

Flouted Conversational Maxims in the American Sitcom *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.* Season 8

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ABSTRACT

Humor is a universal experience shared by many people, and it is influenced by culture. In Pragmatics, it is created through the deliberate flouting of conversational maxims. Sitcom humor is deliberately designed to elicit laughter from viewers. This study aims to identify the most flouted maxims found in the sitcom *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.* season 8. Employing a mixed-method sequential explanatory approach, this study collected data from the transcripts of all 24 episodes of the eighth season of *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.* Qualitative content analysis was used to aid in data collection and data analysis. The data were then arranged and coded in a coding table. The frequency distribution of each aspect was also determined. The results revealed that all of the conversational maxims were flouted, with the maxim of quality being the most flouted across all episodes of season 8. This may mean that American sitcoms usually flout all of the conversational maxims to produce humor and elicit laughter from the viewers. The results of this study may provide baseline data for researches on humor. Also, sitcom writers may find this study informative and helpful in their writing.

Keywords: *Flouting, Implicature, Situational Comedy, Humor, Spontaneous Conversational Humor, Qualitative content analysis.*

INTRODUCTION

Humor is a vital aspect of a person's life. To laugh reflects their ability to connect, bond, and release stress. It is both a social and cultural phenomenon. In the context of communication, humor is sometimes difficult to analyze, since a speaker attempts to explain a joke to a hearer. It will no longer be funny (Meyer, 2000). Ibraheem and Abbas (2015) contended that the early use of humor was to refer to someone who is viewed as peculiar, ridiculous, or laughable. Thus, laughter was said to be the parameter for humor, as both are directly related to each other (Dewi, 2014). Additionally, Anggraini (2014) also contended that the main aspect of humor is to

bring laughter and amusement. For Attardo (1994), the primary function of humor in a conversation is the effect that the speaker is trying to achieve using humor. Humor is highly subjective and cultural (Anggraini, 2014; Nancy et. al., 2023). What is funny in one culture might not be funny in another.

In situational comedy, humor is deliberately employed in various humorous scenes. (Anggraini, 2014). Situation comedies (Sitcoms) are narrative-based series consisting of short, 25–30-minute duration episodes which have regular settings and characters (Anggraini, 2014). For Dai (2023), sitcoms originated from post-World War II radio plays, which were subsequently brought about by the rising popularity of Videoland, which promoted sitcoms. Peng (2006, as cited in Dai, 20024) also considered sitcoms as “light comedies” that aimed to recreate real-life situations, and that they could be segmented into three steps: (1) the opening, (2) intensification of the conflict, (3) the dramatic resolution of the conflict.

The classic American TV sitcom *FRIENDS* is steeped in humor. It has also been considered a great way to learn English. In Mike Ives’s (2021) online article in *The New York Times*, he noted that the sitcom was used in an English lesson among international students in San Jose, California. In addition, several prominent celebrities such as Jürgen Klopp, some major league basketball players whose native language is Spanish, and Kim Nam-joon, or RM of Korea’s sensation BTS, all learned English from *FRIENDS* (Ives, 2021). Moreover, the writer also wrote in the same article about a 45-year-old Korean woman who goes by the name Kim Sook-han, who said that the show allowed her to learn and understand American culture (Ives, 2021). On the same note, Gordon Gaffney (2022) wrote an article highlighting the following points on how the sitcom could be a good way to learn English: (1) the characters speak easy-to-understand everyday words/ vocabulary; (2) the fun and entertaining characters will simultaneously amuse and teach viewers English. Harville (2024) also contended that teaching English with *FRIENDS* is great for students to better understand American culture; to allow them to immerse themselves in informal conversations in the native language (American English); to build a broader vocabulary; and they relate to the show.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pragmatics is the study of language used in contexts. It concerns the meaning of the speaker’s utterances in a given context and how it influences and affects the utterances. It studies how utterances communicate both literal and implied or additional meaning.

Cooperative Principle (CP). In conversations proposed by Paul Grice (1967), these general principles suggested that when speaking, participants should observe the four conversational maxims: the maxim of quality, quantity, manner, and relevance. The Cooperative Principles require the speakers to contribute what is required in conversation, keeping in mind its purpose and direction (Yule, 1996, as cited in Dewi, 2014).

The first maxim is the **maxim of quantity**. This maxim requires speakers to:

1. to be informative as required
2. should give neither too little nor too much information.

The second maxim is the **maxim of quality**, which requires speakers to:

1. Say only what you think is true (be sincere)
2. Say only something which you have adequate evidence (Grice, 1989, p. 27), uncertain, and that speakers already know that (Cutting, 2002).

The third maxim is the **maxim of relevance or relation**. This maxim refers to the contribution of speakers' utterances that could be considered relevant. The maxim requires the speaker to observe the following:

1. Be relevant (Grice, 1989)

Flouting is a blatant violation of the maxims, where speakers intentionally do so to conform to another maxim (Attardo, 1994). Flouting occurs when speakers blatantly fail to observe one of the four maxims to imply some additional meaning (Cutting, 2002, p. 36, as cited in Dewi, 2014; Krisdwiyan & Hannidar, 2022). When flouting a maxim, the speakers assume that the hearers will not take their utterances literally, but rather, they are hoping that the speakers will infer the implicit meaning they deliberately create (Cutting, 2002, p. 37). Those who deliberately flout the maxim of quantity provide inadequate or excessive information.

Implicature refers to the intended meaning of what is being said (Grice, 1989). Birner (2012) contended that natural meaning involves a non-arbitrary relationship to an utterance, which is free from any specific purpose or intent. There are two different kinds of implicature: conversational implicature and conventional implicature. In Conventional implicature, the meaning of the utterance is not truth-conditional (Birner, 2012, p. 45; Szczepanski, 2014), which, by convention, is attached to a word or an expression, rather than from some primary pragmatic principles (Levinson, 1983,

p. 127: as cited in Szczepanski, 2014). On the other hand, Conversational implicature relies entirely on context to convey additional meaning. Different implicatures are carried by the same expression, depending on the context. Conversational implicatures can be further subdivided into two subtypes: generalized and particularized. Generalized conversational implicature is an implicature that is generally attached to the utterance, therefore, not to be inferred or interpreted with each relevant utterance (Birner, 2012, p. 45). On the other hand, particularized conversational implicature is unique to the context of the utterance.

Humor is a phenomenon widely influenced by culture. Many cultures have different ways of producing it. According to Nancy et al. (2023), what makes humor different in many cultures is that those cultures differ in values, history, and, of course, geography. We typically find humor in our conversations, in the movies, on television, in books, newspapers, magazines, articles of comedy such as comic strips and comic books, on the radio, and even in graffiti on public bathroom walls (Birger, 1993). However, there is an attempt to arrive at a commonly acceptable and inclusive definition of humor, coming from practitioners of disciplines such as linguistics, anthropology, and psychology (Šmilauerová, 2012).

Situational Comedy, also known as a sitcom, is a form of television series that involves a consistent and continuing cast of characters situated in a succession of comedic or humorous circumstances. For Butler (2020), situational comedy is something that tells us a story, and by telling us so, we become amused and entertained by the predicaments of characters and their scripted dialogues or lines. To make sense of sitcoms, we must consider the first genre as a crucial tool for making sense of television in general. Sitcom, as defined by Mills (2009), is a genre defined by its comic impetus, where its textual elements rely upon the comic aspect. Mills (2009) put forward the idea from Sioned Williams that a sitcom is not entirely defined by jokes only, but also by several factors, such as narrative, character, and representation as well. Genres, in general, could be examined in terms of repetition and difference, according to Neale (1980) in Mills (2009). Character archetypes could also play vital roles in the humorous construction that is deliberately maintained across the span of the sitcom scene or episode. The type characters interact with other types of characters, creating a complex, coherent, and true-to-life narrative that, with careful consideration of the use of rhetorical devices in the dialogues of the characters and with the help of visual, auditory, or any kind of humor amplifier, the writer could surely elicit tremendous laughter from the audience. The sitcom writer must also consider the context in which the sitcom exists. This means that sitcom writers must consider what types

and kinds of humor to bring into the show. Cultural expectations on humor and wit should be extremely considered, since sitcom humor needs to connect and relate to the audience, so that the audience would deem it funny and would exhibit the overall intention of sitcoms.

Local Studies. In the context of local studies conducted in the Philippines, some focused on various areas of interest, but mostly either on the cultural study of humor, or purely humor research, such as the typology of humor in Philippine classrooms (Luaña & Campoamor-Olegario, 2021), analyzing Filipino humor in Filipino situation comedies (Bautista et al., 1982), the pragmatics of Irony as a trend of Philippine witticism (Rillo & Buslon, 2019), language and humor styles of Filipino stand-up comedians (Dedace et al., 2023), and a corpus-based content analysis of rhetorical devices in Philippine stand up comedies (Catunao et al., 2015).

There is a notable gap in several related studies that examine maxim flouting, rhetorical devices, and forms of humor in a sitcom. First is the knowledge gap stemming from the lack of comprehensive studies, detailed analysis, and discussion involving the flouting of conversational maxims to produce humor in television sitcoms conducted by researchers, particularly from Asian countries. These researchers focus on the combination of maxim flouting with other selected aspects, such as: rhetorical devices (Dewi, 2014); forms (Nancy et al., 2023) and functions of humor (Anggraini, 2014; Herawati, 2015); social issues (Febriani, 2015); and types of humor and violation of the maxims (Rafi'i, 2022). Subsequently, they included and analyzed only a few data samples from limited episodes of their chosen sitcoms or shows. Thus, there is also a significant and considerable data gap stemming from the studies mentioned.

It is also worth noting that local studies on humor in the Philippines only focused on aspects such as the rhetorical devices used in Filipino stand-up comedies (Catunao et al., 2015), the pragmatics of Irony (Rillo & Buslon, 2019), the language and humor styles in Filipino (Dedace et al., 2023), and Filipino humor (Bautista et al., 1982). In addition, there have been no humor studies conducted so far in Dumaguete City and Negros Oriental that focus on maxim flouting in television sitcoms.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative interpretive corpus-based approach supplemented by descriptive quantitative analysis. The primary analytical orientation was qualitative, as the study aims to identify and interpret instances of conversational maxim flouting in the sitcom *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.* Season 8 using Grice's (1989) Cooperative Principle as its

theoretical framework. The qualitative analysis focused on using qualitative content analysis (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009) for the script, and close observation for watching the sitcom to determine how characters deliberately fail to observe conversational maxims to generate implicature and humorous effects within the discourse. To complement the qualitative aspect, a quantitative frequency distribution procedure was used to determine the frequency and distribution of the flouted maxims across the dataset. The quantitative component was therefore descriptive rather than inferential, serving to illustrate patterns of maxim usage within the analyzed corpus.

For the data corpus of this study, the corpus comprises of the entire transcripts of all twenty-four (24) episodes of *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.* Season 8. These were retrieved from a publicly available online archive (Aasen, n.d.) and cross-checked against the televised episodes to guarantee text accuracy and conformity with the actual text. The researcher chose the utterances with identifiable humorous intent as possible data. Contextual clues in the sitcom, such as the context of the conversation, the interaction of the characters, and the presence of a laugh track, were used to establish the occurrence of a humorous utterance. A total of **1,614 utterances** were identified as instances in which conversational maxims were flouted across the twenty-four episodes.

Humorous instances were identified through qualitative content analysis of the sitcom transcript, complemented with contextual analysis of the sitcom discourse. During the data collection process, there were some factors that the researcher considered in determining if an utterance was an example of humor in the dialogue. For one, if there was an audience laugh track directly following an utterance, it was considered that that utterance was intended to bring about some form of humor. This is because, in sitcoms, an audience laugh track is often utilized to let viewers know that something that was said was supposed to bring about some form of humor. Another factor that was considered was the manner in which other characters in that scene responded to an utterance. If an utterance was said and it was met with some form of laughter, playful teasing, and exaggerated emotional responses from other characters in that scene, it was also considered that that utterance was an example of something that was intended to bring about some form of humor. Finally, there was an assessment of whether or not an utterance was an example of some form of exaggeration, sarcasm, irony, playful teasing, and so on, since these are all linguistic features that are often utilized in sitcom dialogue and are often associated with some form of pragmatic humor.

For analytical consistency, maxim flouting was operationally defined as a deliberate and recognizable 'violation' of one of Grice's (1989) conversational maxims

that generates a conversational implicature interpretable by interlocutors or by the audience. The following criteria guided the classification of each instance:

Maxim of Quality. Utterances show flouting of the maxim of quality when the sitcom characters intend to say something untrue, or they have no definite evidence to provide, or they tend to exaggerate in the context of the conversation. These utterances can be in the form of irony, sarcasm, exaggeration, metaphor, or any form of humour or exaggeration.

Maxim of Quantity. Utterances show flouting of the maxim of quantity when the sitcom characters gave either more or less information than needed in the context of the conversation. These utterances were those of detailed explanations or explanations that gave either more or less information than required by the other character/s.

Maxim of Manner. Utterances show flouting of the maxim of manner when the sitcom characters use ambiguous or obscure language in the context of the conversation. These utterances were those of indirect language or language use, delivered in a manner that was not clear or direct.

Maxim of Relevance (Relation). Responses show flouting of the maxim of relevance when the sitcom characters provide a response that was not related to the context of the previous turn in the conversation.

When multiple maxims appeared to be implicated simultaneously, the classification was based on the maxim whose flouting most directly contributed to the humorous or pragmatic effect of the utterance.

The coding process followed a systematic procedure consisting of several stages. First, each episode of *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.* Season 8 was viewed while consulting the corresponding transcript in order to identify conversational segments that potentially contained humorous dialogue. During this stage, the researcher focused on utterances that appeared to generate humor within the narrative context. Second, the identified utterances were extracted and recorded in a coding table adapted from previous pragmatic analyses of humor in television discourse (Anggraini, 2014; Dewi, 2014; Herawati, 2015; Febriani, 2015). The coding table was modified to suit the analytical requirements of the present study and contained the following information:

1. **Entry Number.** This column recorded the sequential numbering of each identified instance of maxim flouting in the dataset.
2. **Code.** The code column indicated the episode and scene reference of the utterance. The code format is as follows: season (S8)–episode (e.g., E1)–scene number (e.g., Sc1)–Line number (e.g., L12-16).

3. **Data/Dialogue.** In this column, the actual utterance or dialogue excerpt taken from the transcript where there is an indicated maxim flouting is identified. Lines that reflected the flouting of the maxim were italicized for easy identification. The utterances were recorded exactly as they appeared in the transcript to maintain the exact linguistic structure and conversational context.
4. **Maxim Flouted.** This column identified which of Grice's (1989) conversational maxims—quality, quantity, manner, or relevance—was flouted in the utterance. The classification was determined based on the operational criteria of maxim flouting discussed in the analytical framework of the study.
5. **Rhetorical Devices.** This column documented the rhetorical or linguistic strategy used in the utterance, such as irony, sarcasm, exaggeration, metaphor, or other pragmatic devices.
6. **Forms of Humor.** This column categorized the type of humor expressed in the utterance. These categories were based on humor classifications identified in related studies and were used to describe the specific comedic effect produced by the dialogue.

Finally, the coded dataset was reviewed to verify the consistency of the classification of each flouting instance in line with the conversational context of the sitcom dialogues. Ambiguous cases were revisited by examining the corresponding episode segments to ensure that the pragmatic interpretation was supported by the interactional context.

The coding and classification of maxim flouting in this study were conducted by the researcher alone. However, due to practical difficulties in terms of time availability and data volume, inter-rater reliability was not established. The data comprised transcripts from all twenty-four episodes in F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Season 8. This provided an extensive volume of data that required significant interpretation in terms of context. There was a limited opportunity, in terms of the availability of additional raters, to establish inter-rater reliability, which is typical in qualitative content analysis. There are significant methodological implications in not establishing inter-rater reliability. Firstly, in terms of identifying and classifying instances of maxim flouting, there was an assumption based on the researcher's interpretation. This means that there is an assumption that some data has been classified in accordance with the researcher's interpretation of conversation context and pragmatic inference. Secondly, there is a

limited opportunity, in terms of not establishing inter-rater reliability, to quantify the extent of agreement that could exist between raters.

Despite these challenges, various steps were taken to improve the accuracy and transparency of the analysis. First, the use of specific and explicit criteria based on Grice’s (1989) cooperative principle and subsequent pragmatic theory discussions (e.g., Cutting, 2002) was employed. Second, the use of a systematic and structured coding table was employed. Third, the original context of the conversations was deliberately revisited and reviewed by constantly checking the original context of the conversations through re-examining the relevant excerpts of the conversations and the corresponding video segments. Therefore, the absence of inter-rater reliability is the major limitation of this study. Future research could improve the reliability of the analysis by establishing inter-rater reliability and assessing the intercoder agreement. Finally, in terms of ethical considerations, the research poses no ethical risk since no research respondents were involved.

This study only collected data from the utterances found in the sitcom’s transcript of each episode. Also, the videos are readily available in a streaming application called Netflix, and the videos are used only for viewing and data collection, not for other purposes that may cause harm or damage to the show, the streaming platform, or the entire cast involved in the show.

RESULTS

Flouted Conversational Maxims

All four maxims were identified using Grice’s (1989) conversational maxims. Provided in Table 2B below is the overall count and its corresponding percentages of the flouted maxims.

Table 2B.
Overall Count and Corresponding Percentages of Maxims Flouted in the Entire Season 8

Maxim	Overall Count	Percentage
Quality	1436	89%
Quantity	28	1.7%
Manner	138	8.6%
Relevance	12	0.7%
Total	1614	100%

Among the four conversational maxims, the maxim of quality was the most flouted maxim across the 24 episodes of FRIENDS season 8. Humor is dependent on flouting. Cutting (2002) believed that the maxim of quality is flouted when a speaker's utterance does not represent what they think; speakers exaggerate their statement (hyperbole); speakers use metaphor; and speakers use irony, banter, or sarcasm. The findings presented above are similar to the studies conducted by Rohmahsih (2022), Putri (2020), Tran and Nguyen (2020), Rafika et al. (2020), Cahyani (2017), and Febriani (2015). All these related studies found that all the conversational maxims are flouted. Furthermore, these results also validate the study of Tran and Nguyen (2020), Rafika et al. (2020), Cahyani (2017), and Febriani (2015), where they found that all of Grice's maxims were flouted by the characters in their selected American television comedy series. Also, this study found that the maxim of quality was the most frequently flouted conversational maxim. This finding is consistent with one of the findings of the study conducted by Tran and Nguyen (2020), Cahyani (2017), Febriani (2015), and Dewi (2014), where they found that 98 the maxim of quality was the most flouted.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of the corpus showed that the four maxims of conversational communication proposed by Grice (1989), namely quality, quantity, manner, and relevance, were flouted in the dialogue of F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Season 8. However, the frequency of the flouting of the maxims was uneven. The maxim of quality was the most frequently flouted maxim in the data set, followed by the maxims of manner, quantity, and relevance. This indicates that the use of humor in the dialogue of sitcoms depends on the flouting of the maxims of quantity, manner, and quality.

The frequency of the flouting of the maxim of quality in the corpus was the highest. This is because the use of humor in the dialogue of sitcoms is based on the flouting of the maxim of quality. As Cutting (2002) mentioned, the flouting of the maxim of quality occurs when the audience infers that the speaker says something that is not true. However, the audience understands the implicature of the statement. Therefore, the flouting of the maxim of quality is an important aspect of the use of humor in the dialogue of sitcoms.

Flouting the maxim of quality. The maxim of quality was the most frequently flouted in the corpus. The statements of the characters were mostly exaggerated and

ironic. An example of this pattern can be observed in Figure 1 below, following the exchange from *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.* Season 8, Episode 1:

Example 1

Phoebe: Who's the father?!

Rachel: Ugh! Look honey, y'know what? I haven't told him yet, so until I do, I don't think I should tell anybody else.

Phoebe: Yeah. That's fine. That's fair. Is it Tag?

Rachel: Phoebe!!

Phoebe: Okay, I'm sorry. I'll stop.

Rachel: Okay.

Phoebe: *Is it Ross? It's Ross, isn't it? Oh my God, it's Joey!*

Rachel: Honey, stop it! I am not going to tell you until I tell him.

Phoebe: *Ah-hah! At least we know it's a him.*

(FRIENDS season 8, episode 1, scene 3, lines 101-110)

Figure 1. *Conversational Exchanges of Rachel and Phoebe in F.R.I.E.N.D.S Season 8, episode 1*

In Figure 1 above, it is seen that Phoebe promises Rachel that she will no longer ask about the father of the baby. However, she again begins to ask about the name. This shows that the dialogue presents an ironic situation. From the pragmatic point of view, it is seen that the dialogue presents an instance of quality flouting. This is because the quality of the given dialogue is not the actual quality of the communicative intention of the speaker.

The humor in the given dialogue is seen because the audience is able to comprehend the inconsistency between the statements of the character. The audience is also able to comprehend the meaning of the dialogue. Therefore, the audience is able to comprehend the humor. Quality flouting is seen as an important pragmatic strategy that is used to bring humor in the dialogue of the given sitcom. The findings of the present study support the arguments of previous studies conducted, such as Dewi (2014) and Febriani (2015), who also showed that ironic and exaggerated statements presented in the dialogue of the sitcom were instances of the maxim of quality flouting,

Flouting the maxim of manner. The second most flouted maxim was the maxim of manner. Flouting of this maxim was seen in the instances where the character expressed their ideas ambiguously and indirectly. The character's statements were humorous because the meaning of the statements was not immediately clear. An example of this pattern can be observed in Figure 2 below, following exchange from *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.* Season 8, Episode 11:

Example 8

Rachel: Well, y'know what? I'm going to see my doctor tomorrow, and I'll ask her about this. Maybe she can give me a pill or something.

Phoebe: Yeah. Yeah, that's what you need, a good...pill.

(No. 2 season 8, ep 11, scene 1, lines 4316- 4318)

Figure 2. *Conversational Exchanges of Rachel and Phoebe in F.R.I.E.N.D.S Season 8, episode 11*

In Figure 2 above, Rachel is getting emotional because of her being pregnant, as she glances at an unknown male individual. In response to this, Phoebe states that what Rachel needs is “a good pill,” spoken with a pause before saying pill. The ambiguity of this statement offers a range of possible meanings that add to the comedic effect of her saying it.

Moreover, this particular statement can be considered as a flouting of the maxim of manner as it illustrates ambiguity. Phoebe does not directly express her intended message; instead, she delivers it ambiguously, which results in an utterance with different possible meanings.

These examples show that ambiguity is a comedic or rhetorical device of humor that can be utilized in a sitcom's dialogue. The sitcom writers present statements that are subject to contextual understanding; thus, the comedic effect comes from the audience's ability to comprehend the implied meaning of the utterance.

Flouting the maxim of quantity. Although less common, cases of flouting the maxim of quantity were also noted in the corpus. Flouting this maxim refers to situations where the characters gave either too much or too little information in relation to the context of the conversation. An example of this pattern can be observed in Figure 3 below, following the exchange from *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.* Season 8, Episode 11:

Example 15

Rachel: Phoebe?

Phoebe: Yeah?

Rachel: Look at that guy by the window, wow!

Phoebe: *He's awfully short and I think he's talking to himself. And to be completely honest, he's not that good in bed.*

Rachel: *Oh, what is wrong with me lately? I mean it's like every guy I see—I mean look here. (Points behind them) Look at that guy for example, I mean normally that's not someone I would- would be attracted to, but right now, with the way I'm feeling, all I want to do is rip off his sweatpants and fanny pack.*

(No. 1, season 8, ep 11, scene 1, lines 4294- 4302)

Figure 3. *Conversational Exchanges of Rachel and Phoebe in F.R.I.E.N.D.S Season 8, episode 11*

In Figure 3 above, the topic of the dialogue between the two ladies, Rachel and Phoebe, is about the man they saw in the café. Phoebe went into an elaborate and unnecessary description of the man's looks as a way of responding to Rachel's observation about the man. The fact that the details provided by Phoebe were so elaborate and unnecessary is the source of humor in the situation.

From the pragmatic perspective, the source of the humor is the fact that the speaker is providing more information than the situation calls for. This is the source of the humor because it is an exaggeration of the situation. The fact that the audience is also surprised by the details provided also contributes to the humor.

Flouting the maxim of relevance. The occurrence of the flouting of the maxim of relevance was not common in the data set. However, it played a role in the creation of the humor in the scenes. Flouting this maxim refers to an instance when a speaker replied to an utterance in a conversation by saying something irrelevant to the initial utterance. An example of this pattern can be observed in Figure 4 below, following the exchange from *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.* Season 8, Episode 3:

Example 20

Joey: I don't have a key, they took mine to give to you.
 Phoebe: What?! They took mine to give to you!
 Joey: Why would they take away our keys?
 Phoebe: Maybe they don't trust us.
 Joey: No that's not it. They let me keep my key the last time they were out of town.
 Phoebe: *You mean the time you broke the ketchup bottle and cleaned it up with Monica's guest towels?*
 Joey: Hey, I washed those!
 Phoebe: No you didn't.
 Joey: *Yeah that didn't sound like me*
 (No. 4, season 8, episode 3, scene 2, lines 934- 943)

Figure 4. *Conversational Exchanges of Joey and Phoebe in F.R.I.E.N.D.S Season 8, episode 3*

In Figure 4 above, Joey and Phoebe are discussing the reasons why their friends, Monica and Chandler, did not leave them a spare key to their apartment. Instead of directly answering Joey's question, Phoebe recounts an earlier experience where he broke a ketchup bottle and used Monica's guest towel to clean up the mess. Although this answer seems irrelevant to the question addressed to her, there is an underlying implication that this is one of the possible reasons why Monica and Chandler did not leave Joey their spare apartment key. The humor is derived from the fact that Phoebe's

answer is irrelevant to Joey's question, allowing the audience to make an underlying connection to her answer.

Overall, the results of this particular study emphasize the importance of conversational maxim flouting as a means of creating sitcom humor. By flouting conversational maxims, speakers can produce utterances that require hearers to infer implied meanings that are related to the literal content of the speech. The fact that flouting the maxim of quality is common indicates that irony, sarcasm, and exaggeration are effective means of creating humor within televised discourse. Also, the other types of flouting are also present, indicating that different types of pragmatic violations are related to humor creation in various ways. These results provide further evidence for the general notion that humor within spoken discourse is related to the manipulation and intentional flouting of conversational maxims. Therefore, the deliberate flouting of conversational maxims allows sitcom writers to produce linguistic situations that require hearers to infer implied meanings that are related to the literal meaning of an utterance.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the occurrence of conversational maxim flouting in the American TV Sitcom *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.* Season 8, using Grice's (1989) Cooperative Principle. Employing qualitative content analysis with descriptive quantitative distribution, the research identified instances where the characters in the TV show deliberately flout conversational maxims to create implicature and humor in the dialogue.

The study found that all four conversational maxims, that is, the maxim of quality, quantity, manner, and relevance, were all flouted in the sitcom. Among these, the maxim of quality was the most flouted in the data. This implies that rhetorical devices such as irony, sarcasm, and exaggeration, among others, which are considered to directly flout the said maxim, are central in creating humor in the sitcom. These rhetorical devices enable the characters to make statements that deviate from the truth and, at the same time, create implied meanings for the audience to recognize.

The study also found instances where the maxim of manner, the maxim of quantity, and the maxim of relevance were flouted, albeit in fewer instances. These instances also create humor in the sitcom. They also show how the use of conversational maxim flouting is a pragmatic device for creating humor in TV Sitcom dialogue. Finally, this study has shown the importance of conversational maxim flouting in the

creation of humor in TV Sitcom discourse. This is evident in the various dialogues in the sitcom where the characters deliberately flout conversational maxims to create implied meanings and create conversational humor.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and limitations of the present research, several points may be considered for future research: First, future studies may investigate other seasons of *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.* or other television sitcoms to compare the findings of maxim flouting in different contexts of sitcom discourse. It may offer a deeper understanding of the manipulation of conversational principles in different varieties of comedic discourse.

Further research may also expand the scope of the investigation of pragmatic phenomena of humor in television sitcoms. It may investigate conversational implicatures or rhetorical devices used in the discourse of humor or the use of humor by different characters with different varieties of humorous style. It may offer a deeper understanding of the construction of humor in television sitcom discourse.

Further research may also use multiple coders in the process of coding in order to establish inter-rater reliability. It may offer a deeper and more reliable understanding of the classification of maxim flouting in television sitcom discourse.

Finally, further research may also expand the scope of the investigation of pragmatic phenomena of humor in television sitcoms in the context of the Philippine media. Such study may provide comparative context on the pragmatic phenomenon of humor.

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