An Analysis of the Violation of Maxims In
Malam Minggu Miko Situation Comedy

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to find out the violation of the maxims produced in Malam Minggu Miko comedy situation. Grice cited in Yule (2006) proposed cooperative principle to control the conversation between speaker and hearer that exchange information in their talk. He also wrote that a participant in a talk exchange may fail to fulfil a maxim in various ways, one of them is violation. In obtaining the data, the writer took four videos of Malam Minggu Miko humour series in You Tube that have the highest rating of viewers. The episodes are Malam Minggu Miko episode of Nissa, Malam Minggu Miko episode of Miranda, Malam Minggu Miko episode of Malam Terakhir Miko and Malam Minggu Miko episode of Malam Penembakan Sasha. After that, the writer transcribed the data and identified the utterances that violated the maxim. In analysing the data, the writer applied a qualitative approach. The steps taken were first, classifying the violation of maxims proposed by Grice found in the data, then analysing how often each of the four maxims is violated and if whether or not there is one maxim that is violated most frequently. The results show that the violation of the maxim of relation, found 13 times, is the most frequent occurrence than the other maxims. It is shown by the production of the irrelevant talks towards the context of the talk.

Keywords: Humour; Situation Comedy; The Maxim of Relation; Violation of The Maxims

1. Introduction

Apparently, humour is anything done or said purposefully or unexpectedly and found to be comical or amusing. Ross (2005:1) states the definition of humour is something that aims to make a person laugh or smile. It is as a condition that can cause people laugh in everyday life. However, humour appears not just as an entertainment but also has characteristics or form and function of its own.

Today, humour serves in several media such as books, television, radio and even online media. Television is one of the entertainments that contains humour and achieves large audiences. Situation Comedy or sitcom is one of the TV programs which contains humour. It has a series of weekly shows based on a primary idea of humorous situation and characters. According to Ross (2005:89) the source of humour in sitcom is playing around with the comic possibilities of those particular character types interacting with each other in that situation, and may not involve lines or gags which are funny in isolation.

Recently, there are many Indonesian situation comedy (henceforth sitcom) programs such as Warkop DKI, OB, Bajaj Bajuri, Suami-Suami Takut Istri, Kejar Tayang, Abdel dan Temon and so forth. The newest sitcom that should be taken into consideration is Malam Minggu Miko. The sitcom, which was firstly broadcasted on 29th August 2012, reaches many viewers that were indicated by the rate of viewers in YouTube. For 22 episodes, it reaches 10 million viewers and the increasing of the viewer around 800 thousands in 3 days (Gitomartoyo, 2013).

In relation to humour, Pan (2012) analysed the basic linguistics of humour by applying Gricean Cooperative Principle. Furthermore, he described the relation between the creation of humour and the violation of cooperative principle; and criticized on Gricean cooperative principle in which the focus was on limitations Gricean cooperative principle. This study is to prove Pan’s point about the relation between the creation of humour and the violation of Cooperative principle.

Another study by Kresnawaty (2003) showed Flouting Maxims of Conversation That Arose Humour in The Adventures of Tintin Comic Books. In her study, Kresnawaty overestimated that when one of the
participants in conversation deliberately fails to fulfill a certain maxim conversation, it does not mean that communication meets the end but it can be built on humourist’s purpose.

A further research is by Mayasari (2012) “Conversation Implicature in March 14th Episode Sentilan Sentilun” in which she analysed the conversation implicature of Gricean’s theory produced by the speakers in the talk show. The finding overlooked the participants in Sentilan- sentilun talk show flout their utterances in order to convey social criticism and information humorously.

The research gap between the previous researches and this study lies on the object of the research. This study concerns on analysing the humorous utterances produced by the main characters in the comedy series of Malam Minggu Miko that violate the maxims during the characters’ talk exchange. Thus, the problems of this study are formulated to analyse the utterances which violate the maxims in Malam Minggu Miko sitcom, to discover how often each of the four maxims is violated, and to interpret if there is one maxim mostly violated in Malam Minggu Miko sitcom.

2. The Violation of Maxim of Cooperative Principle

In communication, sometimes we found a gap of presupposition between speaker and hearer. The gap of presupposition could occur when one of the participants does not provide the full information in conversation and it will not cooperate with each other.

The cooperative principle stated by Grice says “Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged” (Cited in Yule, 2006:130). The Cooperative principle is a theory of principle between speaker and hearer when they exchange the information in their talk. Furthermore, Grice defines the cooperative principle into four sub-principles (maxims) namely:

1. The maxim of Quantity is related to quantity of providing the information.
   Sub – maxims:
   • Make your contribution as informative as is required
   • Do not make your contribution more informative than is required

2. The maxim of Quality is related to the truth-value of the utterance.
   Sub – maxims:
   • Do not say what you believe to be false
   • Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence

3. The maxim of Relation is related to correlation between one utterances and other utterance.
   Sub – maxim: Be relevant

4. The maxim of Manner is related to the way the utterances that produced.
   Sub – maxim:
   • Be perspicuous
   • Avoid ambiguity
   • Avoid obscurity
   • Be Brief
   • Be orderly

Speaker and hearer do not always obey cooperative principle in their conversation. Grice wrote that a participant in a talk exchange may fail to fulfil a maxim in various ways, which include the following:

1. He may quietly and unostentatiously violate a maxim; if so, in some cases he will be liable to mislead.

2. He may opt out from the operation both of the maxim and of the CP; he may say, indicate, or allow it to become plain that he is unwilling to cooperate in the way the maxim requires. He may say, for example, I cannot say more; my lips are sealed.

3. He may be faced with a clash: He may be unable, for example, to fulfil the first maxim quantity (Be as informative as is required) without violating the second maxim of Quality (Have adequate evidence for what you say.)

4. He may flout a maxim; that is, he may blatantly fail to fulfil it. On the assumption that the speaker is able to fulfil the maxim and to do so without violating another maxim (because of a clash), is
not opting out, and is not, in view of the blateness of his performance, trying to mislead, the hearer is faced with a minor problem: how can his saying what he did say be reconciled with the supposition that he is observing the overall C: This situation is one that characteristically gives rise to a conversational implicature; and when a conversational implicature is generated in this way, I shall say that a maxim is being exploited (Grice, 1989:49).

Nevertheless, Attardo and Raskin in Xiaosu (2010) claimed that the violation of one or more of Gricean Maxims establish prominently high percentage of humorous conversation (in this case, the conversation which appears in sitcom). Because of the violation, speaker may violate in order to trigger hearer’s laughter. Attardo (1990) gives examples of each maxim violation:

1. Quantity: “Excuse me, do you know what time is it?” – “Yes.”
4. Quality: “Why did the Vice President fly to Panama?” – “Because the fighting is over” (from Johnny Carson’s The Tonight Show in January 19, 1990)

The examples above violate the maxims rather than flout or exploit the maxims, i.e. they fail to conform their ‘recommendations’ and thus constitute examples of non-cooperative behaviour. In spite of the examples do make sense and are understood, they are seen as jokes. Grice (1989:49) sees that the speaker violating one or more maxims will be liable to mislead. Furthermore Attardo cited in Mooney (2004:915) states that there is a built consensus within humourus texts which violate one or several maxims. When the effect of the humorous text or utterance is rigged, the violation of the maxims is produced by speaker to mislead the hearer to believe the ‘normal’ reliable information (cf. Morreal, 1983, :79-82 in Ahmed, 2007).

3. The Analysis of Violation of the Maxim

Humour is a condition that can cause people laugh in everyday life. Humour triggers the person’s laughter and amuse. In conversation, there is Cooperative principle to analyse and control people’s conversation when speakers and hearers exchange information. However, people may not always obey the cooperative principle. Should this happen, then the maxims are violated.

In this study, the writer took four episodes of Malam Minggu Miko sitcom based on the criterion of the highest rates on YouTube. The violation of the maxims are analysed as follow:

Excerpt (1) (Malam Minggu Miko Episode of Nissa)
Miko: “Gimana, udah keren belom buat first date?”
Rian: “I loe kayak pedofil akhir baliq tau gak?”
Miko: “Ini bukannya keren? Gue lihat Olga pake gini di TV.”

Miko would have a first date today. He was so excited and satisfied about his outfit but, his friend Rian did not think so because Miko wore V neck t-shirt and sunglasses. Rian thought that Miko’s style was not match for dating with Annisa. Rian was arguing that Miko did not look macho like a real man.

In this sentence, according to the cooperative principle theory proposed by Grice (cited in Yule 2006) Rian violated the maxim of quality and the maxim of relation. Rian insulted Miko by saying “loa kayak pedofil akhir baliq tau gak?”. Rian actually violated the maxim of quality by making an excuse about Miko’s style. Rian did not give the truth-value of his utterance. The comment is ironically to tease Miko’s style. Actually, Miko did not like a paedophilia as what Rian said. According to Rian, Miko’s style did not match for his first date. Rian’s question toward Miko was actually a bit obsecure. He produced an irrelevant commentary between fashion style and paedophile. Paedophile is a psychiatric disorder characterized by a primary or exclusive sexual interest toward prepubescent children meanwhile fashion style is a particular form of dresses. Rian violated two maxims in his utterance to make a humour in this scene.

Excerpt (2) (Malam Minggu Miko Episode of Miranda)
Miko: “Yan, yan loe mesti tau. Si Miranda, Miranda tadi BBM gue terus dia bilang dia lagi deket-deket sini, terus dia bilang “leh mpir ga?”.”
Rian: “Bergelambir enggak? Sliapa yang bergelambir?”
Rian was doing his assignments in his bedroom. Suddenly, Miko opened Rian’s bedroom without knocking on the door. He looked very excited and a little worried about Miranda’s BBM (Blackberry Messenger). Rian was surprised and told Miko to calm down before he told his problem. Therefore, he told all the conversation between Miranda and him. However, Rian was confused about the conversation between Miranda and Miko.

In this situation, Miko violated the maxim of quality and the maxim of relation. Miko, as the first speaker, wanted the opinions of Rian as the hearer about Miranda’s desire to come to their house. Miranda sent the incomplete structure of question to Miko “leh mpir ga?” which means that “boleh mampir enggak?”. Miko actually understood the meaning of “leh mpir ga?”. However, while Miko was telling the BBM between Miranda and him to Rian, Rian looked confused about their BBM. Rian repeated “leh mpir ga?” as “Bergelambir enggak? Siapa yang bergelambir?”. In this case, Miko actually violated the maxim of quantity. Miko provided less information of Miranda’s question to Rian as the hearer. He expected Rian to understand about the conversation between him and Miranda. However, the less information about the question caused Rian to violate the maxim of relation. His question was not related to the answers of Miko’s question before. Actually, the question was about Miranda’s desire to come to their house not about having sag skin or somebody who had a sag skin.

According to the depiction from the explanation above, a maxim of quantity and a maxim of relation are violated in this conversation. Miko violated the maxim of quantity by providing incomplete information and also Rian violated the maxim of relation by not providing information related with the topic talked about. Visiting someone and having sag skin is an irrelevant topic in the conversation. Accordingly, the violation which is more than one maxim makes in this conversation humorous.

Excerpt (3) (Malam Minggu Miko Episode of Malam Terakhir Miko)

Miko : Mas Anca
Anca : iya mas?
Miko : gue pergi dulu ya. Jaga rumah!
Anca : Iya mas, saya di rumah aja sendiri. Mas Miko pasti bisa ngejalanin hidupnya sendiri tanpa saya.
Miko : loe kenapa sih? Kepala loe kebentur lagi?
Rian : gue pergi juga?
Anca : Iya mas, Mas Rian juga udah nggak ngebutuhin saya lagi. Saya memang enggak b erguna, saya hanya sebutir pasir di padang pasir yang luas.
Rian : loe kenapa jadi labil gini sih? Aturan tuh Miko yang labil, dia mau nembak cewek, palingan juga ditolak.
Miko : emang gitu?
Rian : ya elah, biasanya juga kayak gitu.

Anca is a house assistant in Miko’s house. Before he left, he asked Anca to keep his house. Anca thought that he was no longer needed as a house assistant in Miko’s house because lately Miko and Rian did not need his help. He thought too much about Miko’s behavior toward him lately.

Anca violated two maxims, the maxim of quantity and the maxim of relation. He obviously gave more information than Miko would like to hear. He violated the maxim of quantity by giving a rambling answer to Miko’s question. According to the maxim of quantity, the information should be informative as is required. He exaggerated his feeling to give the information. He used a metaphorical sentence to describe his feeling. He said saya hanya sebutir pasir di padang pasir yang luas to describe that he was a useless man like the sand in the desert. Besides Anca violated the maxim of quantity, he also violated the maxim of relation. Anca gave an irrelevant comment that was tied to the violation of the maxim of quantity. The information was not needed for the talk exchange between Miko and him.

Excerpt (4) (Malam Minggu Miko Episode of Malam Penembakan Sasha)

Rian : “ Ya mas Anca , kenapa mas?”
Anca : “ Ya mas. Saya udah di Jakarta, dari sini saya kemana ya mas?”
Anca : “Ke Ragunan? Yang kebun binatang itu? Yang sering ada di televisi?”
Rian : Iya bener.”
Anca asked Rian where he should go when he came to Jakarta. Rian told him to take the public transportation to the Ragunan district. Because it was the first time for Anca in Jakarta, he only knew that Ragunan was a zoo in Jakarta. Actually, Rian did not mean the Ragunan zoo but Jagakarsa which was near of Ragunan district. In this scene, there was a misunderstanding between Rian and Anca to describe the district where Rian lived.

Rian violated the maxim of relation to answer Anca’s question. Anca’s question did not correlate with Rian’s explanation about his house. Rian mentioned Ragunan as one of the districts in East Jakarta, not the Ragunan Zoo. According to the Cooperative principle that is purposed by Grice (1989), the maxim of Relation is related to correlation between one utterances and other utterance. In this conversation, Anca violated the maxim of relation. However, the next utterance is produced by Rian to create humour. Rian said *Emang gue pacaran ama gorilla?* to Anca. Rian also violated the maxim of relation that gave no correlation of his utterance contribution. There was no correlation between the knowledge of Primate in Ragunan Zoo and being the lovers of Gorilla.

The result of the analysis shows that the maxims are violated by the characters in the four episodes of Malam Minggu Miko. There are 27 the maxim violations of cooperative principle in the four episodes. The occurrence of the violation can be read in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violation of the maxim</th>
<th>Occurrence</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manner</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relation</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>44.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. the occurrence violation of the maxims in four episodes of Malam Minggu Miko

The most frequent violation occurrence in four episodes of *Malam Minggu Miko* is found in the maxim of relation. The occurrences of the maxim of relation are 12 times while the maxims of quality, of quantity and of manner are not violated as often as the maxim of relation. Thus there is a clear difference in the number of violations. The maxim of quality is only violated 7 times. The maxim of manner is violated 4 times of the total utterances and violation of the maxim of quantity emerges 5 times.

In the conversation of *Malam Minggu Miko*, there is an irrelevant perception of the speakers’ thought and the hearers’. If the speaker or the hearer does not have the same perception, misinterpretation tends to occur. Because of the misinterpretation of the context, as the viewer who has the same background of the context sees this as the source of humour in *Malam Minggu Miko* sitcom.

### 4. Conclusion

*Malam Minggu Miko* is one of the sitcoms in which its humours derive from the utterances of daily conversation among the characters. In relation to the conversation, there is a cooperative principle to analyse and control people’s conversation between speaker and hearer in the exchange of information. Since people may not always obey the cooperative principle, they may violate the maxims.

The cooperative principle and the four maxims are violated frequently in *Malam Minggu Miko* sitcom. When the cooperative principle is violated, humor is created. The maxim of relation is the most frequent maxim to be violated in *Malam Minggu Miko* sitcom.

### 5. References


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