

AN ANALYSIS OF HUMOR OF *STUDENTS CHITCHAT* PAGE ON FACEBOOK WITHIN COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE FRAMEWORK: A CASE STUDY ON THE STUDENTS GROUP PAGE

Agnes Arum Budiana¹, Prettiristra², Doris Sukma³ Ari Satria⁴

^{1,2,3,4}Lecturers of English Study Program of State Polytechnic of Bengkalis
State Polytechnic of Bengkalis

Jl. Bathin Alam-Sungai Alam, Bengkalis-Riau, 28711 Phone: (+6277)24566,

Fax: (+2766) 800 1000, I n d o n e s i a .

e-mail: agnes@polbeng.ac.id , prettirista@polbeng.ac.id

dorissukma@polbeng.ac.id, arisatria@polbeng.ac.id

Abstract: *The cooperative principle proposes four maxims in communication. They are the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. When any of the four maxims is violated or flouted, misunderstanding or implicature, and thus humor might be generated. This study attempts to describe theories in this framework to analyze the maxims violation on students' humor of Students. This is a case study on sophisticated issue in the Students Group Page. It used qualitative study method to generate in-depth understanding about humor of Students Chitchat Page on Facebook through observing the humor which contradicts with the common sense. Techniques of data collection in this study were conducted by note taking and observation while the students posted the humor story on that Facebook page. In Students Chitchat Page on Facebook the four maxims are flouted, violated, infringed, opted out or suspended, so that one remark of humor after another is created.*

Keywords: *Cooperative Principle, Humor, Maxims.*

INTRODUCTION

The development of globalization leads everyone to connect with other people and other cultures easily. Subsequently, people have easier access to English culture in many aspects, especially from social networks in internet. Among them, Facebook is still gaining on popularity.

Students Chitchat is one of the community pages on Facebook which

can be accessed by everyone in the world. This page is for college students, high school students and teens to share academic and social knowledge, and get study help, advice to choose university, career, and student life. It has many features about students' life such as life advice, hobbies and interests, study center, academic help, humor and funny stuff. Admin of the page will update new information

every day. Since 2011 until now, Students Chitchat has been popular all over the world. There are 16.680 people like only in two years from the first time it was created. The humor of this page often shows contradiction with the environment, action and common sense and hence generates jokes and funny things. Humor, is one of the most important features of the page and also the main mechanism to proceed. As time goes by, this characteristic of the page has not changed.

There are some relevant past studies on cooperative principle violation to raise humor. One of which is done by Ahmad Ulliyadhi Satria Raharja entitled Maxim of Cooperative Principle Violation by Dodit Mulyanto in Stand-up Comedy Indonesia Season 4. The aims of this research are to classify the maxims of cooperative principle and to explain how Dodit Mulyanto violates cooperative principle to raise humor in Stand Up Comedy Indonesia season 4. Different with that past study, this study attempts to is to describe the maxims of cooperative principle and to explain how the students violates cooperative principle to raise humor on the

Students' Chitchat page on Facebook.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This part describes the previous studies related to humor as one of the focus on this study and the brief description about Student Chitchat Page on Facebook.

Past Related Studies about Humor

As Mark Twin said, humor is mankind's greatest blessing. It can add interesting elements to the topic of communication, bring happiness and pleasant feeling to people, change a person's mood, sooth a sad heart and even construct a way to a happy life. Also humor is specifically divided into visual humor and verbal humor, represented by pictures and actions, funny utterances respectively. Since humor is playing an important role in human life, a great many scholars have been attracted to explore the mystery of it throughout the history. The field of research range from philosophy, psychology, literature to linguistics.

Among the traditional researches on humor, the Superiority Theory, the Release Theory and the Incongruity Theory are among the most influential ones. The Superiority

Theory can be tracked as far as Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes (1981) defines humor as “the sudden glory arising from the sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others.” According to Hobbes’s view, humor is considered to be an expression of superiority. We laugh at other’s misfortune or shortcoming, which reflect our sense of superiority. Commonly, the superiority theory is representation as an endeavor to account for all cases of humor. For example, Bardon (2005) says “The superiority theory is the theory that the humor we find in comedy and in life is based on ridicule, wherein we regard the object of amusement as inferior and/or ourselves as superior”

Further, the release theory is conducted from the angle of psychology. It points out that laughter is a kind of release from social sanction physically and psychologically. Freud is the main spokesman for the release theory. He held that for some time people long for getting rid of the restraint set by morality, law and some other aspects of human life, back to a stage of being relaxed, free and pleased, not to worry about anything (Freud, 1976). Humor is just right to

provide human with such possibility. By enjoying humor, people may release their burden and gain pleasant mood.

Being frequently used, the incongruity theory is one of the most influential approaches in the researches of humor and laughter. The main point in this theory is that “laughter arises from the view of two or more inconsistent, unsuitable or incongruous parts or circumstances, considered as united in one complex object or assemblage.” (Attardo, 1997, P.396).

As the linguistic research on humor in modern times develops, both the semantic research and the pragmatic research gain achievements. In the field of semantic study, the Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH), an important theory claimed by Raskin, and the General Theory of Humor (GTH), developed by Attardo (1994) gained wide recognition.

“SSHT explains the meaning of every sentence in every context it occurs. The theory recognizes the existence of the boundary between the knowledge of language and knowledge of the world. As a linguistic theory, SSTH does not account for what’s on the other sides of the boundary. However, it pushes the boundary much

further out than any other available formal semantic theory.”(Raskin, 1985, P.67)

GTH is developed from SSTH. It includes more linguistic field than SSTH, such as the theory of narrativity and the textual linguistics, by broadening the scope with the logical mechanism, the target, the narrative, the language and the situation.

Besides these three traditional theories and two modern semantic theories, pragmatic approaches are also used to study humor. This paper will conduct humor study within the frameworks two important pragmatic theories, using the humor of *Students Chitchat* Page in Facebook as a case study.

A Short Introduction about the Student Chitchat Page on Facebook

Students Chitchat, one of the most popular page in Facebook, has been recently created, and at the same time been introduced into *Facebook world*, which immediately causes a stir especially among young people. Besides enriching our knowledge, the introduction of this page will also promote our understanding of English culture and help cultivate our interest in English. This paper will try to analyze

the visual humor of the *Students Chitchat* Page in Facebook from cooperative principle framework so as to appreciate the language style of this page better.

Started in June 2011, *Students Chitchat* Page in Facebook has 16.680 likes. It is one of the community pages in Facebook which can be accessed by every people in the world. This page is especially for college students, high school students and teens to share academic and social knowledge, and get study help, advice to choose university, career, and student life. It has many features about students' life such as life advice, hobbies and interests, study center, academic help, humor and funny stuff. Admin of the page always update new information every day. Humor in this page will brighten up people's day with a laugh. So that is why this paper conducted humor study within the framework of the cooperative principle, using the humor of *Students Chitchat* Page on Facebook as a case study.

The Cooperative Principle Framework

People have to obey a certain system of interaction in order to communicate successfully. Herbert

Paul Grice, developed a system of interaction for successful communication known as the Cooperative Principle (CP) and its maxims based on the philosophy standard of language. Grice (1989) states the Cooperative Principle as follows: “Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of talk exchange in which you are engaged.” Furthermore, he classified the maxims into 4 types:

- a. Maxim of Quality
- b. Maxim of Quantity
- c. Maxim of Relation
- d. Maxim of Manner.

Quantity: make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of the exchange). Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

Quality: Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

Relation: Be relevant.

Manner: Avoid obscurity of expression. Avoid ambiguity. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity). Be orderly.

The least interesting case is when a speaker observes all the maxims as in the following example:

Example 1

Husband : Where are the car keys?

Wife : They are on the table in the hall.

The wife has answered clearly (Manner), truthfully (Quality), has given just the right amount of information (Quantity) and has directly addressed her husband’s goal in asking the question (Relation). She has said precisely what she meant, no more and no less, and has generated no implicature (i.e. there is no distinction to be made here between what she says and what she means, there is no additional level of meaning).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative method to generate in-depth understanding about humor of Students Chitchat Page on Facebook through observing the humor which contradicts with the common sense. Techniques of data collection in this study were conducted by note taking and observation while the students posted humor story on the Students Chitchat

Page on Facebook. The subjects who joined the page were varied while the topics of humor conversation or story were varied also. The topics could be personal matter, education, school subjects, and so on. The data indicated that the interlocutors of the humor conversation or story observe the maxims. In *Students Chitchat* Page in Facebook these maxims are flouted, violated, infringed, opted out or suspended, so that one remark of humor after another is created. This study would not differentiate them and use non-observance as the generalized term.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Detailed analysis will be made in the following.

A. Non-observances of Maxims of Quality

Non-observances of maxims of quality occur when the speaker says something which is blankly untrue or for which he or she lacks adequate evidence.

The posted story 1

Interviewer : There are 500 bricks on a plane. You drop one outside. How many are left?
Applicant : That's easy, 499
Interviewer : What are the three steps to put an elephant into a fridge?

Applicant : Open the fridge. Put the elephant in. Close the fridge.
Interviewer : What are the four steps to put a deer into the fridge?
Applicant : Open the fridge. Take the elephant out. Put the deer in. Close the fridge.
Interviewer : It's lion's birthday. All the animals are there except one, why?
Applicant : Because the deer is in the fridge.
Interviewer : How does an old woman cross a swamp filled with crocodiles?
Applicant : She just crosses it because the crocodiles are at the lion's birthday.
Interviewer : Last question. In the end the old lady still died, why?
Applicant : Err.... I guess she drowned?
Interviewer : No! She was hit by the brick. You may leave now.

The dialog shows that both the speakers say some sentences which are blatantly untrue or for which they lack adequate evidence. The implicature is generated by the speakers' saying the things which are patently false and irrational. The reader of the dialog can feel the humorous way since the interviewer appears to be trying to deceive the applicant in some way, he was forced to look for another plausible interpretation. The funniest thing about this example is that in the end of the dialog, the applicant failed to answer the last question that was the lady died just because she was hit by the brick which was dropped from the plane.

B. Non-observance of Maxims of Quantity

The maxims of quantity states that one's contribution should provide sufficient, but not too much information. In *Students Chitchat* Page in Facebook, the geeky people often provide much more information than enough to be socially appropriate. Their social incapacity often creates surprise for the hearer as well as the readers, and hence, the humor is produced.

The posted story 2

Teacher: "Why didn't you study?"

Student: "A year has 365 days for you to study. After taking away 52 Sundays, there are only 313 days left. There are 50 days in the summer that is way too hot to work so there are only 263 days left. We sleep 8 hours a day, in a year, that counts up to 122 days so now we're left with 141 days. If we fooled around for only 1 hour a day, 15 days are gone, so we are left with 126 days. We spend 2 hours eating each day, 30 days are used in this way in the year, and we are left with 96 days in our year. We spend 1 hour a day speaking to friends and family, that takes away 15 days more and we are left with 81 days. Exams and tests take up at least 35 days in your year; hence you are only left with 46 days. Taking off approximately 40 days of holidays, you are only left with 6 days. Say you are sick for a minimum of 3 days; you're left with 3 days in the year to study! Let's say you only go out for 2 days. You're left with 1 day. But

that 1 day is your birthday. That's why I did not study. And in b/w teacher you did not wish me on my birthday."

The students provided superfluous information beyond the teacher's expectation and puzzled him. The readers might laugh at the student's unnecessary explanation. Instead, he answered the teacher's question in non-observance circumstance.

The posted story 3

Teacher: Why are crows black in colour?
Students: Because Crow says Cow (kaow-kaow), COW gives MILK, MILK is WHITE, WHITE is very BRIGHT, Brightness gives future to STUDENTS, STUDENTS are the leaders of TOMORROW, TOMORROW never comes before TODAY, TODAY I should go COLLEGE, COLLEGE is the home of KNOWLEDGE, KNOWLEDGE has nothing to do people like BUFFALOW! But Crows sit on BUFFALOW, BUFFALOWS are Black. So Crow is black.

Similar to the posted story 2, the students provided superfluous answer. It was a kind of non-observance occurs also when a speaker provides more than enough information which in turn created humor.

C. Non-observances of Maxims of Relation

The maxim of relation is exploited by making a response or

observation which is very irrelevant to the topic in hand.

The posted story 4

Teacher : Jimmy, why aren't you writing?

Jimmy : I don't has a pencil.

Teacher : Jimmy, that's not a correct sentence. The correct way is: I don't have a pencil; he doesn't have a pencil; we don't have a pencil.

Jimmy : Who stole all the pencils then?

Jimmy was grammatically incorrect with his first utterance. The teacher tried to right Jimmy's utterance by giving the correct examples. The funny thing about this example is that Jimmy gave irrelevant response by asking who stole all the pencils. Here, by flouting the maxim of relation, Jimmy generated the implicature that he did not understand the teacher's correction at all.

D. Non-observance of Maxims of Manner

People may use obscure or disorderly language, whether by choice or not. On such occasions non-observances of maxims of manner may occur.

The posted conversation 5

Chemistry professor : Now, class. Observe closely the worms. Now, what lesson can we derive from this experiment?

Johnny : Drink whiskey and you won't get worms!

The chemistry professor taught the 5th grade class a lesson about the

evils of alcohol, so he produced an experiment that involved a glass of water, a glass of whiskey and two worms. The professor was putting a worm first into the water. The worm in the water writhed about, as happy as a worm in water could be. The second worm, he put into the whiskey. It writhed painfully, and quickly sank to the bottom, dead as a doornail. When the professor asked what lesson the students could derive from the experiment, Little Johnny, who naturally sat in back, raised his hand and wisely responded, "Drink whiskey and you won't get worms." Here, the humor comes from the even greater embarrassment. Johnny made such funny mistakes for he was eager to show off his haphazard knowledge.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The humor of *Students Chitchat* Page in Facebook was analyzed within the framework of the cooperative principle, which was proved to be very efficient in explaining the creation of comic effects. This analysis is hoped to help with people's appreciation as well as creation of humor. For a deeper understanding of four maxims in

communication, the future research might conduct a mixed mode research (qualitative and quantitative). The interlocutors on the group's conversation or the group's story can be classified into a bigger scope in order to get a study finding which can be generated to all genders and ages.

REFERENCES

- Thomas Hobbes (1981) *Leviathan*, p. 125. Harmondsworth, Penguin.
- Attardo, S. (1994). *Linguistic Theory of Humor*. Mouton de Gruyter.
- Attardo, S. (1997). *The Semantic Foundations of Cognitive Theories of Humor*. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 10-4, 395—420.
- Freud, S. (1976). *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*. London: Penguin Books.
- Raskin, V. (1985). *Semantic Mechanisms of Humor*. Dordrecht and Boston: Reidel Publishing Company.
- Thomas, J. (1995). *Meaning in Interaction: an Introduction to Pragmatics*. London: Longman Group limited.
- Lintott, Sheila. (2016). *Superiority in Humor Theory*. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, pp.347-358.
- Scruton, Roger. 1987. "Laughter." In *The Philosophy of Laugh- ter and Humor*, edited by John Morreall, 156–171. SUNY Press.
- Shaw, Joshua. 2010. "Philosophy of Humor." *Philosophy Com- pass* 5: 112–126.
- Smuts, Aaron. 2006. "Humor." *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <http://www.iep.utm.edu/humor/>.
- Solomon, Robert C. 1992. *Entertaining Ideas: Popular Philo- sophical Essays (1970–1990)*. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books.
- Grice, H. P. (1989). *Studies in the way of words*. Cambridge Harvard University Press.
- Grundy, P. (2000). *Doing Pragmatics*. London: Arnold.
- Gudykunst, W. B., et al. (1996). The influence of cultural individualism-collectivism, self-construals, and individual values on communication styles across cultures. *Human Communication Research*, 22(4), 510-543.
- Hall, E. T., & Hall, M. R. (1989). *Understanding Cultural Differences*. Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press.
- Raharja, Ahmad Ulliyadhi Satria. (2019). *Maxim of Cooperative Principle Violation by Dodit Mulyanto in Stand-up Comedy Indonesia Season 4*. *Journal of Pragmatics Research* Vol. 1, No.1, 2019, pp.43-61