

A COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE APPROACH ON THE DIALOGUES OF RCTI'S *OFFICE BOY*

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Abstract

Office Boy is a situational comedy aired by one of the Indonesian private television station. It is always about the daily life of an HR department in which office boy is a part. The joke creation in the program is unique. It is, then, a reason to explore the dialogues in the episodes by viewing the interactive communication between the characters through a pragmatic approach, particularly the cooperative principles proposed by Grice.

Key words: *situational comedy, dialogues, maxims.*

Introduction

Communication is important for human to play their role as the social creature in daily life. Communication is considered as a social process established at least by two persons, namely the speaker and the interlocutor. To be good in communication, both of them must have same knowledge about something they are talking about, and they need a medium to send and receive messages to each other so that there is cooperation during conversation. Language is one of media which is very useful to express feelings and ideas of the participants, the speaker and the interlocutor. As Ramelan explains (1991: i), "Language is a means of communication used by human beings to cooperate and interact". Based on the statement, it can be concluded that the process of communication can only go well, if language, verbal or non-verbal, takes a part in succeeding the participant's efforts.

Television is one of mass media used by human to establish communication. It is a tool for the people to find out what is really going on in the world. Now, there are many private television stations established to please the viewers. RCTI is one of private TV stations offering any kind of program for the viewers who have different tastes. RCTI as one of private televisions broadcasts a serial program gaining a big response from the viewers. This serial program is *Office Boy*. This serial program creates many dialogues established by the characters to make cooperative nuance with their interlocutor, in which most of utterances in *Office Boy's* dialogues use the pragmatic style.

This research is focused on how the fulfillment of Cooperative Principle in the dialogues founded by the characters. It is conducted to find out whether the dialogues between the characters of *Office Boy*

adhere to Cooperative Principle covering its four maxims, in which if the information they present is informative enough and relevant to the goal of conversation, it will be well-accepted by all interlocutors involved. Meanwhile if it is otherwise, the inadequacy in fulfilling the principle may make one of the interlocutors misunderstand and mislead.

Cooperative Principle

The success of a conversation depends upon the various speakers' approach to the interaction. The way in which people try to make a conversation go properly is well-known as the cooperative principle. In an ordinary conversation, the speaker is suggested to shape his utterance or contribution in a right portion so that it can be comprehended by the interlocutor or at least to be cooperative.

Levinson (1983:101) describes cooperative principle as follows: "Make your conversational contribution such as required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged". It says that when the speaker establishes a conversation with the interlocutor, the speaker must give enough information as it is required by the interlocutor. The information is suggested to be sufficient. In other word, do not be more or less than needed by the interlocutor. The contribution sent is expected to be relevant to the context and still in a way in which the interlocutor involved can accept it as information he demands.

This principle can be explained by a set of rules guiding how people use language in conversation. Levinson (1983:101) formulates these rules into four basic maxims of conversation basically underlying how people should follow these maxims for a cooperative use of language, as guidelines for the efficient and effective use of language on which people establish a conversation to be cooperative as expected, which jointly express a general cooperative principle. He states that the maxims of cooperative principle are the maxim of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner (1983:101-102).

Humor

Humor is the ability of people, objects, or situations to evoke feelings of amusement in other people. It encompasses a form of entertainment or human arousing such feelings, or making people laugh or feel happy. The actor and the actress having ability to provoke the viewer or the audience to laugh are called as the comedian. They have a sense of humor functioning as the talent to make new innovations about the humor performance on the stage so that the audiences do not get bored.

Humor derives from the unique words manipulated based on location, culture, maturity, and level of education with a view to tempt

the audiences to forget their problem for a moment during a spectacle of humor. Laugh is capable of releasing human from life burdens, in which it is as a sign of the success of the comedian in entertaining the audiences. Laugh is also a hint that there is relevant mind between the comedian and the audiences.

Humor is a means to make life more spirited and elastic in society as like the lubrication in the construction of human relation. The term "humor" as it is formerly applied in comedy referred to the interpretation of the sublime and the ridiculous. Humor is often a subjective experience as it depends on a special mood or perspective from its audience to be effective as well.

Analysis

Text 1

This datum is the dialogue of *Office Boy's* characters among Pak Taka, Hendra, and Gusti taken from the episode of "*Teman Kuliah Pak Taka*" on 1 May 2007, in the minute of 7:41-9:00, by the guest star, Aji Pangestu.

Hendra : "*Masa Pak Aji seperti itu, Pak?*"

Pak Taka : "*Memang dia seperti itu, dia selalu ingin mengalahkan saya...dan selalu aja, ada cara untuk menjatuhkan saya. Pasti dia iri dengan kepandaian saya. Dulu...waktu saya kuliah, saya jadi Ketua Bidang Pendidikan di Badan Senat Mahasiswa, lalu Aji datang dan bilang ke saya...kalo dia menggantikan saya*".

Hendra : "*Lalu bapak diganti?*"

Pak Taka : "*Ya diganti...saya dijelek-jelekan sama Aji. Tapi yang paling saya ingat...waktu saya makan di kantin. Aji datang memaksa saya untuk keluar dari tempat duduk saya...ya saya keluar. Eeh...malah dia yang duduk di tempat saya...kurang ajar kan?!*"

Gusti : "*Eemm...Pak Taka, kenapa bapak mau?*"

Pak Taka : "*Soalnya...Eemm...Aji datang sama teman-temannya*".

Context of situation

The context of situation can be explained into three things, namely setting that includes place and time, activity, and relation between or among the characters. Place is in the HRD manager room and time is when Hendra and Gusti sit on the chair in front of Pak Taka's desk after they finish their job. Activity is all behaviours done by Pak Taka, Hendra, and Gusti in the HRD manager room. Relation between Hendra and Gusti is that they are partner in job, and Gusti and Hendra are the subordinates of Pak Taka. The context of situation is fully illustrated as follows:

Gusti and Hendra are sitting on the chair opposite Pak Taka's desk, and it is usual in their daily work when they always report the responsibility of their job in a day. Pak Taka who is in serious problem to hail his old friend, in campus, talks to Gusti and Hendra about his old friend, Aji. He considers Aji as his big enemy. He tells Gusti and Hendra about his past with Aji, when Aji once always bothered him in campus. Meanwhile, he never had a boldness to fight Aji, or at least protest what Aji did.

Cooperative Principle

Based on the cooperative principles, the dialogue above will be analyzed in terms of the degree of fulfillment to the maxims, covering the maxim of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner.

Quantity Maxim

Pak Taka in the part of this maxim does not seem to be right in conveying his answer to Hendra and Gusti. For the first answer, Pak Taka gives contribution much more than demanded by the questioner, Hendra, who actually just needs a simple reply about the bad habit of Aji. The answer explained by Pak Taka to Hendra is too explanative – as Hendra, in this conversation, perceives that Pak Taka has not been necessary to reply about the story of Aji in detail. And for the second answer, Pak Taka also repeats his greediness to tell about Aji as based on him, Aji always tried to provoke a conflict with him.

Quality Maxim

In relation to the maxim of quality, Pak Taka as the interlocutor is suggested to talk to Hendra and Gusti about his past with Aji in a true way. From the reply given by him to his two employees, Hendra and Gusti, he looks so honest to talk about his past with Aji in campus. Although in fact, his experience in the past is something bitter to be exposed in front of them. Here, Pak Taka seems to say what he believes to be true, or not trying to tell a lie about the fact of his bitter past with Aji. In this case, the way of this maxim has been well-done.

Relevance Maxim

All interlocutors involved in the talk have adhered to this maxim. Pak Taka has given information relating to the questions proposed by Hendra and Gusti. All replies said by him are relevant, as they are still in a way that is understood well by Hendra and Gusti. It is proved by Hendra and Gusti who feel so satisfied with Pak Taka's information perceived to be very relevant with their questions. In sum, the maxim of relevance is fully completed in this dialogue.

Manner Maxim

As having formulated in this maxim that the interlocutor is ruled to tell about something required in a brief way. Here, Pak Taka has talked

about his bitter past with Aji in a longer expression. Of course, it makes Hendra and Gusti feel so bored for a moment to listen his story, since they have to be silent to hear it. He should tell it in a simple way, or it at least should go to the main point. Here, Pak Taka seems to have widened the topic of story become so long. In addition, this maxim has been absolutely infringed by Pak Taka.

Text 2

This datum is the dialogue of *Office Boy's* characters among Gusti, Sayuti, and Revalina taken from the episode of "*Sama-Sama Sok Gengsi*" on 3 May 2007, in the minute of 17:30-18:25, by the guest star, Revalina S. Temat.

Gusti : (He comes to Sayuti and pulls Sayuti's hand).

Sayuti : "*Eh Mas...ada apa tho Mas?*"

Gusti : "*Ssssttt...!!! Gue minta tolong nih, pinjemin gue duit dong...dua ratus ribu aja. Soalnya antar malem gua mau dinner sama Re...*"

(He stops mentioning the name of "Revalina", since Revalina comes and listens to their conversation).

Reva : (She comes and stands beside them to hear what they are talking about).

Gusti : "*Aduh Say...sorry banget deh, gue sih duit ada...Cuma ATM di depankan lagi diotorisasi, jadi gue nggak bisa minjemin...ye*".
(He changes the topic of conversation by pretending that he will lend sayuti some money).

Sayuti : "*Eee...bisa kok Mas ATM nya, malah saya habis ngambil dari situ*".

Gusti : (He closes Sayuti's mouth by his hand to save his prestige as a man in front of Revalina).
"*Sayuti emang suka bercanda, ya kan? Ntar malem jadi dinner kan?*"

Reva : "*Jadi dong...*"

Gusti : "*See you next...*"(Then leaving Revalina and Sayuti with happy expression to go back to HRD staff room).

Context of situation

The context of situation can be explained into three things, namely setting that includes place and time, activity, and relation between or among the characters. Place is in front of the lift door of floor 2 and time is when Gusti tells a lie to Revalina. Activity is all behaviours done by Gusti, Sayuti, and Revalina in front of the lift door of floor 2. Relation between Sayuti and Gusti is that Sayuti is the subordinate of Gusti, and Revalina is Gusti's friend. The context of situation is fully illustrated as follows:

The situation is in front of the lift door of floor 2. Sayuti is standing in front of the lift door of floor 2, Suddenly Gusti comes to him in hurry; he looks panic. Gusti approaches Sayuti and tries to persuade him in order to lend a lot of money for Rp. 200.000 to him. The money is for a date with Revalina. When they are transacting, suddenly Revalina comes and stops her step in front of them to hear what they are talking about. She seems to suspect the conversation topic. To save his prestige in front of Revalina, Gusti changes the conversation topic by ostentatiously canceling to lend Sayuti a lot of money with the alibi that The ATM in front of the O.K TV building cannot work properly, so he cannot lend some money to Sayuti. It is bad for Gusti since Sayuti tells about the truth of the condition of the ATM. Gusti is luck because his plan to make a date with Revalina keeps going smoothly.

Cooperative Principle

Based on the cooperative principles, the dialogue above will be analyzed in terms of the degree of fulfillment to the maxims covering maxims of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner.

Quantity Maxim

Gusti as the second participant, in term of quantity maxim, has delivered complete information to respond the question of Sayuti who wants to know what is going on with him. It is based on the fact that Sayuti asks Gusti to tell the cause of why Gusti looks so panic and upset. The question "*Eh Mas...ada apa tho Mas?*" is an solid evidence for Gusti to share the cause of his confusion completely. So does what Revalina says to Gusti. Revalina has answered the question of Gusti sufficiently to satisfy his invitation. In addition, she has evoked a good and adequate response, "*Jadi dong...*". It is enough to conclude that the maxim of quantity in the talk has been perfectly observed.

Quality Maxim

The rule of maxim of quality insisting the interlocutor to say the truth does not seem to be completed by one of the participants, Gusti. He has violated this maxim by telling a lie to Revaline about the damage of Automatic Teller Machine. The ATM in fact is not damaged as said by Sayuti that the ATM still does work properly. Gusti, once again, also makes a lie by saying that Sayuti is kidding. Actually it is just his strategy to save his prestige. In sum, the maxim of quality in the text of conversation has not been fulfilled.

Relevance Maxim

This maxim proposes the participant to contribute relevant information with what other speaker says. Gusti has said a thing not

understood by Sayuti – as it is proved by Sayuti who has different argument about the ATM with Gusti. Here, Sayuti just tries to be honest in telling a fact that he has already taken the money from the ATM. However, it is Gusti's fault he does not notify Sayuti before to change the conversation topic. It is just a trick to save his face. The case here, Sayuti is a plain boy who is hard to understand Gusti's short drama spontaneously. In conclusion, the rule of this maxim has not been observed by this dialogue.

Manner Maxim

Maxim of manner in the dialogue is violated by the form of falsity constructed by Gusti. It is proved by the prolixity in the reason of Gusti about lending some money to Sayuti – as if Gusti really wants to tell a lie to Revalina; he should say "*Maaf Say, aku nggak bisa minjem duit soalnya aku lagi nggak punya duit*". Somehow, Gusti has said a statement in an indirect way. In sum, the text of talk has not fulfilled the maxim of manner.

Text 3

The analysis of eighth datum is the conversation of *Office Boy's* characters between Ismail and Sayuti taken from the episode of "*Keajaiban Buat Mail*" on 7 June 2007, in the minute of 7:40-8:30, by the guest star, Dona Agnesia.

Sayuti : "*Kenapa Mas Mail? Kok kelihatan sedih gitu, Mas?*"

Ismail : "*Emang gue lagi sedih, Yut*".

Sayuit : "*Sedih kenapa Mas?*"

Ismail : "*Guaa...gua ditolak cewek lagi*".

Sayuti : "*Mmm...Mas Mail ndak usah sedih Mas, itu kan biasa*".

Ismail : "*Emang sih Yut, harusnya gua nggak usah sedih...ditolak atau diterima, itu kan udah biasa ya Yut ya?!*"

Sayuti : "*Ee...Maksud saya bukan itu Mas, Mas Mail kan biasa ditolak cewek, jadi nggak usah sedih Mas*".

Ismail : "*Huuh...*" ("*Brak*", slapping the table by his hand as a hint of his anger to Sayuti).

Sayuti : (He runs out of pantry as the reaction of his fright to Ismail)

Context of situation

The context of situation can be explained into three things, namely setting that includes place and time, activity, and relation between or among the characters. Place is in the pantry, a place where O.B workers take a rest and time is when Sayuti gives a suggestion to Ismail. Activity is all behaviours done by Ismail and Sayuti in the pantry. Relation

between Ismail and Sayuti is that they are partner in job. The context of situation is fully illustrated as follows:

Ismail who is still single perceives disappointed by a girl, his love is not accepted by her. On the same time, Sayuti who is making a cup of coffee in the kitchen of pantry can read the facial expression of Ismail looking so sad, and then he tries to know what is going on with Ismail by interrogating him. Ismail feels Sayuti has sympathy with him, so he tells Sayuti about his problem. Sayuti suggests him not to be sad, since his problem is customary for him, not odd event. But Ismail gets misunderstanding with Sayuti's suggestion and says that being refused or accepted by a girl in amour is common for all men, so it is better for him not to be sad. In his opinion, after he interprets Sayuti's advice.

Cooperative Principle

Based on the cooperative principles, the dialogue above will be analyzed in terms of the degree of fulfillment to the maxims covering maxims of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner.

Quantity Maxim

Ismail as the interlocutor has consigned information as asked by the questioner, Sayuti, who really wants Ismail to send answer sufficiently. It is clear that Ismail's information has satisfied Sayuti for the cause of his sadness. By saying, "*Kenapa Mas Mail? Kok kelihatan sedih gitu, Mas?*", Sayuti has unconsciously also tried to force Ismail to answer two things all at once. Ismail just answers that he is really sad, and he replies it again after Sayuti asks him again about the cause of his sadness for he has been refused again by a girl. Here, the extra information uttered by Ismail, in his last sentence, does not mean to flout this maxim rule. In this case, the extra information used by Ismail is just to continue and retell Sayuti's suggestion that the words "*...itu kan biasa*", in Ismail's opinion, means that either being accepted or refused by a girl is a common thing for all men. Sayuti also seems to give the extra information used to correct Ismail's misunderstanding. In addition, Sayuti's extra information also does not mean to exploit this maxim; it is just a correction for Ismail. In sum, the text of this datum does not neglect the quantity maxim.

Quality Maxim

All things, in relation to the maxim of quality, stated by Ismail and Sayuti are true – as the audience also knows about the fact that Ismail has no any reason to tell a lie to Sayuti about the fact of his sadness for he has been rejected by a girl. He here is so honest for telling about his bitterness of getting a failure in love. Sayuti, in his talk, also just says what she believes to be true about the reality that Ismail is always refused by a girl. Fortunately, his honesty makes Ismail angry. Here, Ismail and Sayuti have followed the law of this maxim.

Relevance Maxim

Based on the relevance maxim, Sayuti has produced irrelevant word to share. Sayuti, in his word "*Mmm...Mas Mail ndak usah sedih Mas, itu kan biasa*" has sent information that fails to be comprehended well by Ismail – as it is proved by the misinterpreting of the proposition caught by the interlocutor. In Ismail's opinion, it is as a suggestion that either being refused or accepted by a girl is common in the love story, since it not only happens to him but also to all men. But Sayuti, then, makes a clarification to correct Ismail's misunderstanding. In his clarification, Sayuti explains the original idea in explanative way that is understood more by Ismail. However, the dialogue between Sayuti and Ismail does not run smoothly. In addition, Sayuti is not right based on the maxim of relevance.

Manner Maxim

The exploitation of the manner maxim in the dialogue is seen in the information contributed by Sayuti. Sayuti does not seem to try to avoid obscurity as looked here, when he says "*Mmm...Mas Mail ndak usah sedih Mas, itu kan biasa*". Ismail fails to interpret the word "*Biasa*" – As according to Ismail, it means that being refused or accepted by a girl is common for all men, in his opinion. In sum, the word "*...Biasa*" is the key of obscurity that makes Sayuti flout this maxim rule.

Discussion

Cooperative Principle

Based on the analysis above, it can be concluded that the cooperative principle in the dialogues of *RCTI's Office Boy* has been fulfilled. However, there are some violations of the maxims in the texts of dialogue. The four maxims covering the maxim of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner of the text of dialogue of *RCTI's Office Boy* that have been analyzed are discussed in general below.

Quantity Maxim

The maxim of quantity in all data has been perfectly fulfilled by the participants involved. This fulfillment is proved by the adequate answer of the second person that could be understood by the first person, as the initiator of the dialogue. However, there are several violations of this maxim in the texts of dialogue. The violation of this maxim on the dialogue is caused by the long answer of the second person that is perceived too much more than expected by the questioner, like that in the datum 1 of "*Teman Kuliah Pak Taka*". Pak Taka in the part of this maxim does not seem to be right in conveying his answer to Hendra and Gusti. For the first answer, Pak Taka gives contribution much more than demanded by the questioner, Hendra, who actually just needs a simple reply about the bad habit of Aji. The answer explained by Pak Taka to Hendra is too explanative – as Hendra, in this conversation, perceives

that Pak Taka has not been necessary to reply about the story of Aji in detail. And for the second answer, Pak Taka also repeats his greediness to tell about Aji as based on him, Aji always tried to provoke a conflict with him.

Quality Maxim

All participants in the texts of dialogue have obeyed the maxim of quality, for they have given true information, especially the interlocutors who are inquired to be honest in answering the question of others. However, there is several violation of this maxim occurring in the text of dialogue, like that in the datum 2 of *"Sama-Sama Sok Gengsi"*. The statement *"Aduh Say...sorry banget deh, gue sih duit ada...Cuma ATM di depankan lagi diotorisasi, jadi gue nggak bisa minjem...ye"* is a lie. It is just nonsense of Gusti to save his face and prestige in front of a beautiful girl. It is then proved by the correction of the first person about the condition of the ATM, as he says *"Eee...bisa kok Mas ATM nya, malah saya habis ngambil dari situ"*. Here, it can be seen that finally, dishonesty of the second person is disclosed.

Relevance Maxim

All participants in the text of dialogue have obeyed the relevance maxim, for they have followed the rule of this maxim to give relevant information for the goal of conversation, especially the participants who are inquired to answer the question of others. However, there is several violation of this maxim in the text of dialogue, like that in the datum 3 of *"Keajaiban Buat Mail"*, in which the statement of Sayuti *"Mmm...Mas Mail ndak usah sedih Mas, itu kan biasa"* has failed to be understood by Ismail. It is proved by Sayuti then making a clarification to correct the misunderstanding of Ismail. In Ismail's opinion, the failure in love is common for all men in the word. Meanwhile in Sayuti's opinion, it is a suggestion for Ismail not to be sad, since he is really always refused by a girl. In short, Sayuti and Ismail are in irrelevant mind.

Manner Maxim

In general, the maxim of manner has been fulfilled by the participants of texts. However, there are several violations of this maxim in the texts of dialogue, like that in the datum 3 of *"Keajaiban Buat Mail"*, Sayuti does not seem to try to avoid obscurity as looked here, when he says *"Mmm...Mas Mail ndak usah sedih Mas, itu kan biasa"*. The word *"Biasa"* is obscure to be interpreted since it has many meanings. So, the impact is that Ismail fails to interpret the word *"Biasa"*. It is proved by Sayuti, who then gives a clarification about the meaning of word *"Biasa"*, in Sayuti's opinion.

Conclusion

Office Boy is just an example showing us how important the rules of Cooperative Principle affect the audiences or the viewers to understand

inferences created by the characters, the speaker and the interlocutor. Here, the speaker is allowed to intentionally make a maneuver by exploiting one, two, or more of four maxims if the situation really demands the speaker to do those violations. In order to preserve the assumption, the interlocutor also has to infer it to be in line with the context so that it is relevant and cooperative for both, the speaker and the interlocutor.

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