

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the theoretical framework from experts that have been used as a guide in providing the context of the research, a source of review to understand the object of research, and the main tool to analyze the problems formulated in Chapter 1. The theoretical framework consists of the definition of pragmatics as a branch of linguistics, which becomes the main arena of this research; the definition of Grice's cooperative principle, which becomes the basis for presenting case studies; the definition of maxims and flouting maxims as one of the main focuses in collecting research data; and the definition of humor as theoretical enrichment.

2.1. Pragmatics

Levinson (1983, p.7) proposes that pragmatics is the study of language from a functional standpoint, which means that it attempts to explain facets of linguistic structure by referring to non-linguistic pressures and causes. As a result, the pragmatic focus investigates language variables in a non-linguistic context, specifically social interactions. Furthermore, Yule (2016, p.362) states that the study of pragmatics focuses on "invisible" meaning, or how humans understand meaning even when it is not expressed verbally or in writing. Speakers (or writers) need to be able to rely on a great deal of common presumptions and expectations in order for that to occur when they try to communicate. Examining those presumptions and expectations gives us some insights into how our understanding extends beyond the language content of spoken words.

From those definitions, it can be concluded that pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies meaning and is in the domain of language use. Unlike semantic studies that discuss literal meaning, pragmatics discusses contextual meaning, a meaning of language use related to context. And this is in line with the domain of this research. The object of research in the form of humorous utterances and conversations in sitcoms is part of the domain of language use and, furthermore, about how a language has a deeper meaning than just what appears on the surface.

2.2. Cooperative Principle

As mentioned in Chapter 1, a conversation does not always go smoothly due to many reasons. Therefore, in order for the communication process to run well and effectively, it requires cooperation between the speaker and the listener, where both have the same understanding of how a conversation should be conducted, a kind of basic assumption that the speaker and the listener make when talking to each other. This is what Grice (1975) puts forward when proposing the Cooperative Principle: “Make your conversational contribution as required, at the appropriate point, by the acknowledged purpose or direction of the discussion exchange in which you are participating” (Grice. 1975, p.45).

Furthermore, in this cooperation principle, Grice (1975) has stated that both speakers and listeners must comply with the four maxims of conversation, namely the maxim of quantity, the maxim of quality, the maxim of relation, and the maxim of manner.

2.2.1. Maxim of Quantity

Maxim of quantity is related to the amount of information provided in a conversation. There are two sub-maxims in this category:

- a. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange); and
- b. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

(Grice. 1975, p.45).

Here, Grice (1975) wants to convey that in having a conversation, we must provide the right amount of information, not too little and not too much. Too little information will risk causing failure to understand the speaker's intention and meaning, while too much information will cause bias and confusion about what is truly meant, as well as boredom.

2.2.2. Maxim of Quality

Maxim of quality is related to the quality of the information provided in a conversation. There are one super maxim and two sub-maxims in this category:

- a. Try to make your contribution one that is true;
- b. Do not say what you believe to be false; and
- c. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

(Grice. 1975, p.46).

Speakers are expected to always be honest and sincere and only provide information that they believe to be true and based on reality. They are supposed to not make any statement that they believe to be false or for which there is no evidence to support it.

2.2.3. Maxim of Relation

Maxim of relation is about the relation between the speech in a conversation. There is only one sub-maxim in this category:

Be relevant. (Grice. 1975, p.46).

The speaker is expected to say something appropriate and relevant to the topic of conversation being held, for example, in answering a question or responding to a request. By maintaining the relevance of the answers or responses given, the speaker contributes to avoiding confusion while supporting the success of a conversation in accordance with the purpose of the conversation.

2.2.4. Maxim of Manner

Maxim of Manner is related to how an utterance is conveyed in a conversation. There is one super maxim and four sub-maxims in this category:

- a. Be perspicuous;
 - b. Avoid obscurity of expression;
 - c. Avoid ambiguity;
 - d. Be brief; and
 - e. Be orderly.
- (Grice. 1975, p.46).

In conducting a conversation, the speaker must perform his or her utterances in a way that is easy to understand so that the interlocutor has no difficulty in understanding the intended meaning of the utterance. Avoid unclear speech, and do not use words or tones that create ambiguity. Also, be brief and organized in your speech.

Those are the four conversational maxims that become the core of Grice's cooperative principle. This principle becomes a kind of guide that needs to be followed by people who want to have a conversation and hope that the conversation can run well and effectively. This cooperative principle may sound unfamiliar to those who have never studied the discipline of linguistics or pragmatics. However, in reality, this principle actually has been practiced and performed daily without them realizing it. In fact, Grice (in Cutting) says that in actual

conversational practice, listeners already have a basic assumption that speakers will adhere to this cooperative principle. Furthermore, it is this knowledge of the four maxims that allows the listener to be able to draw conclusions about the intent and implied meaning of the speaker. The meaning conveyed by the speaker is then understood as a result of the listener's conclusion, and this is what is called conversational implicature (Cutting, 2022, p.36).

2.3. Maxim Failure

After understanding this cooperative principle, we should be grateful that linguists have taken the trouble to formulate theories and concepts that make it easier for us to practice language in conversation. People just need to read, understand, and follow them. What could go wrong, right? However, as stated in Chapter 1, people do not always fulfill this cooperative principle. They do not always observe these maxims, and when it happens, it will produce a condition called Maxim Failure. According to Grice (1975), there are four types of maxim failure. Citing indirectly from Black (2005), here are the four types of maxim failure:

a. Violation

This is a maxim failure that is done intentionally and consciously by the speaker but without the interlocutor knowing. The purpose of this failure is usually to hide something or mislead the interlocutor from the real facts. This kind of maxim failure is the same as lying.

b. Opting Out

Like Violation, Opting Out is a maxim failure that is also done intentionally and consciously, but the difference is that the action is known by the interlocutor. The speaker honestly says that something was omitted or not told for some reason. Another difference with Violation is that Opting Out does not aim to mislead the interlocutor, although there is still an element of purpose to hide something.

c. Clash

Like Violation, Clash occurs when a person is unable to comply with the cooperative principle in its entirety. For example, in an attempt to obey one maxim, such as the maxim of quality, a person may have to violate another maxim, such as the maxim of quantity. An example would be someone who knows some information but doubts its accuracy. He may try not to violate the maxim of quality, but if he does, he will also violate the

maxim of quantity because it does not provide enough information for the interlocutor to understand what he means.

d. Flouting

The last type of maxim failure is Flouting, and unlike any other type, it is the most interesting type of maxim failure, and it is not without reason. Just like the other three maxim failures, Flouting is also a type of maxim failure that is intentional by the person speaking. That is, the person consciously and intentionally commits the maxim failure. However, unlike Violation, where the interlocutor does not know the existence of the maxim failure, in Flouting, the interlocutor knows it and is aware of the existence of the maxim failure, even the interlocutor is directed to be able to understand the reason why the maxim is violated. Based on this explanation, at first glance, Flouting looks the same as Opting Out. However, the difference is that Opting Out has an action to reduce or conceal information from the interlocutor, while Flouting does not. In Flouting, the information is still provided to the interlocutor. How is this possible? It is because the existence of Maxim Flouting produces implicatures that contain communicative effects, so that the information delivered indirectly is still obtained and understood by the interlocutor.

2.4. Flouting Maxim

As explained in the previous point, of the four types of maxim failure, Flouting Maxim is the most interesting because it presents an implicature, which is an act of conveying a meaning that goes beyond the literal understanding of what is actually stated. The existence of this implicature is a clue for interlocutors to get the information they need because the speaker does not convey it explicitly, which can be caused by various things, one of which is due to politeness considerations. This is what distinguishes maxim flouting from other maxim failures, that the message is still conveyed, while in another maxim failure such as Violation, Opting out, and Clash, the message is not conveyed. That is why it is interesting to know how these types of failure occur in each maxim, as follows:

a. Flouting the Maxim Quantity

Flouting the maxim quantity occurs when a speaker provides too little or too much information than is necessary. Normally the interlocutor will have difficulty understanding

the speaker's intentions, but because there are implicatures that arise due to flouting of the maxim, the interlocutor will be able to understand the speaker's intentions. The example is as follows:

- A. Well, tell me, how do I look?
- B. Your shirt is nice.

A asks B about how he looks. By asking such a question, A expects B to answer by commenting on A's overall appearance, be it face, hair, shirt, pants, shoes, and so on. B then answers briefly and only comments on A's nice shirt without commenting on other elements. B intentionally reduces the expected information in his answer, but A still understands it as a whole. A understands that by B only commenting on the shirt being nice, the implication is that other things besides the shirt are not nice.

b. Flouting the Maxim Quality

Flouting the maxim quality occurs when an utterance cannot be interpreted literally because the utterance uses language styles such as hyperbole, metaphor, irony, or sarcasm. In flouting this maxim of quality, the speaker hopes that the interlocutors can understand the style of language so that they can catch what he or she means. The Example of flouting the maxim of quality using hyperbole is as follows:

- A. Why are you in such a hurry?
- B. I feel like I will starve to death!

In the conversation above, B answers A's question by using hyperbole, which is by exaggerating the facts. B does not think he will actually starve to death for real. He just uses hyperbole to describe his very hungry condition. On the other hand, A certainly does not believe that B will actually starve to death. A understands that what B says is just an exaggeration of him being really hungry.

Here is an example of flouting the maxim of quality that uses a metaphor:

- A. Tell me how important I am to you.
- B. You are the sunshine that always warms my days.

Based on the maxim of quality, B simply answers that A is very important or not important to B. The answer is short and concise and does not cause ambiguity, as suggested by Grice's cooperative principle. However, A prefers to answer with a metaphorical language style instead. Why would B's answer be considered a metaphor? Because, of course, A is not a ray of sunshine as B says, because A is a human being, not a light. The reason why B says something that is not in accordance with this physical reality is to use a metaphor to express how important A is to B. On the other hand, A certainly does not believe that he is a ray of sunshine as B says. A understands the phrase as a hyperbole, and A will undoubtedly feel great happiness when he hears and understands the meaning of the sentence.

Furthermore, here is an example of flouting the maxim of quality that uses irony:

- A. Why do you come to campus in the middle of heavy rain like this?
- B. I love rain! Look at all my books soaking wet!

A quite politely asks B why she forces herself to come to campus when it is pouring rain. B responds by saying that she loves the rain and asks A to look at all her rain-soaked books. A, of course, do not take this utterance literally because no one likes to have their books ruined by rainwater. Therefore, A understands that what B says is an irony that means the opposite of what B actually feels.

Finally, an example of quality flouting using sarcasm is as follows:

- A. Do you like my cooking?
- B. I love it so much that I can not wait to throw it away.

A asks B if he likes his cooking. B initially replies that he likes it but continues with a sarcastic sentence that B cannot wait to throw the food away. A then understands that B actually does not like her cooking and even wants to throw it away immediately because he dislikes it so much.

c. Flouting the Maxim Relation

Flouting the maxim relation occurs when speakers provide utterances or information that are irrelevant to the theme being discussed in a conversation. Even so, the speaker hopes that the listener can imagine what the speaker did not say and connect the speaker's utterance with the previous utterance. An example is as follows:

- A. What do you think of my new girlfriend?
- B. Her cat is very cute and beautiful.

A asks B what he thinks of his new girlfriend. A, of course, expects that B will answer according to what A asked, whatever his opinion of his new girlfriend is. However, what happens next is that B gives an answer that has nothing to do with what A asked because B gives an opinion about the girlfriend's cat instead, that his new girlfriend's cat is cute and beautiful. The incongruity of this answer would normally create confusion that would lead to a deadlock in the conversation, but B's irrelevant answer also generates an implicature that guides A to understand that if B comments on his new girlfriend's cat being cute and pretty instead, then it means that in B's opinion, his new girlfriend is not cute and pretty.

d. Flouting the Maxim Manner

Flouting the maxim quantity is related to how the speaker gives utterances or provides information, and it occurs when the speaker provides utterances or responses that are ambiguous so that they produce more than one meaning in the conversation. The flouting maxim of manner also occurs when a speaker makes a long-winded and unclear utterance with the aim that no one else can understand the meaning of the utterance except the speaker and his interlocutor, kind of providing information that uses a special code. The example is as follows:

- A. Where are you going?
- B. I want to go to that place to buy something you know.

A asks B where he is going. B answers with a vague answer and has a high level of ambiguity because A do not clearly tell him where he is going and what goods he was going to buy. However, A deliberately do that because he was sure B would understand. In carrying out this conversation, which is full of ambiguity, A also aims to ensure that people other than him and the person he is talking to do not understand what he means, for example, because the nature of the information is confidential.

2.5. Theories of Humor

Saude (2018) has stated that humor is a universal human experience, yet philosophers,

psychologists, and sociologists continue to argue about its nature and causes. Humor research has been ongoing for a long time, and it has resulted in numerous humor theories suggested over the years. Plato and Aristotle, as well as Cicero, Immanuel Kant, and Sigmund Freud, are all influential in the study of comedy. Their contributions, as well as those of other recent theories, are explored in Raskin's comprehensive overview, *Semantic Mechanisms of Humor* (Raskin, 1985), and Attardo's discussion, *The Linguistic Theory of Humor* (Attardo, 1994). In general, the humor theories that have been stated by all the experts are then grouped into three main theoretical groups, namely Hostility Theories, Release Theories, and Incongruity-based theories. These groupings are based on the different aspects of humor they represent (Attardo, 1994; Larkin-Galiñanes, 2017):

- a. Hostility theories (such as aggression and superiority theories) focus on the social components of comedy. These views are based on the assumption that laughing stems from the pleasure of feeling superior to others or that humor is a social corrective that corrects abnormal behavior (Attardo, 1994). According to these beliefs, all comedy is founded on a conversation between included and excluded groups. Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, and Bergson are among the most important figures in these views.
- b. Release theories are based on psychoanalytic theory, and Sigmund Freud is its most influential proponent. The main notion behind these beliefs is that humor emerges unintentionally when an inner tension is released. According to Martin (2010, p. 35), the enjoyment of humor is derived from the release of energy that was previously linked with an unpleasant feeling but is now redundant. In other words, humor comes from transforming something painful into something lighthearted. It is a coping method for dealing with life's unfortunate events.
- c. Incongruity-based theories often ascribe the presence of comedy to cognitive discomfort caused by incongruent factors clashing. Kant and Schopenhauer are often considered the pioneers of incongruity theory. According to McGee, as referenced by Attardo (1994, p.48), the concepts of congruity and incongruity apply to the interactions between components of an object, event, idea, or social expectation. When the arrangement of an event's constituent pieces differs from the regular or expected pattern, the occurrence is seen as incongruous.

The theories in these categories are all essentialist theories, which means they seek to uncover the

essential characteristics of all occurrences of comedy. Their shared goal is to uncover the sufficient conditions that cause some things to be hilarious. These three groupings do not directly contradict one another but rather differ in their disciplinary roots and emphasis.

Moreover, Berger (1993, p.17) has stated that there are at least two steps in analyzing humor: first, identifying the key aspects and procedures used to generate humor, and second, rating the techniques to determine which are basic and which are secondary. This is predicated on the premise that humor has a process aspect that can be broken down and evaluated. Any example of comedy shields many tactics that generate humor, and something is hilarious or humorous, in the end, not because of the subject matter or theme but because of the techniques used by the creator.

For this reason, in terms of humor delivery techniques, Berger (1993, p.17) has stated that Humorous approaches can be classified into four basic categories, each of which has its own techniques:

1. Language, which means the humor is verbal. The techniques for this category are Allusion, Bombast, Definition, Exaggeration, Facetiousness, Insults, Infantilism, Irony, Misunderstanding, Over literalness, Puns, Word Play, Repartee, Ridicule, Sarcasm, and Satire.
2. Logic, which means the humor is ideational. The techniques for this category are Absurdity, Accident, Analogy, Catalogue, Coincidence, Disappointment, Ignorance, Mistakes, Repetition, Reversal, Rigidity, and Theme/Variation.
3. Identity, which means the humor is existential. The techniques for this category are Before/After, Burlesque, Caricature, Eccentricity, Embarrassment, Exposure, Grotesque, Imitation, Impersonation, Mimicry, Parody, Scale, Stereotype, and Unmasking.
4. Action, which means the humor is physical or nonverbal. The techniques for this category are Chase, Slapstick, Speed, and Time.

Of these four categories, language is the category used as a reference for analysis in this research, so it can be concluded that the humor analyzed from utterances and conversations found in The Final Season of The Big Bang Theory (2019) sitcom is verbal humor.

2.6. Previous Related Studies

Based on the literature review that I have previously carried out, there are several previous studies that have been conducted. These studies have similarities and also, of course, differences with the research I have.

The first research is by Maulidya Ayu Puspasari and Lisetyo Ariyanti (2019) from Surabaya State University with the title "Flouting Maxims in Creating Humor - A Comparison Study Between Indonesian and American Stand-Up Comedy". In their research, it was concluded that the study explores the use of flouting maxims in comics, revealing that they do not make people uncooperative but can be used to create humor. Two comics from Indonesia and America flout various maxims, including quantity, quality, manner, and relevance. The least flouted maxim is quantity, reflecting American culture's direct communication style, while the most flouted maxim is quality, reflecting Indonesian culture's indirect approach. Both comics employ joke techniques, including paralanguage, ridicule, satire, and politeness strategies. The similarity in joke techniques is influenced by their ethnic backgrounds, despite their different nationalities.

The second research is by Chengshu Yao (2022) from Nanning Normal University, China with the title "Analysis of Verbal Humor in Two and a Half Men from the Perspective of Cooperative Principle." In his research, it is concluded that this paper analyses verbal humor from the American sitcom Two and a Half Men, focusing on nine examples of how the Cooperative Principle and its sub-maxims can be violated in conversations. The data collected from 217 conversations shows that the maxim of quality is frequently flouted, while the maxim of manner is the least. However, the thesis has limitations, as it only analyzes verbal humor from a pragmatic perspective, ignoring other relevant theories, and all examples are selected by the author, which is subjective.

The third research is by Othman Khalid Al-Shboul (2022) from Jadara University of Jordan with the title "Flouting of Grice's Maxims by Jordanian Speakers in Everyday Communication." In his research, it is concluded that not following or observing certain maxims in a conversation does not necessarily mean the speaker is not successful or cooperative. It suggests that the successful contribution depends on delivering the implied meaning to the hearer, allowing them to understand the meaning and achieve the function. The data analysis suggests that flouting is positive and can be classified as positive politeness. It minimizes the social

distance between Jordanian speakers and mitigates negative-threatening faces that may arise during communication. Nonobservance is justified, as linguistic redundancy, despite not following the quantity maxim, serves a pragmatic function. The study also asserts that the speaker's flouting of maxims is crucial in helping the addressee understand the speaker's intended meaning, as pragmatic devices like jokes or exaggeration serve as hints for the listener to infer what the speaker implicates. Therefore, this flouting occurs on purpose.

The fourth research is by Muhammad Harits (2017) with the title "Flouting Maxims to Create Humor Using Grice's Cooperative Principle in the Movie The Big Bang Theory". In his research, it is concluded that The Big Bang Theory movie features a flouting maxim in conversations between characters. The writer analyzes 22 episodes in one season, focusing on cooperative principles that flout these maxims. The majority of these cases are of quality, with thirteen cases, and the fewest are of quantity, with five cases. These flouting maxims create humorous atmospheres, proving that they play a significant role in creating humorous situations. However, the humor derived from these maxims is influenced by factors such as age, culture, personal experience, education level, and geographical location. Humor is subjective, and the humor may not be amusing to some people or considered outrageous to others. Therefore, the humor in this study may not be amusing to some and may be considered outrageous to others.

The fifth research is by Dwi Sri Fatkhur Rohmahsih (2022) from Diponegoro University with the title "Analysis of Flouting Gricean Maxims in a Situational Comedy Entitled How I Met Your Father Season 1". In her research, it is concluded that the characters in How I Met Your Father Season 1 flouted all conversational maxims, including quality, quantity, relation, and manner maxims, in humorous situations. However, only 18 out of the 70 instances of flouting are verbal humor, as proposed by Berger. The writer concludes that while Berger's verbal humor effectively demonstrates how flouting creates humor, it cannot fully capture all the humor in the sitcom. Other theories of humor or approaches can be used to analyze situational comedy.

There are similarities and differences based on the related studies mentioned earlier. The similarity of these studies is the application of Paul Grice's theory of cooperation principles and conversational maxims, particularly maxim failure, which is focused on the type of flouting. The first investigation is conducted to identify humorous utterances and conversations resulting from maxim flouting. The second investigation was conducted to classify and code the identified data based on the types and strategies of maxim flouting. The third investigation is conducted to

calculate the findings to find out what type of maxim flouting dominates the most.

Moreover, the difference between these five studies is that they use different research objects, namely Indonesian and American stand-up comedy videos, Two and a Half Men sitcom, Jordan Speaker Video, How I Met Your Father Season 1 sitcom, and finally The Big Bang Theory Season 10.

In this study, I use the same theory, namely Paul Grice's Cooperation Principle and Conversational Maxims, especially Maxim Failure, which is focused on the flouting type. However, the difference is that I use the object of research in the form of the movie script of The Final Season of The Big Bang Theory (2019) Sitcom. I found what humorous utterances and conversations result from the maxim flouting contained in the movie script of The Big Bang Theory Last Season (2019), analyzed what types of maxims are flouted by those humorous utterances and conversations, and found out what type of maxim flouting is the most dominant.

