



# The Violation of Cooperative Principles and Four Maxims to Create Humor in American Sitcom “*Friends*”

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## Abstract

This paper attempts to explore how the characters in the famous American sitcom *Friends* create humor by violating the four maxims of Grice’s Cooperative Principle, and which maxim is the most frequently flouted one in this context. Data under analysis is extracted randomly from five episodes of the sitcom. The findings suggest that all maxims are violated to different extents by the characters out of different purposes to amuse the audience, among which the maxim of quality is the most often violated one, followed by the maxim of relation, quantity, and manner. Given the limitations of this study, implications for future research are provided.

## Subject Areas

Pragmatics

## Keywords

Cooperative Principle, Grice’s Maxims, Four Maxims, Conversational Implicature, Violation, *Friends*

## 1. Introduction

Paul Grice, a British philosopher of language, proposed his best-known theory of implicature and the cooperative principle (CP) in 1975, which later became foundational concepts in the field of pragmatics. Pragmatics is the study of the context-dependent aspects of meaning which are systematically abstracted away from the construction of logical form (Horn & Ward, 2008) [1]. An implicature is the implicit meaning in speaker’s utterances (Recanati, 1989) [2]. The CP aims to draw explicit rational principles through the observation of people’s commu-

nication (Hadi, 2013) [3]. The building blocks of CP are four conversational maxims that arise from the pragmatics of natural language, namely the maxim of relation, quantity, quality and manner. His CP theory illustrates how a cooperative conversation takes place when the four conversational maxims are observed (Grice, 1989) [4]. However, in the real-life context, it is often the case that these maxims are purposefully violated by interlocutors in order to achieve certain effects. Several studies have proved that a high percentage of humorous conversations are based on the violation of one or more of Grice's maxims of CP (Attardo, 1997 [5]; Attardo & Raskin, 1991 [6]; Helmy, 2023 [7]; Sri Dwi Hardianti, 2023 [8]), so as to achieve a humorous effect and to arouse the audiences' laughter. This kind of humor often happens between friends, colleagues and people who are familiar with each other.

*Friends* is an American sitcom that run from 1994 until 2004 and is among the highest-rated TV series around the world. Having been popular when originally broadcasted as part of NBC's "Must See Thursdays", it remains the fifth most popular program ever in reruns (Kutulas, 2018) [9]. This sitcom depicts the long-lasting friendship and love among six friends, namely Chandler, Monica, Ross, Rachel, Phoebe, and Joey in New York City. This sitcom has become a classic in its fans' hearts and brought them shrieks of laughter.

Even though some of the extant studies have discussed the humorous effects displayed in this well-known sitcom, none of the authors has adopted a quantitative research method to closely investigate the script under the theoretical framework of Grice's Cooper Principle. To address this research gap, this study sets out to apply a quantitative method to conduct a detailed analysis of the phenomenon of violations of the four maxims, therein lies the innovative point of the current research.

## 2. Literature Review

In the past few decades, studies concerning the theory of CP and the violation of the four maxims have been at the center of the field of pragmatics. Hadi (2013) [3] claims that Grice's CP has played a historically important role in pragmatics by separating pragmatics from linguistics. In a recent study, it is claimed that "cooperation is essential for conversations to take place" (Jia, 2010) [10], which is to say the cooperative attitudes of speakers on both side is the prerequisite of a smooth and successful conversation.

A few studies have also discussed the specific application of Grice's CP in different fields of study, such as psychological consulting, classroom interaction and discourse analysis (Jia, 2010 [10]; Kamila, 2014 [11]; Ladegaard, 2009 [12]; Mey, 2001 [13]; Sobhani & Saghebi, 2014 [14]). There are also studies that shed light on the analysis of American TV series and talk shows in light of Grice's CP. For example, Dornerus (2005) [15] compared and contrasted the violations of different maxims in American TV series *Desperate Housewives* and the talk show program *That 70s' Show*, who found that among the four maxims, the

maxim of relevance was the most frequently violated one. The study conducted by Tupan and Natalia (2008) [16] found that all the characters in *Desperate Housewives* violated more than one maxim deliberately as they were lying to each other for different purposes. Recently, scholar Liu Bo has investigated the humorous speech acts and effects achieved in the sitcom *Friends*, who argues that humorous utterances complete general illocutionary acts while practicing the act of amusement (Bo, 2008) [17]. There are studies talked about humor strategies in the American sitcom *Friends* but still few in number (Bo, 2008 [17]; Wu & Yong, 2010 [18]). All the studies above indicate, though conducted in different contexts, that in most cases, people would violate CP for specific reasons. Besides, among the four maxims, the maxim of relation is the most frequently violated one.

Against this backdrop, the present study sets out to analyze how these characters in the American sitcom *Friends* violate the four maxims of Grice's Cooperative Principle in order to achieve a humorous effect with detailed a analysis of the scripts as database, and to see which maxim is the most frequently violated one.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

#### Cooperative Principles

Grice (1975) claimed that communication is a process that requires speakers on both sides to be cooperative with each other, and he theorized certain rational principle that guides speakers to make their interactions smooth and appropriate through observation of peoples' communication, which later becomes Cooperative Principles. Grice (1989: 26) [4]. In the Cooperative Principle, there is a special term, Implicature, which comes before Grice's Maxims. Implicature refers to the capacity of interlocutors to extract meaning from the utterances they exchange with each other despite some missing elements. Those elements are often implicated, and such implicatures are made possible by cooperation between speaker and listener (Grice, 1989) [4]. The concept of "implicature", is based on the assumption that the hearer of the message has the capacity to extrapolate about the speaker's intended meaning, based on the meaning of the uttered sentence, together with background or contextual information and universal communicative principles which speakers are expected to understand. That is to say, what is implied by the speaker should be able to be understood by the hearer. Based on that, four maxims were proposed by Grice as the building blocks of CP:

- 1) The Maxim of Relation
  - a) Be relevant.
- 2) The Maxim of Quality
  - a) Try to make your contribution one that is true.
  - b) Not to say things that are false or for which you lack adequate evidence.
- 3) The Maxim of Quantity
  - a) Do not make your contribution more or less informative than required.
- 4) The Maxim of Manner

- a) Avoid ambiguity and obscurity.
- b) Be brief and orderly.

These maxims are the specific rules that interlocutors need to follow if they want the conversation to go on successfully. Grice has also stated that the violation of maxims can happen from time to time, and a violation means “the unpretentious or quiet non-observance of a maxim” (Grice, 1989) [4]. Whenever one or more of these maxims is transgressed, the necessity of reconstructing the meaning of the utterance arises in order to save the utterance from merely being a faulty conversational contribution (Wu & Yong, 2010) [18]. For instance, some self-evidently true or false statements must be uttered for specific reasons instead of simply conveying their explicit meanings.

In the scenario of real-life conversations, it is more often the case that Grice’s four maxims are flouted than obeyed, which generally contains more information (Darighoftar & Ghaffari, 2012) [19]. As mentioned above, it is the flouting of maxims that actually gives rise to implicature. It should be noticed that there is a difference between real-life conversations and conversations that take place in TV shows. That is, compared to listeners in daily conversation, the audience in front of TV with an omnipotent point of view, can more easily detect the discrepancy between the speakers’ utterances and their real meanings.

The present study is dedicated to exploring the violation of different maxims by characters in the American sitcom *Friends* to create a humorous effect and arouse the audience’s laughter, and to find out which maxim is the most often violated one. Besides, the reasons behind those violations and their role in creating a humorous effect in the context of sitcom will be covered in this study, so as to provide a better understanding of the interpretations associated with Grice’s CP maxims and their violation.

#### 4. Methodology

As mentioned above, this study intends to analyze how the characters in *Friends* violated the four maxims of Grice to arouse the audience’s laughter and to be humorous, and to find out which maxim is the most often flouted. The data used in this study is the original script of this sitcom, which consists of five complete episodes randomly chosen from five seasons (randomly chosen as well). The canned laughter during the characters’ conversations is the standard for judging whether the line is funny or not. In a study investigating the linguistic strategies of *Friends*, Shu (2007) compared the funny lines signaled by two native English speakers according to the occurrence of canned laughter, finding that the correlation between the occurrence of canned laughter and funny lines pointed out by two different English speakers was 78%. Thus, in this study, the lines where canned laughter occurred are collected as the punch lines to be analyzed as data.

#### 5. Data Analysis and Discussion

Based on the violation of four maxims of Grice’s Cooperative Principle, namely the maxim of quality, the maxim of quantity, the maxim of relation and the

maxim of manner, the collected punch lines, which are used as the data of this research with a total number of 277, are classified into five categories: “the violation of the maxim of quality” (93, 35%), “the violation of the maxim of quantity” (16, 6%), “the violation of the maxim of relation” (47, 18%), “the violation of the maxim of manner” (15, 5%), and “other” (106, 40%), as is shown in **Table 1**.

The “other” category contains punch lines whose humorous effects are not the result of the violation of any maxims. For example, there are many jokes that are not in conversational form, which is to say the audience may find them funny because of the characters’ exaggerated body language or facial expressions. Besides, the CP theory can fail to account for jokes that are funny because of other linguistic features. Hence, the category “other” contains punch lines where the CP theory is not applicable and would not be further discussed in the later session.

Thus, the second research question can be answered: Among the four maxims of the cooperative principle, the maxim of quality was the most frequently flouted one (35%), which is different from former researchers’ findings (Dorne-rus, 2006 [15]; Tupan & Natalia, 2008 [16]). Second to the maxim of quality is the violation of maxim of relation which contributed (18%), followed by the maxim of the quantity (6%), and the maxim of the quantity (5%). In the next part, each case will be illustrated in detail with excerpts taken from the scripts of the chosen episodes.

#### **Category 1: The Violation of Maxim Quality**

According to Grice, the maxim of quality means people should not say what they believe to be false or that for which they lack evidence. However, in this sitcom, characters often say something that is against their true feelings, or deliberately make claims that are evidently false, with the purposes of exaggerating, lying, hiding their true feelings to avoid hurting others’ feelings (or on the contrary), or simply being ironic or sarcastic to poke fun at each other.

#### **Excerpt 1 (S1, E3)**

*When they are chatting way in central park coffee, Phoebe remains silent and seems unhappy, which arouses the attention of her friends, so they try to find out what happened.*

Chandler: You okay, Phoebe?

Phoebe: Yeah, no, it’s not even worth... It’s my bank.

Monica: What did they do to you?

Phoebe: It’s nothing, it’s just... Okay. I’m going through my mail, and I open up their monthly “statement.” (Raising her pitch)

**Table 1.** The violations of different maxims in the collected data.

Maxim of Quality	Maxim of Quantity	Maxim of Relation	Maxim of Manner	Other
93	16	47	15	106
33.57%	5.77%	16.96%	5.41%	38.26%

Ross: Easy.

Phoebe: And there's 500 extra dollars in my account.

Chandler: Oh, Satan's minions at work again.

Phoebe is complaining about a mistake made by the bank, that is 500 dollars come into her account for no reason. For most common people, that will be like pennies from heaven rather than something to be worried about. Chandler describes it as "Satan's minions at work" to say that it is a bad thing, while in fact he did not think so. Here, he tries to be ironic by saying something that is opposite to his real opinion and violates the maxim of quality.

**Excerpt 2 (S2, E3)**

*They are at Monica's apartment, sitting on the couch and chatting away. Chandler walks in and greets everyone. Last night Chandler had a date with Joan, so his friends want to catch up with it and ask Chandler how the date is going.*

Monica: So how was Joan?

Chandler: Broke up with her.

Ross: Oh, why? Don't tell me. Because of the big nostril thing?

Chandler: They were huge. When she sneezed, bats flew out of them.

Rachel: Come on, they were not that huge.

Chandler: I'm telling you, she leaned back, I could see her brain.

In this episode, Chandler grows to realize that the reason why he is always single is that he is too picky to maintain a long-term relationship, and he has been rejecting a lot of good girls because of some superficial insignificant things such as small flaws in their appearances. Here is an example. Talking about why he broke up with Joan, Chandler exaggerates how huge Joan's nostrils are, whose statements are evidently untrue. In this case, Chandler violated the maxim of quality by exaggerating something that could be true, so as to be sarcastic and funny, which is this character's main linguistic feature in this show.

**Excerpt 3 (S4, E15)**

*After getting back with Janice, his once lover, Chandler finds himself could no longer put up with her peculiarities like her strange laughter and voice. As a result, he lied to Janice that he will be transferred to Yemen to get away from her. However, Janice buys it and decides to set him off at the airport, which forces Chandler to actually buy a ticket for Yemen. This is their saying farewell before the plane takes off.*

Chandler: Well, I guess I gotta go.

Janice: Oh. My Bing-a-ling. I'll wait for you. Do you even know how long you're gonna be gone?

Chandler: Well, just until we find an energy source to replace fuel.

Janice: Oh. Well, I'll write you every day. 15 Yemen Road, Yemen.

In this example, Chandler lies to Janice about when he will be back in New York and where he lives in Yemen. Obviously, Chandler's words violate the maxim of quality with the purpose of avoiding hurting Janice's feelings. Janice

may not know that Chandler is lying to her, but the audience, with an omnipotent view, knows it perfectly well. Hence, the humorous effect is generated.

**Excerpt 4 (S7 E5)**

*In this episode, Phoebe dates a guy named Kyle, who is undergoing the process of divorce. Accidentally, Ross is dating Kyle's ex-wife Whitney. As Kyle has complained a lot about his ex-wife in front of Phoebe, Phoebe tries to talk Ross out of his relationship with Whitney.*

Phoebe: Look, okay, Ross. Kyle just told me some really bad stuff about her.

Ross: Like what?

Phoebe: Like she's really mean. And she's overly critical and... And... No. She will paint a room a really bright color without even checking with you.

Ross: Okay.

Phoebe: And she uses sex as a weapon.

Ross: Fine. Thank you for warning me. At breakfast, I'll be on full alert for room painting and sex weapons.

Phoebe listed the setbacks of Whitney in front of Ross, who finds them absurd and unbelievable. Hence, Ross violates the maxim of quality by saying sarcastically in favor of Phoebe, while in fact, he thinks Phoebe's accusation of Whitney is ungrounded and biased. Here, humor is generated by saying something that is against one's true opinion.

**Excerpt 5 (S10, E5)**

*In this episode, Rachel's born sister Amy visits her at her apartment. Amy is like the original version of Rachel, who is spoiled, self-centered, arrogant, selfish and sharp, having no direction in life. She's here to tell her sister that she is going to marry an old man who has a fancy house.*

Rachel: So, now, what are you doing here?

Amy: I have huge news.

Rachel: Hold on. Let me check on the baby.

Amy: This is important. Can't Ella wait?

Ross: Uh, her name is Emma.

Amy: Why did you change it? Ella was so much prettier.

Ross: What do I know? I just sell Middle Eastern food from a cart.

In this dialogue, both Amy and Ross violate the maxim of quality. First, Amy calls Rachel's daughter Emma the wrong name. She did it because she is too self-centered to care about another human being other than herself. The audience laughed because it's too ridiculous that Amy did not even remember her niece's name. Then, Ross said himself a man selling Middle Eastern food from a cart because he wants to be sarcastic in revenge for Amy's former behavior—pretending not to know Ross and calling him a Middle Eastern sandwich vendor. In fact, Amy cannot forget Ross, as they two once had a romance, and now Ross has a baby with her sister. Amy pretends to do this only to show her indifference towards Ross. As a result, when Ross used Amy's words to answer back sarcastically, the audience bursts into laughter.

### Category 2: The Violation of the Maxim of Relation

Grice described the maxim of relation as being relevant to the topic and the context as well. However, in this sitcom, characters often say something that is irrelevant and distant from the current issue, or simply change the topic. As the second highest violated maxim in this sitcom, it serves the role of diverting the interlocutor's attention to avoid embarrassment, showing indifferent attitudes as well as other functions. The following part is a detailed discussion.

#### Excerpt 6 (S1, E3)

*In this episode, they are talking about Monica's new boyfriend Allan, and they seem to like him very much.*

Joey: Know what was great? The way his smile was kind of crooked.

Phoebe: Yes, yes. Like the man in the shoe.

Ross: What shoe?

Phoebe: From the nursery rhyme. "There was a crooked man who had a crooked smile... who lived in a shoe for a while..."

Ross: So I think Alan... will become the yardstick against which all future boyfriends will be measured.

Here, Phoebe makes a mistake by calling the crooked man in the nursery rhyme living in a shoe. When Ross realized that Phoebe is saying wrong, he deliberately ignores Phoebe's response and shifts to another topic. By changing the topic and responding with irrelevant information, Ross makes the audience feel his speechlessness towards Phoebe's mistake and achieves a humorous effect.

#### Excerpt 7 (S2, E3)

*In this episode, Monica and Rachel were endowed with Mr. Heckles' legacy, who used to be their neighbor living downstairs and calling them noisy girls. Rachel picked a seashell lamp from Mr. Heckles' relics and wanted to keep it in their apartment, while Monica didn't like it at all. As a result, Monica purposefully broke it. Chandler enters the room and Rachel complains about what just happened to him.*

Rachel: Hey, Chandler. Monica just broke my seashell lamp.

Chandler: I'm gonna die alone!

Rachel: Okay, you win.

Chandler finds that he and Mr. Heckles, the lonely old man living downstairs who died alone eventually, have many similarities. They are excessively picky about their dates, and they have many common peculiarities. Hence, Chandler believes he will end up being alone just like Mr. Heckles, which worries him a lot. As a result, when Rachel complains to him, he responds with totally irrelevant information as he becomes too obsessive about his looming future. This act of violating the maxim of relation arouses the audience's laughter.

#### Excerpt 8 (S7, E5)

*In this episode, Rachel hired a young and handsome guy as her assistant. This man is so hot that Rachel has a crush and fetish for him. Now these friends are drinking coffee at central park.*



Rachel: Oh, I gotta get back to work.

Phoebe: You don't have to be back for a half-hour.

Rachel: My assistant, Tag, does sit-ups in the office during lunch.

In this dialogue, Rachel makes a totally irrelevant remark toward Phoebe's suggestion, and this is where implicature comes in. Even though her response seems irrelevant, the audience can understand the implicit meaning of her words that Rachel wants to see Tag doing sit-ups because he is so hot. When the audience gets the implicature of Rachel's response, humor is generated.

#### **Excerpt 9 (S1, E3)**

*In this episode, Chandler tries to quit smoking by using a nicotine patch, which is a real pain for him because he just suffered a relapse. They are watching TV together, which plays an entertainment program featuring a woman talking to the sock on her hand.*

Chandler: How old is that sock? If I had a sock on my hand for 30 years, it'd be talking too.

Ross: Okay, I think it's time to change somebody's nicotine patch.

Chandler mocks at the show, which he thinks is simple and stupid. Instead of responding to Chandler's sly humor, Ross says it's time for Chandler to change his nicotine patch, which indicates that Chandler cannot control his addiction to cigarettes and still relies on outer force to quit smoking. By doing this, the one who's mocking others becomes the one being mocked. Once the audience understands his implicature, they will be amused by Ross's witty remark.

#### **Category 3: The Violation of the Maxim of Quantity**

According to Grice, speakers should make their response as informative as required, that is, avoid giving either more or less information than the other side needs. Characters in this sitcom sometimes give too much unnecessary information while sometimes giving less information as required on purpose, either because they are not open for discussion or they're too excited to hold word back, and the reasons vary. The following part is a detailed illustration.

#### **Excerpt 10 (S2, E3)**

*Chandler is scared by thinking that he will wind up being another Mr. Heckles and just the thought of it drives him nuts...*

Rachel: Chandler, you are not gonna die alone.

Chandler: Janice was my safety net, okay? And now I have to get a snake. If I'm gonna be an old, lonely man, I'm gonna need a thing. You know, a hook. Like that guy on the subway who eats his own face. So I figure I'll be "Crazy Man With A Snake."

Crazy Snake Man. Then I'll get more snakes, call them my babies. Kids won't walk past my place, they will run! "Run away from Crazy Snake Man," they'll shout!

Being too obsessive and nervous about dying alone, Chandler cannot help rumbling on and on, which violates the maxim of quantity because he offers too much unnecessary information. It can be seen that when the speaker is under

unstable status, he or she might talk more or less than usual.

**Excerpt 11 (S10, E5)**

*Amy comes to Rachel to announce huge news: she is getting married. Rachel wants to know more about her sister's fiancé.*

Rachel: All right, what's your news, Amy?

Amy: Oh. Ahem. Well. I'm getting married.

Rachel: Wow! Oh, my God! To who?

Amy: This guy. He has a killer apartment.

Rachel: And?

Amy: And it's on 5th. And the elevator opens up right into the living room.

Rachel: No, what's he like?

Amy: Oh, he's okay.

Even though Rachel keeps asking for more information about Amy's fiancé, Amy still answers briefly and vaguely, referring to her fiancé as "This guy" and describing him simply with the word "Okay". Obviously, it is far less informative than the listener, her sister Rachel requires and expects. Her over generalization makes the audience feel that she doesn't care about the man she's going to marry at all, and as well, makes her sister Rachel doubt her motive behind her decision. By being less informative than required, Amy violates the maxim of quantity and her careless and irresponsible attitude evokes the audience's laughter.

**Excerpt 12 (S10, E5)**

*Amy comes to Rachel's apartment to tell her sister that she is going to marry an old man with a fancy apartment. Apparently, Amy doesn't do so out of love, so Rachel wants to teach her little sister a lesson and make her change her jerry decision.*

Rachel: Oh, honey, you know, I once also almost married somebody that I didn't love. Do you remember Barry?

Amy: Remember him? God, we used to make out all the time after you went to sleep.

Rachel: Sometimes just nodding is okay.

Here, Amy answers with more information than her sister Rachel expects or wants to hear: she has cheated on Rachel with her ex-boyfriend Barry. Amy is too self-centered to care about other people's feelings, so she blurts out the harsh truth despite Rachel is trying to persuade her out of love and care. In this scenario, Amy flouted the maxim of quantity by giving too much unnecessary information.

**Category 4: The Violation of the Maxim of Manner**

The maxim of manner requires interlocutors to avoid ambiguity and obscurity and be brief and orderly. In this sitcom, humor is produced because of ambiguity of the utterances, which causes misunderstanding and unexpected responses and arouses the audience's laughter. The following part is a detailed discussion.

**Excerpt 13 (S1, E3)**

*After the first meeting with Monica's new boyfriend Allan, they are sharing*

*their impressions and opinions about Allan. To Monica's surprise, her picky friends seem to like him.*

Ross: You know what I like most about him?

Monica: What?

Ross: The way he makes me feel about myself.

Ross talks about what he likes most about Allan, in a rather ambiguous way, which is to say the audience can approach it from different ways. It can be read as "Allan helps Ross to appreciate and acknowledge himself", which is positive feedback. On the contrary, it can be out as "Allan makes Ross feel himself superior and better", and that can be a negative judgment. Between these, ambiguity comes, and humor transpires.

#### **Excerpt 14 (S1, E3)**

*Monica is talking about her feelings towards her new boyfriend Allan with her colleague at the restaurant. She complains that she feels nothing toward him, so she wants to end the relationship.*

Monica: It's just, you know what? I just don't feel the thing. I mean, they feel the thing. I don't feel the thing.

Colleague: Honey, you should always feel the thing.

Here, Monica wants to say that she has no special feelings for her current boyfriend, but the expression she adopts can lead to referential ambiguity: In this context, it can either refer to the mental feeling or the physical one (her boyfriend's genitals). Obviously, her colleague put it the second way. As a result, humor can arise when there's referential ambiguity in one's utterances.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study answers two questions: how the characters in the American sitcom *Friends* create humor by violating the four maxims of Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principles and which maxim among the four is the most frequently violated one. It is found that the humorous effects among the funny lines were largely generated through the violation of Grice's CP. Based on the detailed analysis of the scripts of the five randomly chosen episodes in this sitcom, it is found that all the maxims are violated to different extents by characters to amuse the audience, among which the maxim of quality is most usually flouted. In this sitcom, characters often say something against their true feelings, irrelevant to the topic, or express it in an ambiguous way with the purposes of exaggerating, lying, protecting others' feelings, or simply being ironic or sarcastic to poke fun at each other. When the audience realizes the discrepancy between the characters' utterances and true feelings, humorous effects are achieved.

## **7. Limitations and Implications**

Inevitably, the present study still possesses a few limitations, which accordingly can provide several implications for future studies in this field. To start with, due to the limit of time and energy, the current study only chose five episodes ran-

domly from a total of 236 episodes, and the current research finding may not be conclusive and representative enough. It is suggested that future studies can either further the study of *Friends* by enlarging the sample size or extend to other genres of programs, be they movies, sitcoms or talk shows, to obtain a more generalizable result. Besides, the current study fails to include theoretical findings concerning “humor” itself. Hence, future studies can bring theories regarding humor into the scope to bring more new insights into the field. In addition, the judgment made towards the funniness embedded in the scripts can be a little bit subjective, which will in turn affect the research finding. As a result, the coming research can put efforts in exploring a more objective and scientific way to define whether it is funny or not, to make the research more plausible and compelling.

### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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