



THE FLOUTING AND VIOLATION OF CONVERSATIONAL MAXIMS OF HUMOR IN *BEETLEJUICE 2* MOVIE (2024)

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Abstract

This research aimed to analyze the types of humor the characters employ and the violation or flouting of the conversational maxims contained in the humorous utterances that found in the movie. The data were humorous utterance that uttered by the characters in the movie Beetlejuice 2. This study applied a descriptive qualitative method to collect and analyze the data. The amount totals of data are 60 humorous utterances. The analysis revealed that the characters employed all four types of humor types: 21 data of Aggressive humor, 17 data of Affiliative humor, 17 data of Self-enhancing humor, and 5 data of Self-defeating humor. On the other hand, 54 out of 60 humorous utterances were found to contain violations and flouting of conversational maxims. The researcher concludes that among the four humor types identified, aggressive humor emerges as the dominant type used by the characters. Moreover, humorous utterances in Beetlejuice 2 frequently involve violations and flouting of conversational maxims, which function as key strategies in generating humor.

Key words: Conversational Maxim, Violation, Flouting, Humor, *Beetlejuice 2*.

A. INTRODUCTION

Language plays an essential role in human communication, as it is used to convey messages, share ideas, and express emotions (Ningrum, 2015). Through language, people are able not only to exchange information but also to build interaction, create certain atmospheres, and even produce humor. Conversation, as one of the most common forms of communication, requires speakers to deliver ideas in a clear and efficient manner so that listeners can easily understand the intended meaning (Netty, 2020). Ideally, communication works as a cooperative process in which meaning is successfully shared between participants.

For communication to run effectively, there must be a strong mutual understanding between the speaker and the interlocutor (Suartini & Candra, 2023). When both parties share similar expectations about how information should be delivered and interpreted, interaction tends to proceed smoothly. However, misunderstanding is a frequent phenomenon in everyday conversation. Speakers may provide information that is unclear, excessive, irrelevant, or ambiguous, which can lead to confusion. Because of this, cooperation between speakers and listeners becomes an important requirement in communication (Wahyuni et al., 2019). These recurring problems in interaction later became the

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foundation for the development of a theoretical framework that explains how conversation ideally operates.

Grice's Cooperative Principle was proposed to explain how speakers and listeners cooperate to make communication meaningful (Grice, 1975). This principle consists of four conversational maxims: quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. The maxim of quantity requires speakers to provide sufficient information, the maxim of quality emphasizes truthfulness, the maxim of relevance focuses on staying on topic, and the maxim of manner stresses clarity and orderliness. When these maxims are followed, communication is expected to be effective and easily understood. In reality, however, conversational interaction does not always follow these principles. Many speakers intentionally or unintentionally disobey conversational maxims in real-life communication (Wahyuni et al., 2019).

Grice (1975) explains that speakers may fail to fulfill conversational maxims in several ways, such as by violating or flouting them. While such deviations can result in misunderstanding or confusion, they do not always indicate communication failure. In certain contexts, violating or flouting conversational maxims can serve specific pragmatic purposes. One of the most noticeable effects of such deviations is humor. Rather than simply disrupting communication, breaking conversational norms can create surprise and amusement when interpreted in the right context.

From a pragmatic perspective, humor is closely related to how language, context, and conversational expectations are manipulated. Humor can be created through various linguistic strategies, including exaggeration, irony, sarcasm, and wordplay. Among these strategies, the violation and flouting of conversational maxims play a particularly important role. When speakers deliberately provide irrelevant, excessive, vague, or even obviously untrue information, they create unexpected meanings that may be perceived as funny. These deviations often result in misleading or disconnected utterances that function as jokes, ultimately leading to laughter, which is commonly considered the main goal of humor (Ross, 2005).

Because humorous utterances often rely on implied meanings, humor is best examined through a pragmatic approach (Paraswati, 2024). Humor reflects the tendency to experience or express amusement and is usually accompanied by emotional and behavioral responses, such as smiling and laughing (Martin & Ford, 2018). In both everyday conversation and scripted dialogue, humor frequently emerges when speakers ignore conventional conversational rules, creating interactions that feel surprising, exaggerated, or unexpected.

This study adopts Martin's (2003) theory of humor, which classifies humor into four main types: affiliative humor, self-enhancing humor, aggressive humor, and self-defeating humor. Affiliative humor is used to strengthen social relationships and create a friendly atmosphere. Self-enhancing humor refers to humor used to maintain a positive outlook, often as a way to cope with stress. Aggressive humor involves sarcasm, teasing, or ridicule directed at others, while self-defeating humor occurs when speakers make themselves the target of jokes to gain social approval. In movie dialogue, these types of humor often appear

through conversational maxim violations, as speakers exploit ambiguity, irrelevance, exaggeration, or irony to produce humorous effects.

The use of conversational maxim violations to create humor is not limited to daily interaction. It is also commonly found in entertainment media, such as talk shows and movies (Netty, 2020). In movies, dialogue is carefully constructed, and scriptwriters often use conversational deviations as a strategy to shape character interaction and engage the audience. One common technique to create humor is having characters flout conversational maxims, allowing them to deliver lines that feel absurd, exaggerated, or unexpected (Andresen, 2013). As a result, analyzing movies from a pragmatic perspective offers valuable insight into how humor is intentionally constructed through language.

One movie that provides rich examples of humorous dialogue created through conversational maxim violations is *Beetlejuice 2* (2024), the sequel to Tim Burton's *Beetlejuice* (1988). Released 36 years after the original film, *Beetlejuice 2* continues to present distinctive character interactions and unconventional dialogue styles. The story follows Lydia Deetz, who now hosts a supernatural talk show, and her teenage daughter, Astrid. The reopening of a portal to the afterlife leads to the return of Beetlejuice, triggering a series of chaotic interactions that frequently rely on exaggerated, ambiguous, and irrelevant utterances.

The characters in *Beetlejuice 2* consistently display speech patterns that deviate from normal conversational expectations. Beetlejuice, as the central character, is particularly known for his chaotic and unpredictable way of speaking, which often involves violating or flouting conversational maxims. Other characters, such as Lydia and Astrid, also contribute to humorous interactions through ironic, sarcastic, or blunt utterances. The contrast between their communication styles often creates tension and humor, as meanings are implied rather than directly stated. This makes the movie a suitable object for examining how conversational maxim violations function as a strategy to produce humor.

An example of this can be seen when Beetlejuice responds to a recently deceased man's sorrow about his wife's remarriage. Instead of offering sympathy, Beetlejuice shifts the topic in an exaggerated and unexpected direction, violating the maxim of relevance. This sudden shift creates absurdity and amusement, showing how humor can emerge when conversational norms are intentionally ignored, even in serious situations.

Several previous studies have examined humor using pragmatic frameworks. Islami (2023) analyzed how characters in *Yes Day* violate and flout conversational maxims to create humor. Ramadhany (2025) explored how characters in *Lisa Frankenstein* flout Neo-Gricean principles as a humorous strategy. Susanto (2021) focused on conversational maxim violations in Ellen DeGeneres's classic jokes, while Rafi'I (2022) examined how the cooperative principle operates in creating humor in the sitcoms *Family Guy* and *American Dad!*. These studies demonstrate that pragmatic deviation plays an important role in humor construction.

However, despite the growing number of studies on humor and conversational maxims, research that specifically examines conversational maxim violations and types of humor in Beetlejuice 2 (2024) remains limited. In addition, few studies combine the analysis of maxim violation with a systematic classification of humor types in movie dialogue. This gap indicates the need for further research that explores how conversational maxims are violated or flouted and how these violations contribute to humorous effects in contemporary films.

Based on this gap, the present study aims to analyze the types of humor and the violation and flouting of conversational maxims found in Beetlejuice 2 (2024). This study applies Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle to identify the conversational maxims involved and Martin's (2003) theory of humor to classify the types of humor expressed by the characters. By focusing on humorous utterances in the movie, this research seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how pragmatic strategies are used to create humor and how meaning is shaped through deviation from conversational norms. This research contributes to pragmatic studies by showing how language works beyond its literal meaning in movie dialogue. Examining conversational maxim violations allows for a clearer understanding of how context, intention, and interpretation interact to produce humor in communication..

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is done by using a descriptive qualitative method. The researcher systematically collects, organizes, and classifies the data to provide a detailed analysis of humor types. According to Creswell (2018), qualitative research required the identification of individuals or groups in social situations. Therefore, this research focused on social phenomena or situations that occurred in a comedy, and Creswell's statement was related to this research.

The data of this research were taken from the popular Tim Burton's dark comedy movie, Beetlejuice 2 with a total duration of 1 hour, 45 minutes, and 3 seconds, which provided sufficient conversational data for analysis. The researcher focused on collecting humorous dialogues uttered by all characters in the movie. The data collection involved repeatedly watching the movie, verifying subtitles for accuracy, and using note-taking techniques to record relevant utterances during comedic interactions. The researcher rewatched the movie several times to cross-check the subtitles with specific scenes and to better understand the situational context of each interaction. Using a note-taking technique, the researcher highlighted humorous utterances spoken by the characters. Finally, the directive utterances were classified based on Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies and organized in a table to facilitate systematic analysis.

The standard for determining humor in this research was based on the context and then every humorous utterance was identified according to the type of violation and flouting of conversational maxim proposed by Grice (1975) and the type of humor proposed by Martin (2003). Finally, conclusions are drawn based on the analyzed data to reveal the type of humor used by the characters and how flouting and violating conversational maxim are applied in humorous utterances in the movie.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Finding

The data of this research were humorous utterances found in *Beetlejuice 2* (2024). The researcher identified 60 humorous utterances produced by the main characters throughout the movie. These utterances were analyzed using Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle and Martin's (2003) theory of humor. The analysis shows that all four types of humor appear in the movie, namely affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating humor.

1. Humor Types Used by Characters

No	Humor Type	Frequency
1	Affiliative Humor	17
2	Self-enhancing Humor	17
3	Aggressive Humor	21
4	Self-defeating Humor	5
	Total	60

Table 1. Humor types used by characters in *Beetlejuice 2*

From the table above, the analysis reveal that aggressive humor is the most frequently used type, with 21 occurrences, followed by affiliative humor and self-enhancing humor with 17 occurrences each, while self-defeating humor appears least frequently with only 5 occurrences.

In terms of conversational maxim non-observance, the study found that most humorous utterances involve flouting of conversational maxims, with a total of 48 data. All four types of maxim flouting occur, with flouting of the maxim of relevance appearing most frequently, followed by flouting of quantity and quality, while flouting of manner occurs least. In contrast, violations of conversational maxims occur less frequently, with only 6 data identified, consisting of violations of the maxims of quantity and quality. Additionally, 6 humorous utterances do not involve either flouting or violation of conversational maxims, as the humor is created through situational context or character behavior.

Based on the findings, the researcher concludes that the characters in *Beetlejuice 2* predominantly employ aggressive humor through intentional flouting of conversational maxims, particularly the maxim of relevance. This pattern indicates that humor in the movie is largely constructed through deliberate pragmatic strategies rather than unintentional communication failure. The frequent use of maxim flouting reflects the characters' strong personalities and communicative intentions, emphasizing that humor functions as a systematic linguistic tool in shaping interaction and character portrayal within movie discourse.

2. Humorous Utterances That Contained Flouting Conversational Maxim

No.	Flouting Maxim	Frequency
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1.	Quantity	2
2.	Quality	4
3.	Relation	0
4.	Manner	0
	Total	6

Table 2. Humorous Utterances That Contained Flouting

Data 44

01:18:50,403 - 01:18:57,541

Rory : *What are you doing here?*Damien: *I'm searching for the lost lambs to bring back into the light. Why don't I give you a ride to the church?*

Creatures from the afterlife entered the human world because the portal Beetlejuice created was not close. Rory, who was walking alone, was frightened by this sight. Damien drives by in his car and greet Rory. Rory tells Damien that he is very scared and asks Damien what he is doing wandering around at night. Damien casually replies that he is looking for “lost lamb”, implying that he is searching for people who have strayed from God’s guidance in order to guide them back to God, and he offers Rory a ride.

Damien's statement, “I'm searching for the lost lambs to bring back into the light. Why don't I give you a ride to the church?” is an example of affiliative humor, because he uses religious language in a sincere way but produces a humorous effect due to the unusual context. As a pastor, Damien refers to Rory as one of the “lost lambs,” a term in Christian beliefs that means people who have strayed from God's path and need to be guided back to the light of truth. His intention is actually good, he wants to help Rory by offering him a ride to church, but the situation becomes ironic because Rory is not a sinner who has “strayed,” but rather a frightened human being trapped in the midst of the chaos of the world after the portal to the afterlife has opened. The incongruity between the serious religious meaning and the ridiculous situation around them creates gentle humor that does not attack anyone. This is a form of affiliative humor according to Martin (2003), humor that arises from good intentions and interpersonal warmth, used to maintain social relationships and ease tension in a friendly and funny way.

Damien flouting maxim of manner because he delivered an offer that is not directly relevant to the core question and complicating the answer. Demian using metaphorical and dramatic expressions instead of a direct answer about his activities.

3. Humorous Utterances That Contained Violation Conversational Maxim

No.	Flouting Maxim	Frequency
1.	Quantity	2

2.	Quality	4
3.	Relation	0
4.	Manner	0
	Total	6

Table 3. Humorous Utterances That Contained Violation

Data 9

00:18:24,753 - 00:18:39,896

Beetlejuice : *Jesus, Bob. Can't you see I'm concentrating here? You know, Bob, long distance relationships can be difficult. Especially when one of you is dead and the other's ignoring you for 30 years. But Lydia and I, we have a definite psychic connection.*

The scene begins with Beetlejuice daydreaming at his office desk, tapping his fingers on the table. While he is deep in thought, Bob suddenly taps Beetlejuice on the shoulder, startling him and bringing him back from his daydream. Beetlejuice says that he is concentrating on thinking about his two women. Beetlejuice then tells Bob a long story about his complicated relationship.

Beetlejuice's utterances can be identified as self-enhancing humor because he uses jokes to laugh at his own condition while maintaining his self-confidence. The humor in this scene comes from Beetlejuice's long story about his romantic relationships. Beetlejuice reveals that he has very complicated relationships, which indirectly shows the loneliness he experiences. Instead of showing sadness, Beetlejuice turns that sadness into a joke. The humor is also enhanced by Beetlejuice's exaggerated and confident storytelling style.

Beetlejuice's utterance in this scene can be categorized as a violation of the maxim of quality. According to Grice (1975), the maxim of quality requires speakers to say what is true and supported by sufficient evidence. However, Beetlejuice's statement about having a "definite psychic connection" with Lydia is clearly an exaggeration and not based on factual truth. He claims to share a supernatural emotional bond with Lydia, even though this connection is not shown to be real in the story. The statement is intentionally untrue and dramatized to make his romantic obsession sound grand and humorous.

4. Humorous Utterances That Not Contained Flouting and Violation Conversational Maxim

Data 12

00:20:16,095 - 00:20:28,852

Wolf Jackson : *Correct. A vice cop doesn't get to a perp's door and then call for some hambone stunt man to break it down. Neither did I. You gotta keep it real.*

Beetlejuice : *Looks like you got a little too real there, bud.*

This scene takes place in the office of Wolf Jackson, who works as a "vice cop" in the afterlife. Wolf Jackson is responsible for handling and investigating crimes that occur in the afterlife. Wolf Jackson proudly told Beetlejuice that he never used a stunt man when he worked as a vice cop. Beetlejuice, who still underestimate Wolf Jackson, responded to Wolf Jackson's story with sarcasm.

Then aggressive humor in this scene happens when Wolf Jackson proudly says that he is a former vice cop who keeps everything real, and Beetlejuice replies, “Looks like you got a little too real there, bud,” while pointing at Wolf Jackson’s damaged head. This utterance shows Beetlejuice mocking Wolf’s seriousness and pride in his work by twisting the meaning of the word “real”. Verbally, Beetlejuice changes the “real” meaning of “authentic and professional” to “literally real” because of Wolf Jackson’s damaged body parts. Therefore, Beetlejuice’s comments are considered as aggressive humor, as its purpose is to mock the person he is talking to.

2. Discussion

This research examined humorous utterances in Beetlejuice 2 (2024) that contain the flouting and violation of conversational maxims based on Grice’s (1975) Cooperative Principle. The study aimed to explore the relationship between humor types and maxim non-observance by analyzing how linguistic strategies such as sarcasm, exaggeration, and irony contribute to humorous effects. A total of 60 humorous utterances were collected and categorized according to Martin’s (2003) humor classification—affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating—while also identifying whether each utterance involved flouting, violation, or neither. The analysis was conducted contextually by considering speaker intention, situation, and tone.

This study shows both similarities and differences when compared to previous research. The results differ from Islami’s (2023) study of *Yes Day*, which found affiliative humor to be dominant in a family-oriented context. While both studies apply the same theoretical frameworks, the contrasting genres influence the humor strategies employed. *Yes Day* relies on warm, cooperative interactions, whereas *Beetlejuice 2* emphasizes mockery, absurdity, and character arrogance. In terms of maxim use, this study identifies the flouting of the maxim of relevance as the most frequent strategy, while Islami (2023) reports a relatively balanced use of all four maxims. This suggests that humor in *Beetlejuice 2* often emerges from contextually unexpected yet pragmatically meaningful responses.

Similarities are found with Ramadhany’s (2025) analysis of *Lisa Frankenstein*, which also identifies aggressive humor as dominant and self-defeating humor as least frequent. Both films belong to the dark comedy genre, where humor is shaped by overconfident characters and sarcastic dialogue. However, Ramadhany applies Levinson’s Neo-Gricean theory, focusing on the M- and R-Principles, whereas the present study employs Grice’s Cooperative Principle. Despite these theoretical differences, both studies demonstrate that humor is constructed through the deliberate manipulation of conversational expectations.

Overall, the dominance of maxim flouting over violation indicates that humor in *Beetlejuice 2* is largely intentional rather than resulting from communicative failure. The interaction between humor types and conversational maxims highlights humor as a pragmatic device that reflects character personality, power dynamics, and social relationships. These findings reinforce the view that cinematic humor operates as a complex interplay between language, genre, and pragmatic strategy. The interaction between humor types and conversational maxims demonstrates that

humor in Beetlejuice 2 is not merely entertaining but also linguistically structured, revealing how pragmatic deviations are used to construct meaning within movie discourse.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the analysis and discussion, this study shows that all four types of humor proposed by Martin (2003), affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating, are employed by the characters in Beetlejuice 2 (2024). From a total of 60 humorous utterances identified in the movie, most are constructed through the flouting and violation of Grice's (1975) conversational maxims, while only a small number do not involve any form of maxim non-observance. This indicates that deviation from conversational norms plays a significant role in the creation of humor within the movie. Among the humor types, aggressive humor appears most frequently, mainly realized through sarcasm, exaggeration, and the characters' overconfident manner of speaking. In contrast, self-defeating humor occurs least often, reflecting the characters' preference for displaying confidence instead of positioning themselves as the target of humor.

Regarding conversational maxims, all types of maxim flouting are found in the humorous utterances, with flouting of the maxim of relevance occurring most frequently and flouting of the maxim of manner appearing least. The dominance of flouting over violation suggests that humor in Beetlejuice 2 is primarily created through deliberate and intentional manipulation of conversational expectations, in which speakers rely on implied meanings that they expect the hearers to understand. Meanwhile, only violations of the maxims of quantity and quality are identified, indicating that misleading or uncooperative communication is not the main strategy for generating humor. Taken together, these findings confirm that both flouting and violation of conversational maxims significantly contribute to humorous effects in the movie and directly answer the research questions concerning the types of humor and maxim non-observance in film dialogue.

Furthermore, this study highlights that humor functions not only as an entertaining element but also as a pragmatic strategy shaped by character traits and communicative intentions. This study contributes to pragmatic and humor studies by highlighting how conversational maxim flouting and violation operate as purposeful strategies to construct humor and reflect character traits within movie discourse. Future research may extend this analysis by examining humor in other genres or media, incorporating non-verbal and visual elements of humor, or combining Martin's (2003) humor framework with other pragmatic theories to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of humor construction in discourse.

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