



Maxim Violations and Humor in Trevor Noah's Stand-Up Comedy: A Pragmatic Analysis

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the violation of conversational maxims in Trevor Noah's stand-up comedy performance entitled "How to Not Order at an Indian Restaurant". This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with Grice's Principle of Cooperation theory as the main analytical framework. Data in the form of video transcripts were analyzed to identify the types of maxim violations that occur, as well as to understand how these violations function in building humorous effects. The results showed that all four types of maxims-quantity, quality, relevance, and manner-were violated in the performance, with the violation of the maxim of relevance being the most dominant. The findings show that maxim violations do not necessarily hinder communication, but can be creatively used to create humor and convey cultural messages implicitly to the audience. This study contributes to the broader field of pragmatics by demonstrating how non-cooperative language use can enhance audience engagement and meaning-making. It also advances humor theory by highlighting the pragmatic mechanisms through which linguistic deviation fosters comedic effect and cross-cultural understanding.

Keywords: Cooperative principle; Maxim violation; Stand-up comedy

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INTRODUCTION

Communication is a process of conveying messages, ideas, or notions, either verbally or nonverbally, from one individual to another. According to Sharma & Sharma (2015), effective communication depends on an individual's ability to convey ideas clearly, understand emotions, and respond well to situations through listening and nonverbal communication skills. To ensure communication goes well, there is one branch of linguistics called pragmatics, according to Yule (1996), pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies the meaning of utterances based on the context of the situation, the speaker's intent, and the interlocutor's interpretation. In the field of pragmatics, one of the most influential theories is the Principle of Cooperation introduced by Grice (1975), which consists of four conversational maxims: the maxim of quantity, which requires speakers to provide sufficient information, the maxim of quality, which expects information to be truthful and based on evidence, the maxim of relevance, which emphasizes staying on topic, and the maxim of manner, which encourages clarity and the avoidance of ambiguity. These maxims are designed to maintain coherence and mutual understanding in conversation. However, in everyday conversation, this principle

of cooperation is still often violated. The violation is known as maxim violation, which is a condition when a speaker consciously or unconsciously violates one of the four maxims proposed by Grice. Maxim violations may occur for several reasons such as concealing the truth, expressing uncertainty, employing sarcasm or avoiding certain topics (Wardana, 2021).

Interestingly, maxim violations cannot always be categorized as communication failures. As explained by Hadi & AL Anssari (2021), violations of Grice's maxims do not always lead to failure in communication. In certain contexts, such as irony or sarcasm, the violation is actually done intentionally to convey other meanings that are not conveyed directly. That is, utterances that appear to deviate from conversational norms can be understood based on the context of the utterance by the listener to produce certain effects, such as humor. This is clearly seen in the practice of stand-up comedy, which, as defined by Double (2014), is a performance by a single comedian addressing an audience with the specific intention of making them laugh. Stand-up comedy provides an ideal context for analyzing conversational maxim violations because it relies heavily on pragmatic manipulation. Comedians play with audience expectations, shift topics abruptly, and use exaggeration or irony to create humorous and critical meanings. Unlike scripted drama, stand-up performances simulate natural conversation, where the comedian assumes both speaker and listener roles, responding to imagined or real audience reactions. This makes it a fertile ground for studying how the deliberate flouting of conversational norms enhances humor and social commentary.

Trevor Noah, a South African comedian renowned for his cross-cultural and socio-political humor, exemplifies this practice. His performances frequently explore issues of race, identity, and cultural misunderstanding, using humor as a bridge between diverse audiences. The episode "How to Not Order at an Indian Restaurant" was chosen as the focal point because it vividly showcases his skill in combining linguistic creativity with cultural observation. In this performance, Noah humorously narrates an intercultural dining experience, using intentional violations of conversational maxims—such as exaggeration, irrelevance, and ambiguity—to expose cultural stereotypes and generate laughter. This episode, therefore, offers rich data for analyzing how pragmatic strategies function in constructing humor and cross-cultural meaning.

Previous research has shown that these violations are not a form of communication failure, but rather a strategy used to enrich meaning and increase the appeal of message delivery. The study by Nguyen & Trần (2025) examined the performances of comedian Jimmy O. They used Grice's Cooperative Principle theory as a framework for analysis. The results indicate that violations of the maxim of quality are the most dominant, often combined with violations of other maxims to enhance the humorous effect. This strategy employs statements that are not entirely true or are hyperbolic in nature to create a comedic atmosphere while subtly conveying social criticism.

Similar research was also conducted by Ulliyadhi et al. (2019) and Savira (2023), who studied maxim violations in Indonesian stand-up comedy. Ulliyadhi et al. (2019) analyzed Dodit Mulyanto's performance and found that the maxim of relevance violation was most frequently used, through topic shifts or responses that did not follow the flow of conversation to create surprises that provoked laughter. Meanwhile, Savira (2023) analyzed Christian Giacobbe's performance in the Stand-Up Comedy Indonesia X competition and found that the maxim of manner violation was the most dominant, where ambiguity and uncertainty were used to create irony, social satire, and the distinctive humor of stand-up comedy.

In addition to stand-up comedy, research on maxim violations has also been conducted in the context of movie. Merya Agusmita & Marlina (2018) analyzed the

dialogue in the animated film “The Monster House” and found that violations of the maxim of relevance were the most dominant, used to build tension and strengthen characters. Meanwhile, Putri & Apsari (2020) studied the film *Bad Genius* and reported that the maxim of quantity was used more frequently, both to hide information and to provide excessive information, which contributed to plot tension.

A comparison of these five studies shows that, despite using the same theory, the dominant types of maximum violations vary. These variations appear to be influenced by differences in comedy style, communication objectives, and the characteristics of the media used, ranging from stand-up comedy stages to films with complex narrative plots. However, there has not been much research specifically highlighting maxim violations in English language stand-up comedy performances uploaded through official online platforms, particularly those performed by international comedians, to see the most dominant types of violations and their function in creating humor.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore how Trevor Noah uses conversational maxim violation as a humor strategy in stand-up comedy. By focusing the analysis on the performance, this study seeks to reveal how the use of language that deviates from conversational norms is creatively utilized to create humor, while implicitly conveying social and cultural messages to the audience. Specifically, this study addresses the following research questions:

- 1) What types of conversational maxim violations occur in Trevor Noah’s performance “How to Not Order at an Indian Restaurant”?
- 2) How do these maxim violations function in constructing humorous and cultural meanings within the performance?

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design because it aims to identify, classify, and analyze maxim violations in comedy speech in an in-depth and contextual manner. A qualitative approach is appropriate given that the focus of the research lies on the meaning of utterances in specific communicative situations, rather than on numerical data or statistical generalization. Through this design, the researcher can explore how Trevor Noah constructs humor by deliberately departing from Grice’s Cooperative Principle in his stand-up performance. The analysis centers on the interpretive understanding of language use, emphasizing not only what is said, but also how, when, and why it is said in the flow of the performance.

Research Instruments

The research instruments consist primarily of observation sheets and analytical tables developed on the basis of Grice’s four conversational maxims: quantity, quality, relation, and manner. The observation sheets are used to systematically note relevant utterances, their context, and immediate audience reactions, while the analytical tables serve to classify each utterance according to the type of maxim violated. In addition to these, the study also incorporates tone, timing, and humorous cues as interpretive categories to capture the pragmatic nuances of stand-up comedy. By integrating these elements into the instruments, the analysis can link each maxim violation not only to its formal linguistic features, but also to its pragmatic and comedic effects within the performance.

Data Collection

The data for this research are drawn from Trevor Noah’s stand-up comedy video entitled “*How to Not Order at an Indian Restaurant*”, uploaded on his official YouTube

channel, with a total duration of 14 minutes and 53 seconds. This video was purposefully selected because it contains numerous utterances that potentially violate Grice's conversational maxims and represents a prototypical monologic stand-up routine in which language is strategically manipulated to create humor. Data collection was carried out by repeatedly watching the video in full to gain a comprehensive understanding of its content and context. Relevant segments containing suspected maxim violations were then identified, noted, and transcribed. The initial transcription was based on YouTube's automatic transcript feature, which was subsequently refined through careful close listening to correct errors and to add important contextual details such as tone of voice, strategic pauses, emphasis, and audible audience reactions, all of which are crucial for accurate pragmatic interpretation.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using Grice's Theory of Cooperative Principles as the main analytical framework. The analysis began with identifying utterances that deviate from the expectations of the maxims of quantity, quality, relation, and manner. Each identified utterance was then classified according to the type of maxim violation and examined within its immediate conversational and performative context. Particular attention was paid to the reasons behind each violation, such as exaggeration, absurdity, deliberate irrelevance, or ambiguity, and how these strategies contribute to the humorous effect. Tone, timing, and audience response were also considered in interpreting the pragmatic function of the violation, allowing the researcher to explain how Trevor Noah exploits the Cooperative Principle to generate comedy while still maintaining coherence and engagement with the audience. Through this process, the study provides a contextualized account of maxim violations as a deliberate rhetorical resource in stand-up comedy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section presents the findings of the study, which address the two research questions: (1) the types of conversational maxim violations that occur in Trevor Noah's "How to Not Order at an Indian Restaurant" performance, and (2) how these violations function to create humor. The analysis identified twelve instances of maxim violations across the four types proposed by Grice. As summarized in Table 1, the maxim of relevance was the most frequently violated, followed by the maxims of quality, quantity, and manner.

Table 1. Frequency of Maxim Violations

Types of Maxim Violations	Frequency
Maxim Quantity	3
Maxim Quality	3
Maxim Relation	4
Maxim Manner	2
Total	12

After analyzing the maxims violations that occurred in Trevor Noah's stand-up comedy videos, maxim of relevance was the most frequent type of violation, with a total of four utterances. The frequent use is due to Trevor's delivery style that often breaks the flow of the conversation or gives responses that seem irrelevant. However, it is precisely from the irrelevance that the comedy arises, creating an absurd impression that invites laughter from the audience.

This violations is followed by violations of the maxim of quality with a total of three utterances, which shows that comedic strategies are also often carried out through “lying” or conveying information that is not literally true. In the context of stand-up comedy, deviations from the facts are often intentional to create humorous effects, and the audience usually understands that such hyperbole or lies are part of the performance.

Meanwhile, the least frequent violations were the maxim of quantity and the maxim of manner, each of which only occurred twice. Violations of the maxim of quantity rarely occur because long and detailed explanations are an important part of stand-up comedy so that the audience understands the context of the joke. Similarly, the maxim of manner is rarely violated because Trevor Noah delivers his material in a structured, clear, and easy to follow manner. This clarity of delivery is important so that the jokes are well received and do not cause confusion in the audience.

Violation of Maxim Quantity

The maxim of quantity requires the speaker to deliver information that is sufficiently informative no more and no less than what is necessary. Providing either too much or too little information is considered a violation of this maxim. In Trevor Noah’s stand-up comedy, this type of violation is deliberately used as a humorous strategy.

Excerpt 1

“There are moments in your life. That will forever shape who you are. Moments that will define who you grow on to be. This was one of those moments for me. I put that sandwich in my mouth, I bit down and my mouth came alive. My tongue discovered its purpose. I didn’t know potatoes could pop like that. The flavours were bouncing around. My eyes opened wide.”

(02.58 - 03.20)

The above speech is categorized as a violation of maxim quantity. In this context, Trevor Noah gives a long and hyperbolic description of the experience of eating a curry sandwich. Phrases such as “My mouth came alive” and “My tongue discovered its purpose” are exaggerated expressions that are rarely found in everyday communication. However, this violation is done intentionally as a form of humor strategy that can invite audience laughter.

Excerpt 2

Trevor : “Is it bad?”

Thiessen : “I don’t even know anymore. I lost perspectives”

(02.24-02.29)

In this section, Trevor Noah delivers a stand-up comedy monologue in his signature style, where he often portrays more than one character in a story to bring certain situations to life. He mimics his own dialog with his friend Thiessen. When Trevor asked “is it bad?” then he as Thiessen responded by saying, “I don’t even know anymore. I lost perspective.”

Violation of Maxim Quality

In the principle of cooperation, speakers are expected not to say something that they know is wrong, or is not supported by sufficient evidence. Honesty is an important aspect in maintaining effective communication. If this maxim is violated, such as telling a lie, it can cause misunderstanding or confusion. However, in the context of stand-up comedy, maxim of quality is often violated intentionally, not to mislead or create misunderstanding but as a form of humor strategy. Here are some examples of maxim quality violations in Trevor Noah’s stand-up comedy.

Excerpt 3

“Could we please have three garlic raw nuns? We’re going to have a three rumali rotis. Give us a one shahi paneer. One palak paneer. You know what? We’re going to have a rogan Josh lamb. Of course. Could we also please have one butter chicken for my Caucasian friends? And then we’re going to have three samosas and three mango lassies to wash it all down. Thank you very much.”
(06.26 06.54)

Trevor’s utterance in the quote, actually does not violate the principle of maxim quality, because the information provided is true and in accordance with the context of ordering food in an Indian restaurant. However, the main focus here is the way Trevor delivers the utterance, which is by using an Indian accent, even though he is not actually an Indian.

In this context, Trevor is recounting his experience of going to an authentic Indian restaurant, where the atmosphere inside truly depicts the atmosphere of India, starting from the decoration, music and also the staff who work there. Trevor, who feels he is more Indian than his friends, because he grew up in South Africa which has a strong Indian community, took the initiative to order food using an Indian accent. This fake accent became an important element in his humor. Trevor consciously plays someone who pretends to be part of the culture and it is precisely from this pretense that a funny effect arises, inviting laughter from the audience. His made up accent combined with the long and specific menu list creates a strong comedic situation.

Excerpt 4

“No, no, no, there is nothing wrong with my voice. Can you just get. No, no, everything is fine.”
(12.19-12.26)

Trevor Noah’s statement above can be categorized as a violation of maxim quality. In this context, the violation occurs clearly. Previously, Trevor was pretending to be an Indian by imitating an Indian accent while ordering food at an Indian restaurant. However, the situation became ironic when the waitress turned out to be an Indian who spoke with a Scottish accent, which surprised Trevor. Trevor felt “trapped” in the fake accent he had constructed, and could not immediately revert back to his original accent, for fear of appearing to be playing up his ethnic identity or being perceived as racist.

Things got even funnier when he received a call from his mom. Since he was already using an Indian accent, Trevor still answered the phone with that accent. His mother, of course, was confused and asked about the change in her son’s voice. Instead, Trevor replied, “There’s nothing with my voice” and “Everything is fine”. These statements clearly do not reflect the actual situation, thus violating the principle of quality in conversation. However, this is one of the common humorous strategies used in stand-up comedy, where maxim violations including small lies like this are used intentionally to build irony, surprise, and funny situations for the audience.

Violation of Maxim Relation

An utterance can be a violation of maxim relevance of information if what is given is not appropriate or not related to the topic of the ongoing conversation. In the principle of cooperation, each speaker is expected to keep the conversation focused and directed, so that the contribution given has a direct relationship to the context of the discussion. Violation of this maxim leads to confusion or an unexpected change of direction in everyday communication. However, interestingly, in Trevor Noah’s stand-up comedy, the violation of maxim relevance that is the most frequent violation in order to create a humor strategy. Messages that suddenly “break” or go off the main story line are used to break the audience’s expectations, which in turn triggers laughter because of the unexpectedness.

Excerpt 5

"You don't need to know why. Let's just let's just do it. He's like, no. Why? Why? Because I'm white."

(04.47-04.49)

In the segment, Trevor Noah recounts his experience visiting an authentic Indian restaurant with his friend Steve. When Steve wanted to order his own food, Trevor refused on the grounds that Steve would embarrass him in front of "his people" meaning, the Indian community at the restaurant. Steve, not understanding why he wasn't allowed to order, asked, "Why?", and finally asked, "Why? Because I'm white?"

Steve's sentence is a violation of the Maxim of Relevance because his response deviates from the topic of conversation suddenly by bringing up racial issues, even though what is being discussed is about who will order food. Instead of making a contribution that is in line with the previous direction of the discussion, Steve links Trevor's decision to the issue of race, which is not directly relevant in the context of the conversation. However, this deviation of relevance is done consciously and sarcastically as a humor strategy by giving an absurd topic surprise from ordering food to race issues, which provokes laughter because it is unexpected. Trevor uses this moment to show how cultural differences and certain assumptions can be made into funny and entertaining jokes.

Excerpt 6

"I think it's the best cuisine in the world. Nothing comes close. You don't agree with me? Let's meet in the parking lot. We can fight."

(00.45-00.51)

In the quote, Trevor Noah is talking about how delicious Indian cuisine is. He states that he thinks Indian cuisine is the best in the world, saying "I think it's the best cuisine in the world. Nothing comes close". In the everyday context, the statement is a reasonable form of subjective expression because everyone has their own preferences for food. However, Trevor then adds a sentence that is not literally relevant to the topic of food, which is "If you don't agree with me, let's meet in the parking lot. We can fight."

This statement violates the Maxim of Relevance, as the response deviates suddenly from the main topic. Instead of maintaining the flow of the discussion about food tastes, Trevor diverts the direction of the conversation to threats of violence that are clearly not logically related. However, it is from this deviation that the comedic effect emerges. The sentence surprises the audience because it is unexpected and in sharp contrast to the original context, creating an effective element of humor. In other words, this violation of relevance is intentional and used as a strategy to evoke laughter through an exaggerated and humorous way of speaking, which characterizes sarcasm in stand-up comedy.

Violation of Maxim Manner

A statement violates the maxim of manner if the manner of delivery is unclear, confusing, or ambiguous. When the speaker does not convey information in an orderly and easily understandable manner, it is considered a violation of the principle. For example, convoluted or ambiguous sentences can confuse the listener. As in the example below, Trevor Noah deliberately violates the maxim of manner to create a humorous effect.

Excerpt 7

"He's like, yeah, you are not more Indian than me. I was like "Kuch kuch hota hai" what the hell is that?"

(05,50-05.54)

The quote above exemplifies violation of the Maxim of Manner, which requires speakers to convey information clearly, organized, and free from ambiguity. In this context, Trevor is recounting the moment when he and his friend, Steve, were about to order food at an Indian restaurant. Trevor did not allow Steve to order on his own, which triggered Steve's response, "You are not more Indian than me." However, instead of giving an appropriate response, Trevor said "Kuch kuch hota hai," a popular Hindi phrase from an Indian movie title.

Trevor's statement is vague and deviates from the previous direction of the conversation, leaving Steve confused. In Grice's Cooperative Principle, this can be categorized as a violation of the Maxim of Manner because the utterance is not delivered in a way that is easily understood. However, this violation is done intentionally as part of the comedic strategy. By inserting a globally known Indian popular culture term, Trevor creates humor through the incongruity of the context and the absurdity of the answer. This ambiguity becomes the source of humor as it confuses the audience's expectation of a serious response with an unexpected and ludicrous one.

Excerpt 8

"The guy was Indian, his beard was Indian, but his mouth was Shrek"

(08.16-08.19)

The quote is an example of a violation of the Maxim of Manner, which requires speakers to speak clearly, structurally, and without confusion. In this context, Trevor is describing his experience ordering food at an authentic Indian restaurant. Feeling a cultural closeness to India, Trevor decided to speak with an Indian accent when ordering. However, a surprising thing happened when the waitress, who physically looked Indian, replied with a Scottish accent.

Trevor's expression of confusion and surprise is shown through this sentence. The mention of "*his mouth was Shrek*" is an exaggerated and humorous expression, but it is difficult to understand if taken literally. This sentence deviates from the delivery that is usually expected in normal communication and can therefore be categorized as a violation of the maxim of manner. Despite this, the violation is done intentionally as a comedic strategy, where an unusual style of language is used to create a humorous effect that surprises the audience.

Discussion

The findings of this study illustrate how Trevor Noah systematically and strategically violates Grice's conversational maxims to construct humor and convey cultural meaning in his stand-up performance "*How to Not Order at an Indian Restaurant*." The predominance of relevance violations, followed by violations of quality, quantity, and manner, reflects Noah's comedic style, which often employs abrupt topic shifts, exaggeration, and intentional ambiguity to surprise the audience and create laughter. These results align with and expand upon previous research on maxim violation in comedic discourse, demonstrating that the deliberate manipulation of conversational principles is not merely a deviation from communicative norms but a powerful tool for humor-making and pragmatic effect.

The dominance of relevance violations in the data suggests that incongruity plays a central role in Noah's comedic strategies. In several excerpts, he shifts abruptly from one topic to another, creating humorous dissonance between the expected conversational trajectory and the actual utterance. This pattern mirrors the findings of Fatima et al.

(2023), who determined that relevance violations were the most frequent mechanism for humor in Pakistani sitcoms, as topic irrelevance creates a cognitive jolt that triggers amusement. Similarly, Ulliyadhi et al. (2019) found that Indonesian comedian Dodit Mulyanto uses off-topic responses to disrupt audience expectations and create comedic surprise. The present study strengthens these observations by demonstrating how relevance violations operate in an international, English-language comedic context, where cultural and linguistic diversity shape audience interpretation. Noah's use of irrelevance often incorporates cultural or racial references, adding layers of social commentary that enrich the humor while simultaneously challenging stereotypes. Thus, relevance violations serve not only comedic purposes but also sociopragmatic ones, enabling Noah to navigate and critique cultural boundaries.

Violations of quality were the second most frequent type and functioned primarily through exaggeration, hyperbole, and intentional "lies" for humorous effect. This aligns with Nguyen and Trần's (2025) study of Jimmy O. Yang's comedy, where quality violations—especially through exaggerated or obviously false statements—were the most dominant mechanism for humor. Noah's deliberate use of untruths, such as feigning an Indian accent or claiming his "mouth discovered its purpose," generates humor through the audience's recognition of absurdity. Unlike everyday conversation where violations of quality can cause misunderstanding, comedy leverages such violations to create irony, distance, and humorous tension. Hadi and Al Anssari (2021) similarly argue that lies in comedic contexts do not disrupt communication but instead enhance it, as audiences recognize the divergence from reality as part of the comedic performance. Noah's approach reinforces this argument by demonstrating how fabricated statements can embody shared cultural knowledge and invite the audience to engage in playful interpretation.

Quantity violations, though less frequent, still played a significant role in Noah's humor. In several excerpts, he provides overly detailed descriptions or, conversely, insufficient information, creating comedic exaggeration or ambiguity. These results match the findings of Maulin and Sembodo (2022), who noted that comedians often manipulate the quantity maxim by withholding or overstating information to build tension or produce humorous confusion. Noah's lengthy, poetic descriptions of eating a curry sandwich or his friend's ambiguous response ("I don't even know anymore. I lost perspective") reflect the comedic potential of excessive or insufficient informativeness. While everyday communication relies on the maxim of quantity to maintain clarity, comedy exploits its violation to generate both narrative depth and humorous absurdity.

Violations of manner, although the least frequent, were highly impactful in generating humor through ambiguity, unexpected figurative expressions, and exaggerated metaphors. For example, describing someone's mouth as "Shrek" is semantically unclear yet immediately humorous due to its absurd and vivid imagery. These findings resonate with Savira's (2023) study of stand-up comedy, which found that manner violations—through unclear or ambiguous phrasing—were particularly effective in creating irony and satire. Noah's manner violations often carry intertextual references or playful ambiguity that require audience inferencing, showcasing how stand-up comedy relies on shared cultural knowledge and cognitive engagement. The result is not confusion but heightened comedic resonance as the audience collaborates in constructing meaning.

Comparing the present findings with those from research on film dialogue further highlights distinctions between comedic monologue and scripted narrative. For instance, Agusmita and Marlina (2018) found that relevance violations dominated dialogue in *The Monster House* to create suspense and character depth, not humor. While both contexts

involve intentional maxim violations, their purposes differ: in film, violations strengthen narrative pacing and emotion; in stand-up comedy, they drive humor through unexpected turns. Putri and Apsari's (2020) analysis of *Bad Genius* similarly showed that quantity violations were used to conceal or reveal information for dramatic tension, contrasting with Noah's comedic exaggeration. These comparisons reinforce the argument that maxim violations are context-dependent, serving different functions across genres even when the same linguistic mechanisms are used.

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings contribute to the broader understanding of how Gricean pragmatics operates within humorous discourse. Traditional applications of the Cooperative Principle emphasize cooperative communication as the norm, with maxim violations viewed as deviations. However, the present study reinforces the view that in humor, maxim violations are not deviations but essential strategies. The audience enters a "comedic contract" with the performer, expecting playful manipulation of conversational norms. The intentional flouting of maxims invites inferencing, enriching the humorous experience by allowing the audience to co-construct meaning. This supports Double's (2014) assertion that humor relies on disrupting conversational norms while maintaining enough coherence for the audience to remain engaged.

Practically, the findings have implications for English pragmatics education, particularly in teaching implicature, figurative language, and context sensitivity. Stand-up comedy provides authentic examples of how maxim violations can be used strategically rather than accidentally, enabling students to understand pragmatics beyond textbook definitions. For cultural studies, Noah's performance exemplifies how humor can bridge cultural gaps by presenting relatable yet critical perspectives on identity, ethnicity, and intercultural communication. His maxim violations often highlight cultural misunderstandings, positioning humor as a tool for social reflection and intercultural awareness.

This study demonstrates that Trevor Noah's strategic violations of conversational maxims effectively construct humor while simultaneously conveying cultural messages. The humor does not arise from random deviation but from calculated linguistic choices that play with audience expectations. By situating these findings within existing research, this study strengthens the argument that maxim violations are a central, intentional, and sophisticated component of stand-up comedy's linguistic architecture. This contributes to a more nuanced understanding of pragmatics and humor studies, positioning comedic discourse as a rich site for exploring the dynamic interplay between linguistic structure, creativity, and cultural meaning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that Trevor Noah intentionally uses violations of conversational maxims as a strategy in creating humor. Of the four types of maxims in Grice's theory, the violation of the maxim of relevance was found to be the most frequent. The sudden shift in the direction of the conversation becomes one of the main elements in shaping humor. Violations of the maxims of quality and quantity are also used to display irony, hyperbole, or information that is not entirely true but deliberate action for comedic effect. Meanwhile, violations of the maxim of manner are used through the use of ambiguous or indirect utterances. Overall, these violations are not a form of communication failure, but rather part of an effective linguistic strategy in conveying a message in an entertaining way. This research proves that the study of pragmatics, especially Grice's theory, is relevant in analyzing humorous texts such as stand-up comedy.

RECOMMENDATION

Future research on maxim violations in stand-up comedy should involve a broader range of comedians, cultural contexts, and performance settings to see whether certain types of maxim violations are consistently dominant or vary depending on context. Incorporating multimodal analysis of gestures, tone, and audience response would also provide deeper insight into how humor is constructed pragmatically. This study was limited to one video and relied on the researcher's interpretation, which may not capture the full variety of Trevor Noah's style or account for audience subjectivity.

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