Grice's Conversational Implicature in Written Short Humor Dialogues

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ABSTRACT

The present study, entitled *Grice's Conversational Implicature in Written Short Humor Dialogues* examines the types of conversational implicature, hidden messages which are generated in written short humor dialogues, and audience's responses to implicatures. The present study uses 45 written short humor dialogues which are taken from www.squackle.com, www.lotsofjokes.com, www.englishindo.com, and www.jokes4u.com. The data were analyzed qualitatively by using Grice's conversational implicature (1975). The study is also supported by Hay's humor support strategies (2003) to analyze the audience's responses toward implicature. The study discovers that particularized conversational implicature is the only type of conversational implicature which appears in written short humor dialogues. Those particularized implicatures are generated through the failure in observing maxims, in the form of flouts. Moreover, flouts maxim of relation is the mostly flouted in the written short humor dialogues with 39 occurrences (86.7%) from 45 occurrences. With regard to audience's responses, they are obtained through a short interview with 20 students from English Education Department. The result of the interviews demonstrates that the audiences only use three strategies proposed by Hay (2003) which are 'contributing more humor' (53%), 'humor is support strategy itself' (22%), and 'mixed strategy' (1%) between 'contributing more humor' and 'offering sympathy'. All in all, the findings indicate that humors are easily made by flouting maxims. In addition, the audience's responses signify that the humor is funny and entertaining.

Keyword: Conversational Implicature, Implicature, Maxims, Audience's responses, Written Short Humor Dialogues

INTRODUCTION

Conversation is a type of communication which aims to share people ideas and feelings with others. In a conversation, people use languages as the main tool. In real life, sometimes the conversations among people do not run as smoothly as it is expected. As stated by Thomas (1995: 56), "there are times when people say or write exactly what they mean, but generally they are not totally explicit". They might not say the truth, be relevant, give information as is required, nor say something as clear as he/she can. These may result in misunderstanding between the speaker and the hearer which is called conversational implicature.

Grice (1975) introduces four maxims of conversation, which are maxim of quality, maxim of quantity, maxim of relation, and maxim of manner. When people failed to observe all four maxims of conversation, it resulted implicature. Implicature will give effect such as laughing, misunderstanding, or even confusing.

Moreover, Thomas (1995) further states that there are five ways of failing to observe the maxim, which are flouting, violating, infringing, opting out, and suspending maxim. All of them are also known as non-observance (Dornerus, 2005; Paakinen, 2010). In terms of non-observance, nowadays, there are comedy shows and sitcoms which entertain audiences by flouting the maxims. Characters in comedy shows or sitcoms might tell irrelevant things from the topic or tell a lie in order to make the audiences laugh. Yet, even if flouting can be used for humoristic purpose, the humor effect itself is not always understood by hearer. As Thomas (1995: 58) says, "an implicature is generated intentionally by the speaker and may or may not be understood by the hearer". Furthermore, Khosravizadeh & Sadehvandi (2011) find that in daily conversation, flout of maxims is used to reach certain purposes such comedies, humors, or jokes. Some previous studies (Sandra, 2008; Andresen, 2013) prove that in relation with pragmatic, joke or

humor comes from certain sources. They are lack/exceed of information (Quantity), contradiction or discrepancy (Quality), intended ambiguity (Manner), and misunderstanding or mismatch (Relation). Considering those explanation, this present study is conducted in order to examine types of conversational implicature which appear in written short humor dialogue, the way the hidden messages in implicature are generated, and audience's responses toward the implicature in written short humor dialogue.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method to achieve the aims of the study which attempted to describe and interpret the types of implicature, the ways the implicatures are generated and the audience's responses toward the implicatures in written short humor dialogue. Besides, since the data are also in the forms of conversational exchange. A qualitative method is suitable to be applied in present study. This is in line with Silverman

(1993, cited in Metodos, 2011) who states that a qualitative method is a method for analyzing talk, text and interaction rather than number. It is expected to reveal audience's understanding towards humors present in implicatures and strategies used by them in supporting humors.

There are several steps in the data collection procedures. The first step is identifying conversational exchanges which potentially generate implicatures by noting the setting, the situation which was aimed to support the analysis. Next step is, categorizing the exchanges based on the types of implicature by using Grice's theory of implicature (1975) and identifying the way the hidden meaning are generated through types of non-observance The third step is analyzing the result of interview by using understanding humor framework proposed by Hay (2003).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study found that in written short humor dialogue, there is only one out of two types of conversational implicature appears in written short humor dialogues namely particular

ized conversationali mplicature. The hidden messages in implicature are generated through the flouting of maxim, the remaining four did not occur. In addition, the audience's responses to the implicature show that humor support strategies which are used by the audience are Contributing more humor, Humor is support strategy itseld, and Mixed strategy (Contributing more humor & Offering sympathy).

Particularized conversatio nal implicature appears in all 45 written short humor dialogues. One of the reasons that particularized conversational implicature appears because one or two types of maxim failed to be observed in the dialogues. In humor dialogues, the writers break one or two types of maxim for humoristic purpose. This finding is in line with Paakinen (2010) who states that maxims are broken for humoristic purposes through verbal and non-verbal acts.

With regard to the hidden messages, they are all generated through the flouting of maxim. It suggests that flouts of maxim occur in a situation where people do not

have intention to mislead the hearer, but they want the hearer to find out hidden meaning behind their utterances. In this case, the writers of the written short humor dialogues employ the flouts of maxim to place the source of humor that they want to convey to the readers/audiences. Moreover, this result also shows that humors are generated through irrelevant answers. The irrelevant answers are regarded as the source of humor by the audiences.

The audiences use three strategies, 'contributing more humor', 'humor is support strategy itself', and a 'mixed strategy' (namely, Contributing more humor and offering sympathy). Contributing more humor is represented by laughing at the humor. It suggests that the humors in the dialogues are similar with types of humor which are presented in Indonesia. The respondents acknowledge the humor. So, they easily understand the humors and laugh at them as the response. 'Humor is humor support strategy itself' is represented by the act of not giving any form of humor support by the respondents. The

present study also observes that 'humor is support strategy itself' is used mostly by male audiences. It suggests that the act of not giving any form of support to the humor does not always mean that the audiences do not understand the humor or think that the humor is not funny. Rather, they have other reasons to do so. The first reason is that the audience already read the same dialogue before. So, the degree of humor is greatly reduced. Another reason is the audience thinks the dialogue is a little bit funny. So, the humor is less funny. In addition to two strategies occurred, a mixed between contributing more humor and offering sympathy occurs in the present study. Since the audience firstly thinks that the dialogue is funny and then she feels sorry.

CONSLUSION

From the findings above, it can be concluded, humor dialogue carries particularized conversational limplicature. Particularized conversational implicature occurs in a situation where special/specific knowledge is needed in order to

understand the additional conveyed meaning (Yule, 1996). In the present study, the source of humor in humor dialogues is placed in a sentence/part where the special/specific knowledge is needed to understand the humor. So, all of the humor dialogues contain particularized implicature. The messages in implicature are generated through flouts of maxims, because the speakers in humor dialogue do not have intention to mislead the hearer. The speakers in the dialogue are employed by the writer of the text to flout maxims in order to create humor. The messages in implicature cannot be done by violating, infringing, suspending, and opting out maxim because all of them are broken intentionally for certain purposes such as imperfect language and the use of taboo words. The audience's responses to humor indicate audience's understanding to humor and find out whether the humor dialogues are entertaining or not.

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