

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Conversation in movies is used to advance the narrative, establish relationships, and imply information that is not directly articulated. Clark (1996) states that “language use is really a form of joint action.” This suggests that writers use information that readers are already familiar with and that is generally known in order to create sentences that readers can comprehend (Levinson, 2000).

The factors that cause such lines to support interpretations that are not literal are explained by using a pragmatic approach. Grice's Cooperative Principle defines the principles of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner, suggesting speakers to “make your conversational contribution such as is required” (Grice, 1975). Speakers may intentionally break these principles by conveying statements that are too much or too little information, clearly false, seem irrelevant, or generate ambiguity, not only to initiate dialogue but also to create implicature. Relevance Theory explains this: an obvious difference leads the audience to seek a deeper comprehension, as every observed activity reflects a “presumption of optimal relevance” (Sperber & Wilson, 1995).

However, a mechanism alone is unable to determine the tools that are included into the script. Berger's taxonomy classifies techniques such as repartee, bombast, literalness, misunderstanding, irony, sarcasm, exaggeration, and puns and wordplay as initial strategies (Berger, 1993). This is how Grice and Berger's framework cooperate. Berger demonstrates the development of a line in order to

create ambiguity in the mind of the audience (the strategy that can be applied in terms of wording and context), while Grice demonstrates the reason for this (flout implicature). In addition, this implies that there are typical “incongruity” and reversal instances (Raskin, 1985; Koestler, 1964), or what Koestler referred to as “bisociation,” without moving away from the fundamental principles of observable language.

According to previous research studies, verbal humor is more likely to be planned out than to be spontaneous. For example, conversational studies have shown that joking is dependent on the way that individuals interact with each other, their point of view, and their tone in which they express themselves (Norrick, 1993; Culpeper & Haugh, 2014; Holtgraves, 2014). Theories that are based on scripts and knowledge, on the other hand, provide an explanation for the information that audiences acquire (Attardo, 1994; Attardo & Raskin, 1991). When they are considered together, they indicate that there is a clear situation: when a conversational expectation is clearly violated, the listener is instructed to figure out what the speaker intended, which often results in laughing.

This particular combination of frameworks is explored in extensive detail in *Bottoms* (2023). *Bottoms* (2023) is a modern comedy film about teenagers that depends on casual language, double wordplay, contextual changes, and humorous over- or understatement in order to effectively portray the situations in which flouting maxims and Berger's verbal humor techniques are used. In brief, this research describes how a narrative film without a laugh track may generate humor by way of wording and context. It also explains how audience are able to detect signs that indicate that they should read the content in a non-literal interpretation.

Maxim flouting is employed as the mechanism that causes reinterpretation, and Berger's techniques serve as essential tools in this process.

1.2 Research Problems

This research aims to address and provide solutions to the following problems identified as primary to the scope and objectives of the study:

1. Which Gricean maxims do the characters flout, and how can we identify each case from wording and context?
2. Which verbal humor techniques arise from these floutings, and how can we explain and analyze their operation in the excerpts?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This research is conducted with the intention of achieving the following objectives that have been identified as primary to the scope and objectives of the study:

1. To identify the flouted Gricean maxims in each excerpt using wording and context evidence.
2. To explain and analyze the verbal humor techniques that arise from those floutings, showing how they work in the excerpts.

1.4 Significance of the Study

There are theoretical and practical implications to this research. In theory, it shows a clear way to study humorous dialogue by combining two things together: (1) when characters flout Grice's cooperative principles (which tells readers to pay attention between the lines), and (2) the specific verbal humor techniques by Berger (1993)

that writers use to make the joke work, like pun, irony, and exaggeration. This concept is also simplified through this method: examine for four maxim floutings in the data (too little or too much information, obvious lie, change of subject, unclear meaning), and then explain the chain (flout → implicature → humor) so that others may do the same thing. The research illustrates how wording and context may use pun, irony, exaggeration, etc. to make communication signals humorous through an examination of *Bottoms* (2023). In addition to providing practitioners with a clear and practical strategy for writing, evaluating, or instructing on how to produce humorous dialogue, this also helps reviewers and viewers in understanding why conversations are humorous.

1.5 Previous Studies

Several studies have used Grice's Cooperative Principle to examine how speakers flout conversational maxims and how they lead to humor. These studies demonstrate that conversation may be humorous and practical in different contexts. They have similar objectives but different research subjects, methods, and theories. The researcher reviewed ten studies to explain and guide current research.

One group of studies examines sitcoms where laugh tracks or immediate audience responses can sometimes improve the humor. For example, Addiningrum (2018) examined maxim flouting in *Hannah Montana*. The researcher collected the data from the first seven episodes of the first season, which produced 126 maxim flouting cases. The researcher used Berger's rhetorical devices (1997) and Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975) in the study. According to the results, all four maxims were flouted; however, the maxim of Quality was flouted the most (60 times).

Exaggeration was the most common rhetorical device, followed by irony and ridicule.

Similarly, Krisdwiyani and Hanidar (2022) examined maxim flouting in *The IT Crowd*. The researchers used Grice's Cooperative Principle (1989) with rhetorical devices from Grundy (2000), Cutting (2002), Dynel (2008), and Birner (2013). In their examination of 12 episodes from the first two seasons, the researchers discovered 102 cases of maxim flouting. The most common maxim in 56 cases (54.90%) was the maxim of Quality. The most often used rhetorical technique was allusion, which appeared in 12 cases (11.70%). Furthermore, the research showed that maxim flouting achieved the three primary goals of self-disclosure, expressiveness, and distance.

Rohmahsih (2022) examined *How I Met Your Father* Season 1 on sitcom analysis. The researcher used Grice's cooperative principle (1975) and Berger's verbal humor theory (1997). The researcher identified 70 cases of maxim flouting, 18 of which were humorous. The humorous utterances used a variety of humor techniques, including over-literality (1), irony (3), sarcasm (4), bombast (3), exaggeration (6), and pun (1). These results showed how sitcoms use a variety of humor techniques to generate humorous dialogue while flouting the maxims.

Qosim (2024) continued his analysis of sitcoms by examining the first 10 episodes of *Community* Season 1. The research correlated Attardo's General Theory of Verbal Humor (1994) with Grice's Cooperative Principle. The maxim of Quality was the most often flouted of the four maxims. The research revealed that incongruity humor was common and was often linked to flouting the maxim of Relation. Release humor was usually associated with a combination of Quantity

and Quality, while hostility humor was more frequently associated with the maxim of quality. Release humor related to the maxim of Relation was the least common. According to this research, layered maxim flouting is a common source of sitcom humor.

In contrast to research on sitcoms, Setiani (2019) examined maxim flouting in the movie *The Hangover*. The research used Attardo's humor theory (1994) and Grice's cooperative principle. A total of 29 cases of maxim flouting were discovered, including 3 cases of Relation and Manner, 11 cases of Quantity, and 12 cases of Quality. Three categories of humorous effects have been discovered: hostility humor (7), release humor (11), and incongruity humor (13 cases). The most common one was incongruity. Interestingly, four cases of maxim flouting did not produce humor as they did not fit the criteria for humor. The research suggested that while maxim flouting often generates humor, its impact depends upon the audience's comprehension and delivery of the message.

Moving to series show, Hakim and Indah (2022) examined maxim flouting in the Netflix series *Pretty Smart*. The researchers used Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975) and Shade's verbal humor theory (1996). The analysis examined seven episodes and discovered 20 cases of maxim flouting, most of them are the maxim of Quality. The flouting produced several types of humor, including jokes, irony, wit, and satire. The research showed how maxim flouting is still an important tool for humor in modern series, which often use a combination of humor strategies with new cultural references.

Likewise, Yulianti and Handayani (2022) examined maxim flouting in the TV series *Hawkeye*. The researchers used Grice's Cooperative Principle and

Attardo's General Theory of Verbal Humor (1994). The research discovered that all four maxims were flouted, but Relation and Quantity were the most frequent. The humorous effects often had a hostile tone, the most common humor in the series. The research shows that even TV shows that are not purely comedies, such as action or superhero series, still use maxim flouting to provide comic relief and balance the story.

Moving on to unscripted shows, Paraswati (2024) examined maxim flouting in the *Steve* talk TV Show. Since talk shows depend on spontaneous interaction between host and audiences, maxim flouting is important in generating humor. The research used Cutting's theory of maxim flouting (2002) and Berger's humor techniques (2017). From seven episodes, 18 cases of maxim flouting were discovered. The maxim of Relation was the most common (44%), followed by Manner (37%), Quantity (12%), and Quality (6%). The humorous effects were generated through facetiousness, irony, exaggeration, misunderstanding, and sarcasm. This research demonstrates how maxim flouting can work in live, unscripted performances, showing its versatility outside of written programs.

Focusing on stand-up comedy, Nguyen & Tran (2025) examined Jimmy O. Yang's special *Good Deal* (2020). The researchers used Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975) and the theory of maxim flouting. The research examined 135 cases of maxim flouting, which were categorized into single and multiple floutings. The most common maxim (50%) was Quality, which was often generated through exaggeration, irony, and intentional deception. Relation came in second with 12%, while Manner (1%) and Quantity (3%) were not common. Multiple floutings (34%), particularly the combination of Quality and Quantity or Relation, were

shown to provide layered comedy and improve the humorous effect. According to the results, stand-up comedy works by flouting the conversational principle and taking into account the social and cultural settings that influence how the humor is delivered and understood.

Finally, Zelianti et al. (2024) examined maxim flouting leads to humor in digital media, focusing on Deddy Corbuzier's *Close the Door* podcast with comedian Komeng. The researchers used Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975) and Attardo's humor theory (1994). The results showed that the maxim of Relation was most often flouted (44.4%), followed by Quantity (33.3%), while Quality and Manner appeared least often (11.1% each). The humorous effects came from exaggeration, playful misinterpretation, and unexpected responses. This study showed that even in digital media like podcasts, maxim flouting is a main source of humor in keeping audiences engaged through spontaneous and entertaining dialogue.

These studies influenced this research's methodology (Grice for the flouting maxims, Berger for the humor technique) and set expectations that the results of this research support and improve. Like a lot of other sitcoms and stand-up programs, *Bottoms* (2023) indicates that the main approach to make people laugh is through flouting of Quality (irony and sarcasm are the main techniques). They also made it easier for the researcher to see trends in the data: flouting of Quantity were merely exaggerations, while flouting of Relation was simply making jokes out of serious situations, such as facetiousness. Flouting of Manner was less common, with puns and wordplay taking the lead. Previous studies support the use of a Maxim $\times$ Technique table, a primary maxim flouting (with notes on secondary

maxim floutings), and conceptual chain (flout → implicature → humor) to emphasize what makes *Bottoms* unique while also making the analysis simple and consistent.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The analysis in this research is limited to the dialogue in Emma Seligman's *Bottoms* (2023). Berger's (1993) verbal humor techniques are used to emphasize conversations that flout Grice's conversational maxims and how they generate humorous effects. Since the research is limited to the pragmatic and rhetorical aspects of conversation, it does not examine visual humor, storyline, character psychology, or audience reaction. This research's goal is to demonstrate how humor techniques and maxim flouting cooperate to generate the film's humorous effect.

1.7 Writing Organization

This writing organization provides a comprehensive overview of the content of this undergraduate thesis, starting from chapter I to chapter IV.

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study (1.1), research problems (1.2), objectives of the study (1.3), significance of the study (1.4), previous studies (1.5), and scope of the study (1.6), as well as writing organization (1.7).

CHAPTER II THEORY AND METHOD

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework relevant to the study and describes the methods used for data analysis.

CHAPTER III

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the analysis and discusses the findings, particularly how the flouting maxims generate humorous effects in the film *Bottoms* (2023) using Berger's verbal humor techniques.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes the findings of the analysis conducted in Chapter III and provides suggestions for future researchers who intend to examine similar topics.