what I mean. I don't know if I'll be locked in the room, I'm afraid I won't come home and I'll get stressed"), flouts the Maxim of Manner. The response is long-winded and unclear, making it difficult to understand. According to Attardo (1994), humor often arises from ambiguity or confusion. In this case, Komeng's unclear and verbose response creates humor through the ambiguity and unexpected complexity of his answer.

Example 2

Komeng : Nah kan gak harus Jabar aja nih pak yang saya pikul, karena pikul itu

kan ada di kaca depan, kaca samping, kaca belakang. (Well, it doesn't have to be just Jabar that I'm carrying, because the carrying is on the

windscreen, side glass, rear glass.)

Deddy : (tertawa) Makanya saya diem. (That's why I kept quite.)

In this conversation, Komeng's response, "Nah kan gak harus Jabar aja nih pak yang saya pikul, karena pikul itu kan ada di kaca depan, kaca samping, kaca belakang" ("Well, it doesn't have to be just Jabar that I'm carrying, because the carrying is on the windscreen, side glass, rear glass"), flouts the Maxim of Manner. The response is unclear and ambiguous, making it difficult to understand. This lack of clarity undermines the effectiveness of the communication and demonstrates how the Maxim of Manner can be flouted in conversation. The humor here arises from the incongruity between the expectation of a clear response and the actual ambiguous and humorous reply, as outlined by Attardo's theory.

Discussion

The analysis of the "Close the Door" podcast episode reveals specific patterns in how conversational maxims are flouted, providing insights into the humor and communication strategies used by the participants. The data, summarized in Table 1, show that the Maxim of Relevance is the most frequently flouted, accounting for 44.4% of the total occurrences. This suggests that a significant portion of the conversation involved contributions that were not directly relevant to the ongoing discourse, often serving a strategic purpose in creating humor by introducing unexpected elements that surprise and engage the audience.

No. **Types of Flouting Maxim** Frequency **Percentage** 1. Maxim of Quality 2 11.1% 2. Maxim of Quantity 6 33.3% 3. Maxim of Relevance 8 44.4% 4. Maxim of Manner 2 11.1% Total 18 100%

Table 1. Flouting Maxims Frequencies and Percentages

The Maxim of Quantity was the second most frequently flouted, observed in 33.3% of the instances. This indicates that speakers often provided more information than necessary, which can be a deliberate strategy to emphasize certain points, clarify misunderstandings, or enrich the conversation with additional context. This approach helps ensure that the listener has a thorough understanding, even if it means deviating from the principle of providing only the necessary amount of information.

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Both the Maxims of Quality and Manner were flouted in 11.1% of the cases. The flouting of the Maxim of Quality involves making statements that are not entirely true or that the speaker does not fully believe, often used in humorous contexts to create a playful or ironic tone. For instance, Deddy's statement, "Kan lu enggak gerak masalahnya" ("The problem is you didn't move"), lacks evidence and could be seen as humor derived from incongruity, where the expectation of evidence-based communication is unmet. Similarly, the Maxim of Manner is flouted when Komeng delivers responses that are ambiguous or unclear, such as his comment about being locked in a room, which is challenging to interpret directly. This ambiguity adds a layer of humor through its confusion, further contributing to the overall comedic effect in the conversation.

Grice's (1975) cooperative principle theory serves as a foundational framework for this research, guiding the analysis of conversational interactions. Grice's theory outlines four main maxims—quantity, quality, relation, and manner—that are essential for effective communication (Cutting, 2008). These maxims emphasize clarity, relevance, and informativeness, aiming to facilitate mutual understanding between speakers and listeners. When these maxims are flouted, it can lead to implicatures, where listeners infer additional meanings beyond the literal words spoken (Degaf, 2020).

Building on this foundation, this research aligns with previous studies that have applied Grice's principles to analyze conversational interactions. For instance, Suastini and Putra (2022) found that the maxim of relevance was the most commonly flouted in their study of "Warkop DKI the Movie." This suggests a consistent pattern in conversational humor where relevance is often manipulated to create comedic effects. Furthermore, previous studies, such as those by Von Der Osten et al. (2024), Sabrina (2023), Zahra (2022), and Gultom (2022), have also explored the application of Grice's theory in various contexts, highlighting its broad applicability and relevance.

Despite its utility, Grice's cooperative principle has limitations, particularly when applied across different cultural contexts. Various cultures interpret and express conversational norms differently, leading to variations in what is considered acceptable communication. For example, in the podcast, there are instances where cultural factors affect the interpretation of conversational norms. When Komeng responds to a question with a lengthy and seemingly unrelated explanation, it might be seen as flouting the Maxim of Relevance. However, in the Indonesian cultural context, such elaboration can be a way of showing politeness and thoroughness, even if it diverges from the main topic.

Additionally, the Maxim of Quantity is flouted in Komeng's detailed responses, which might be perceived as providing more information than necessary. While this might be seen as a violation in cultures that value brevity, in Indonesian culture, it reflects a respectful and comprehensive communication style, ensuring that the listener fully understands the context. This difference underscores the variation in interpreting conversational norms across cultures. Furthermore, the Maxims of Quality and Manner often overlap in the podcast, adding another layer of complexity to the analysis. For instance, Komeng's ambiguous statement about being locked in a room can simultaneously flout the Maxim of Manner, due to its lack of clarity, and the Maxim of Quality, if the statement is not entirely truthful or sincere. This overlap highlights the intricacies of conversational interactions and the challenges in applying Grice's maxims straightforwardly. It also emphasizes the importance of considering the broader context and the speaker's intent when analyzing communication.

Attardo's (1994) linguistic theories of humor provide additional depth to the analysis by focusing on the mechanisms behind humor. According to Attardo, humor often involves the violation of conversational norms, such as the flouting of maxims, to create incongruity and

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surprise. This theory is evident in the podcast, where humor is frequently generated through unexpected responses or statements that defy audience expectations. Attardo's concept of "scriptswitching," where the audience's interpretation of a situation is abruptly changed, can also be seen in how Komeng's responses often lead to a shift in the conversational context, adding a humorous twist to the dialogue. Integrating Grice's cooperative principle with Attardo's theories highlights the multifaceted nature of humor and communication. This study explores the deliberate manipulation of language and conversational norms, providing a deeper understanding of how humor operates within different cultural contexts and the ways speakers navigate these aspects to engage their audience.

CONCLUSION

The analysis focuses on a specific episode of the "Close the Door" podcast, which features a conversation between host Deddy Corbuzier and comedian-turned-politician Komeng. This episode reveals distinct patterns in the flouting of conversational maxims, offering insight into the humor and communication strategies employed by the participants. The results indicate that the Maxim of Relevance is the most frequently flouted, accounting for 44.4% of the occurrences. This frequent non-observance of the Maxim of Relevance highlights how the introduction of irrelevant or unexpected elements can enhance engagement and comedic effect. In contrast, the Maxims of Quantity, Quality, and Manner were flouted less frequently, with each instance contributing uniquely to the overall humor. For example, the Maxim of Quantity was flouted through overly detailed responses, while the Maxim of Quality was compromised by unsubstantiated statements. The interplay between these maxims underscores how humor often arises from incongruities and deviations from conversational norms.

Integrating Grice's cooperative principle with Attardo's theories provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the humor in conversational interactions. Grice's maxims emphasize clarity, relevance, and informativeness, which are crucial for effective communication. However, the non-observance of these maxims can lead to implicatures, adding layers of meaning beyond the literal words. Attardo's theories further illuminate the mechanisms of humor, particularly through the concept of "script-switching," where sudden shifts in context create surprise and laughter. The study highlights the importance of cultural context in interpreting conversational norms, as what might be seen as non-observance of the maxim in one culture could be perceived differently in another.

However, the researchers acknowledge several limitations in this study. Firstly, the research is not sufficiently comparative, as it relies solely on Grice's cooperative principle theory and Attardo's humor theory. Additionally, data collection was limited to videos from one podcast channel on YouTube, reducing the study's breadth. To address these limitations, future research should consider expanding the theoretical framework and incorporating additional podcast channels and guest stars to enhance comparability. Finally, this study employed only qualitative methods, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Future studies should incorporate quantitative methods to provide a more comprehensive analysis. In summary, while this study provides valuable insights into the flouting of conversational maxims in a comedic podcast context, further research with broader theoretical and methodological approaches is recommended to strengthen the findings and enhance their applicability.

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