

PRAGMATICS ANALYSIS OF VERBAL HUMOR IN *FRIENDS*—BASED ON COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE

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Abstract

This study examines the role of verbal humor in the popular sitcom, providing insights into language use in social interactions. While humor is crucial for communication, existing literature often lacks detailed pragmatic explanations of how maxim flouting specifically generates comedic effects, particularly in global media like Friends. This study aims to systematically identify, categorize, and analyze verbal humor in Friends by examining the flouting of Grice's Cooperative Principle maxims (Quality, Quantity, Relevance, and Manner), and to explore how contextual elements influence the interpretation of humor. Employing a qualitative, descriptive, pragmatic approach, the study analyzes selected humorous dialogues from the series. Anticipated findings suggest that humor frequently arises from the strategic flouting of all four maxims, with character personalities and situational context playing a vital role in interpretation. Ultimately, this study concludes that humor in Friends is systematically constructed through pragmatic violations, emphasizing the complex inferential processes involved in understanding comedic discourse and highlighting the importance of pragmatic competence for both creators and audiences of humor.

Keywords: *Pragmatics, verbal humor, friends (TV series), cooperative principle, maxim flouting.*

INTRODUCTION

H.P. Grice first introduced the Cooperative Principle (CP) in his book *Logic and Conversation* (1975). According to Grice, effective communication requires cooperation between speakers and listeners as well as adherence to specific rules. The cooperative principle refers to the values that both parties to a discussion uphold jointly (Hoicka, 2014). While this principle provides a fundamental theoretical framework for understanding communication, a significant gap exists in applying it to and explaining its exploitation within the realm of verbal humor, particularly in the constructed dialogues of popular media, such as sitcoms. The general theoretical statement about CP does not adequately address the intentional and systematic violation or flouting of these cooperative maxims as a deliberate comedic strategy. The core gap lies in the discrepancy between the theoretical ideal of conversational cooperation and the practical reality where humor frequently arises precisely because speakers deviate from these rules. Research is needed to meticulously demonstrate which specific maxims are most frequently flouted for humorous effect in contexts such as sitcom dialogue, and crucially, how the act of flouting a maxim precisely generates the humorous outcome, detailing the cognitive and inferential processes that the audience

undergoes. Furthermore, there is a need to explore the significant role of context, character personalities, and shared background knowledge in enabling the audience to understand that a maxim is being flouted for humor, rather than indicating a genuine communication breakdown. Without such focused analysis, the broad understanding of the Cooperative Principle remains largely theoretical concerning its nuanced role in humor creation, leaving the intricate mechanics of comedic communication in popular media largely underexplored.

The principle that conversation participants should cooperate and generally strive to be truthful, informative, relevant, and clear is a cornerstone of effective communication, as articulated by H.P. Grice in his seminal work, *Logic and Conversation* (1975). This principle, with its underlying four maxims (Quality, Quantity, Relevance, and Manner), serves as an implicit agreement that guides how individuals interact to achieve successful communication. We implicitly expect people to follow these maxims in daily interactions; for instance, if you ask, "What time is it?" and receive the response, "Three o'clock," you assume the response is truthful, sufficiently informative, directly relevant, and clear. Deviations from these expectations, even unintentional ones, frequently lead to misunderstandings, demonstrating that their general observance is indeed the default (Cutting, 2002). When a maxim is overtly not followed, listeners typically infer an unstated meaning, highlighting their underlying assumption of cooperation (Grice, 1975).

Grice further asserted that cooperation is a hallmark of meaningful conversation, emphasizing that "Each participant, to some extent, sees in them a shared goal or set of goals, or at the very least a common course of action" (Grice, 1975). This implies that conversations are purposeful, with participants working together towards mutual understanding or a specific outcome. This shared objective is evident in various communicative scenarios, as team members' discussions about responsibilities and deadlines inherently reflect a common aim in collaborative tasks. Similarly, problem-solving talks are driven by the shared goal of finding a solution, where questions, suggestions, and arguments all contribute to an ordinary course of action. Even in contexts like debates, an underlying shared goal exists, such as presenting arguments effectively or arriving at a reasoned conclusion, with participants adhering to structural rules like turn-taking and Relevance (Yanyan, 2009). On a fundamental social level, simply engaging in conversation, like catching up with a friend, implies a shared goal of connection or information exchange. The reciprocal nature of dialogue, where speakers respond to each other's contributions, directly reflects this cooperative effort, underscoring that communication is a purposeful, cooperative endeavor aimed at achieving common ground.

The Cooperative Principle, which seeks to explain how and why talks typically succeed rather than fail, is a basic explanation of how people achieve effective communication in everyday situations. Grice's four Conversational Maxims were added to his Cooperative Principle. He founded the maxims on the notion that effective communication requires saying just enough to make your point, being truthful, being relevant, and being as clear as you can. The Maxim of Quality, the Maxim of Quantity, the

Maxim of Relevance, and the Maxim of Manner are the four conversational maxims. Grice believed that to achieve meaningful communication, one must adhere to these four maxims and presume that others will do the same. This study will describe the maxims of cooperative argumentation argued by Grice (1975), namely: a) The Maxim of Quality, b) The Maxim of Quantity, c) The Maxim of Relevance, and d) The Maxim of Manner.

The Maxim of Quality

Only speak what you firmly believe to be true. You should not make claims without supporting documentation. Of course, different people may have other ideas of what the truth is. Consistently telling the truth is against the Maxim of Quality. Avoid saying something you know to be false. Avoid making claims for which you lack sufficient justification. The Maxim of Quality dictates that conversational contributions should be truthful, comprising two key sub-maxims: "Do not say what you believe to be false" and "Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence" (Grice, 1975). This principle underpins the fundamental expectation of honesty, ensuring the reliable and trustworthy exchange of information in communication. In everyday interactions, we inherently trust that others are being truthful; for instance, when a friend confirms completing a task, we typically believe them without requiring proof. Conversely, violating this maxim, such as through intentional deception (e.g., a student submitting a fabricated report), can lead to a breakdown in trust and negative consequences, underscoring the high value placed on truthfulness. Humor often arises not from outright violation but from flouting the Maxim of Quality through devices like sarcasm, irony, or hyperbole. When someone says, "Wow, you are so graceful!" after a clumsy stumble, both parties understand the humorous untruth through shared context. Similarly, asserting a new theory without sufficient evidence in a scientific discussion would be considered uncooperative, underscoring the importance of substantiated claims. These examples demonstrate how the Maxim of Quality functions as a fundamental expectation, guiding clear exchanges. At the same time, its strategic flouting serves as a key mechanism for generating humor and indirect meaning.

The Maxim of Quantity

You should add as much information to the discourse as is required. You should not include more information in your contribution than is essential. It is essential to share all the necessary facts to continue the conversation. The characters should not overstimulate our audience with unimportant information. Be as informative in your contribution as necessary to support the current goal of the discussion, which implies avoiding the provision of insufficient details to facilitate a productive discourse. Do not contribute more information than is necessary; to have a productive discourse, we should also avoid providing unnecessary information. The Maxim of Quantity states that conversational contributions should be as informative as required for the current purpose of the exchange, neither more nor less (Grice, 1975). This involves providing all necessary facts to continue a productive

conversation while avoiding overwhelming the audience with trivial or superfluous details. In the context of analyzing verbal humor in a sitcom like *Friends*, the characters should ideally provide as much information as necessary for the discussion's goal, steering clear of both insufficient and unnecessary details. Humor often arises when characters deliberately flout this maxim; for instance, by being under-informative, such as when a character gives a terse, unhelpful response like "Things" to a question, forcing the other character and the audience to infer meaning, thereby creating comedic frustration. Conversely, humor is also generated when characters provide excessive, rambling details beyond what is required, which can be humorous due to its absurdity or the speaker's self-indulgence (Shei, 2019). These strategic floutings by *Friends* characters, whether by providing too much or too little information, are key mechanisms for generating verbal humor, often relying on the audience's understanding of this underlying conversational expectation.

The Maxim of Relevance

Only speak on topics that are pertinent to the conversation. This maxim aids in conversational direction and minimises rambling and disjointed interactions. The Maxim of Relevance also enables us to comprehend verbal exchanges that may not be immediately clear. What is mentioned should be pertinent to the discussion's theme. The Maxim of Relevance dictates that conversational contributions should be pertinent to the ongoing discussion (Grice, 1975), serving to maintain conversational direction, prevent rambling or disjointed interactions, and ultimately enable participants to comprehend exchanges. In everyday dialogue, we implicitly expect relevant responses; for instance, responding "I have much work to do" to an invitation implicitly conveys inability to attend, demonstrating how Relevance aids in conveying implied meaning. Conversely, blatant violations of Relevance can quickly lead to communication breakdowns, such as suddenly discussing weekend plans during a serious project meeting, making the conversation unproductive (Nordquist, 2019). Crucially for humor, the Maxim of Relevance is a fertile ground for flouting, where a character responds *not* relevant to the preceding utterance, creating an absurd or surprising comedic turn (Wahyuni et al., 2019). An example from a sitcom might be replying, "My socks have holes in them," to "How was your date?" and generating humor from the blatant irrelevance. While sometimes used to divert or mislead, what initially appears irrelevant can also carry deeper, implied meaning, requiring listeners to infer connections, as seen when a child points to a puddle in response to a question about muddy shoes (Grice, 1975). Thus, the Maxim of Relevance is fundamental to structured communication, and its deliberate manipulation is a potent tool for comedic expression.

The Maxim of Manner

Obscurity and ambiguity should be avoided. Be succinct and organised. Make an effort to be as clear as possible. This maxim mainly applies to the words you choose to employ. For instance, we should aim to be brief and coherent, and refrain from using overly

complex or unfamiliar phrases that we know our listener will not comprehend. Avert obscurity, prevent ambiguity, be succinct (avoid needless prolixity), and be orderly. The Maxim of Manner focuses on *how* something is said, emphasizing clarity, brevity, and orderliness in communication (Grice, 1975). It advises speakers to avoid obscurity and ambiguity, be succinct (avoid needless prolixity), and present their contributions in an orderly manner, ensuring the message is conveyed as clearly and straightforwardly as possible. Adherence to this maxim is paramount in practical settings; for instance, clear and concise instructions are essential for effective communication and preventing errors, whereas ambiguous directions lead to confusion. Similarly, overly verbose or redundant language can obscure the message (Yus, 2003), and presenting information out of logical sequence hinders comprehension. Conversely, flouting the Maxim of Manner is a common source of humor in sitcoms and daily interactions. Characters might deliberately use ambiguous language, speak in an overly convoluted way, or present information in a disorganized manner to create comedic confusion, misunderstandings, or to highlight their unique personalities (Cahyani & Budiati, 2021). For example, a character might give a deliberately vague answer to avoid confrontation or use unnecessarily complex words to sound intelligent, generating humor from the deliberate lack of clarity (Nordquist, 2019). These examples illustrate how the Maxim of Manner guides speakers to present their contributions in an easily digestible format, and how its intentional subversion can be a powerful tool for generating comedic effect.

Cooperative Values and Methods

Grice's maxims are expressions of standards of behaviour, although these 'rules' are frequently disregarded when communicating. Both flouting and violating the maxims are acceptable methods to violate them. Grice's maxims, while serving as standards for cooperative behavior in communication, are frequently disregarded in practice (Grice, 1975). This non-adherence is not always a failure, but can be a strategic choice, leading to implicit meanings or humor. Grice distinguishes two primary methods: flouting and violating. Flouting occurs when a speaker *blatantly* fails to observe a maxim, *expecting* the hearer to recognize this intentional deviation and infer an unstated meaning, or implicature (Cutting, 2002; Grice, 1975). For instance, flouting the Maxim of Quality through sarcasm ("Well, that was graceful!" after a stumble) relies on the listener understanding the ironic opposite meaning. Similarly, flouting Quantity might involve excessive detail, flouting Relevance a sudden topic change, and flouting Manner deliberate ambiguity for comedic effect.

In contrast, violating a maxim involves a speaker *secretly* and *unostentatiously* failing to observe it, typically to mislead or deceive without the hearer's awareness. Examples include violating Quality by lying ("I finished my homework" when it is not true), violating Quantity by deliberately concealing information, violating Relevance by subtly diverting attention (Nur, 2018), or violating Manner by using obscure language to hide the truth. These distinctions highlight that while maxims establish a cooperative baseline, their strategic

deviation is a deliberate communicative choice with distinct pragmatic consequences.

Infringing on Grice's Maxims

When Grice's maxims are breached, it usually happens secretly or covertly (undercover). This implies that none of the other participants are aware that a Maxim has been violated. The maxims of Quality and Quantity are the ones that are broken the most frequently. When someone intentionally lies, the Maxim of Quality is broken. When someone withholds knowledge that another person wishes to know, the Maxim of Quantity is broken.

Grice's maxims can be flouted, but violating them is unquestionably more serious than doing so. For instance, telling a "white lie" is preferable to lying in court. Grice's maxims are frequently flouted and are typically regarded as more acceptable than they are to be violated. Grice's Maxims should be evident to everyone involved when they are being broken. Flaunting Grice's Maxims includes being sardonic, utilising metaphors, acting as though you misheard someone, and using a tone of voice that does not correspond to what you are saying.

When speakers use complicated phrases and technical jargon that their listeners will not comprehend, they are violating the Maxim of Manner. When someone claims to have misheard what has been stated in order to steer the discourse in a different direction, the maxim of Relevance is broken. When someone does not completely answer a question, usually out of obtuseness or annoyance, the Maxim of Quantity is violated. When someone is being ironic, they are violating the Maxim of Quality.

Grice's maxims, while setting standards for cooperative communication, are frequently disregarded in practice, a non-adherence that can manifest as either a covert violation or an overt flouting (Grice, 1975). A violation occurs when a speaker secretly and unostentatiously breaches a maxim with the intent to deceive, with other participants typically unaware of the transgression. The Maxims of Quality (e.g., intentionally lying) and Quantity (e.g., deliberately withholding information) are common targets for such covert breaches (Cutting, 2002). Conversely, flouting involves a speaker *blatantly* and *intentionally* failing to observe a maxim, expecting the hearer to recognize this deliberate breach and infer an unstated meaning or implicature. The key difference is that flouting is meant to be obvious, distinguishing it from deceptive violations, and is generally considered more acceptable. For instance, flouting the Maxim of Quality is evident in sarcasm, irony, or metaphor, where speakers say something they know to be false, relying on context or tone to convey the intended, often humorous, meaning (Cahyani & Budiati, 2021). Similarly, flouting the Maxim of Manner might involve deliberate ambiguity or convoluted language to create comedic confusion (Maouxun, 2019), while flouting Relevance can involve an abrupt, seemingly unconnected statement used for a humorous effect. Specific instances often cited as violations, such as using complex jargon to obscure information (an actual violation of Manner aiming to genuinely confuse) or providing an incomplete answer due to obtuseness (violation of Quantity), differ from flouting because the intent is not for the hearer to infer an

implicature but to be genuinely misled or frustrated. Thus, understanding the distinction between these two forms of maxim non-observance is crucial for analyzing the complexities of communicative intent, especially in humorous discourse.

The smooth development of linguistic communication depends on the speaker and the hearer's tacit cooperation with one another. Strict adherence to these rules is a requirement. The two sides of communication, however, do not always comply with these rules in real life. Even more frequently, they are used to breaking the rule of cooperation, whether consciously or unconsciously. In this situation, the literal meaning of the speaker's words often leads the hearer to understand an illocutionary meaning, or a "special conversational meaning." In this process, humor frequently surfaces (Yanyan, 2009).

Humor

There are two types of humor: broad and narrow. In Western languages, it is frequently used, even in crude humor. Humor differs from cynicism, sarcasm, and mockery in distinct ways. All three of these genres include aspects of humor. However, laughter has historically been expressed in a variety of ways, including bitter laughter, violent laughter, light-hearted laughter, and humorous laughter. Some terms are used to describe the Yi, while others are based on a general outlook on life. Some terms are related to hot and sour, others are soft, and some convey disdain, empathy, or ideological nourishment (Grice, 1991). The best comedy, of course, expresses the depth of intelligence and the brilliance of the spirit. The most emotional of all artistic forms is humor, which is a kind of wisdom capable of evoking specific feelings in human psychology, as well as processing or even destroying reality through logical control. The study of comedy or humor has been elevated to the level of a philosophical discipline. The statement that humor is philosophy is not hyperbole (Manggalita et al., 2022).

According to Freud's view, humor can convey suppressed feelings in a way that is acceptable to others. He emphasizes that via humor, a person can openly express their hostility (playful jokes) or sexual desire without worrying about themselves or others. Superego-counterattack. Because the energy of anti-spiritual catharsis is no longer required, this energy is released in laughing when someone makes a joke (Prakusya & Mulyono, 2022).

Friends

Friends is a well-known sitcom about the ups and downs of six friends living in a downtown New York apartment over ten years. With a total of 236 episodes over 10 seasons, the show was updated at a rate of one season each year from 1994 to 2004. The ratings for each season were among the 10 highest of the year. For their performances, the performers frequently took home Emmy Awards. The play was ranked as one of history's most-watched TV shows. The play's primary characters are self-centered and simple-minded, ranging from a lovely, wealthy woman to Rachel, Monica, a competitive and controlling perfectionist; Phoebe, an eccentric and singularly minded environmentalist; and Joey, a playboy who is

sensitive and simple-minded. In Chandler and the too serious, emotionally driven paleontology professor Ross, comedy is frequently employed to mask self-doubt that borders on neuroticism.

Humiliation Analysis In *Friends*' Violation Of The Cooperative Principle

Many of the amusing sequences in *Friends* appear to violate the politeness standard since it is a typical American drama. To demonstrate to readers how the characters in the play create a humorous impact by flouting the politeness principle, we will use the first and second episodes of the first season as our source material.

DISCUSSION

Violating the Quantity Maximum

Insufficient Information

Conversational information gaps can hinder effective communication, leading to misunderstandings.

[Scene: After bidding each other goodnight, Monica returned to her room. The only people in the living room were Ross and Rachel.]

Ross: Oh, mm.

(They both go for the remaining cookie.)

Rachel: Oh no

(Ross orders her to leave.)

Rachel: Honestly, I do not want it.

Rachel: Alright.

Ross: Good.

(They divided it.)

You may not be aware of this, but I had a significant crush on you in high school.

Rachel: I was aware. It was you, Ross. Oh.... I have always assumed that you mistook me for Monica's geeky older brother.

Rebecca: I did.

Ross: I see. Would it be OK if I asked you out? Please try to avoid making my extreme vulnerability a factor in our conversation. Sometime? Maybe?

Rachel: I guess.

Ross: All right, maybe I will...

Rachel: Nighttime.

Ross: Nighttime.

(As Ross leaves, Rachel goes to her room, and Monica walks into the living room.)

Monica: Bye-bye. What is up with you, wait?

I just grabbed a spoon, Ross.

(Ross walks away, and Monica is unsure of what this implies.)

(Episode 1 of Season 1)

Ross fell flat and lost hope in his wife's emotional life after going through the divorce as a result of her lesbian orientation. The moment Rachel woke up, she ran away from the wedding scene. The two unsuccessful relationships first met at a cafe. Ross has been secretly in love with Rachel since high school. They discussed their old school in Monica's living room after everyone had left. Ross's surprise visit reignited Rachel's desire for an emotional life and gave her the strength to ask Rachel out hesitantly. Rachel gladly accepts. Rachel has always understood Ross's affections for her. Ross was ecstatic. Ross responded that Monica had just taken up a spoon when she spotted him, excited, and inquired what was wrong. Monica was perplexed by the spoon and did not get what Joy, who had a special relationship with food, had said to Ross earlier. Ross presents a severe lack of information, which the audience can see, but which also produces amusement and a smile.

Duplicate Information

Too much information in communication can have unintended consequences, just as too little information can. In the play, there are numerous instances like this.

Everyone is gathered around the kitchen table at Monica and Rachel's. Along with a pair of scissors, Rachel's credit cards are strewn out on the table.]

Rachel: Oh my goodness, folks, do you need to do this? I am free to quit charging whenever

I like. You cannot depend on your parents for the rest of your life, Monica.

Rachel: I am aware of that. I was getting married for that reason.

Phoebe: Give her some time; being independent for the first time is difficult

Rachel: I am grateful. You are welcome, Phoebe.

Phoebe: I can still clearly recall my arrival in this city. I was 14 years old. When I arrived, my mom had recently committed suicide, my step-dad was back in jail, and I knew no one. Moreover, I ended up sharing a house with this albino man who was, like, washing windows outside the Port Authority. After he committed suicide, I discovered aromatherapy. So rest assured that I completely understand how you feel.

(Pause)

(Episode 1 of Season 1)

Rachel is a real old-timer, a spoilt, affluent woman. She left her wedding early and went to the Central Cafe to meet Monica, an old friend. She decided to live independently and delay becoming old after realizing that everyone had their jobs. However, it is simpler said than done. Rachel decided to buy several pairs of boots on sale after struggling to find work. She finally confessed to continuing to use her father's credit card under pressure from her peers. Friends convinced her to cancel every credit card her father had returned in order to get rid of the old hat. Everyone was making a push. Rachel was quite hesitant and thought riding a tiger was a challenging experience. However, Phoebe argues that you should pardon her since this is the first time she is not on her own. Rachel was relieved that someone had at

last made her voice heard. Thank you so much, Phoebe. You are welcome, Phoebe replied. Everyone agrees that the discussion should come to an end. However, Phoebe persisted in talking about her first visit to New York, including the suicide of her mother, the imprisonment of her stepfather, her powerlessness, and the suicide of her ex-boyfriend, who had albinism. She concluded by summarizing Rachel's feelings. Rachel needs someone to speak for her because she is in a critical predicament during this chat. Because of this, the queer Phoebe frequently discusses his history on Rachel's platform, even though it has little to do with Rachel's current circumstances. Due to Phoebe's peculiar behavior and the repetitive nature of the dialogue, Rachel and everyone else are left perplexed. Everyone paused when she was done. Of course, the play makes clear that this technique has a funny effect.

Breaking the Quality Maxim

Intentionally expressing in communication something you believe to be incorrect.

[Scene: Time Lapse, Ross enters.]

Ross: Hello, (mortified)

Joey: I want to commit suicide as this guy says hello. Do you feel alright, sweetheart?

Ross: I get the strangest sensation that someone has reached down into my throat, grabbed my small intestine, dragged it out of my mouth, and tied it around my neck.

Monica: Cookie?

Monica says that Carol moved her belongings out today (telling the others this). Oh, Joey.

Ross, let me grab you some coffee

Thanks, Ross.

Phoebe: Oh my! Oh! (She starts to scratch the air in Ross's immediate vicinity.)

Ross: Hold on, hold on! Stop sprucing up my aura! No, please respect my vibe.

Phoebe: Alright! Be hazy!

Ross: Are you sure I will be OK? I mean, everybody. I am hoping she will be overjoyed. No, you do not, Monica.

Ross: I don't, she left me, to heck with her!

(Episode 2 of Season 1)

Ross visited the cafe to greet everyone. Everyone could see he was not feeling well. Joey even made the sarcastic remark that how this man welcomed me made him want to harm himself. It was because Ross's lesbian ex-wife took away her belongings this morning, Monica revealed. Everyone felt sorry for Ross, which upset the sensitive Ross a lot. Phoebe started "cleaning off the ominous stench on Rose's head." Rose, who was irritated, answered,

"OK, I will be OK. I mean, everybody. I am hoping she will be overjoyed." As Monica pointed out, Rose's words, "No you do not," "I will be OK," and "I hope she will be pleased," are blatantly incorrect; their hearts are precisely the opposite. When she went, he immediately changed his tone to "No, I do not, to hell with her." He started to curse his ex-wife in addition to denying that he had previously blessed her. This location has a comedic effect, which effectively conveys Rose's anger about his wife's treachery, likewise, avoiding drawing sympathy.

Intentionally using weak evidence in communications, The Scene includes Central Perk, Chandler, Joey, Phoebe, and Monica. There is nothing to report, Monica. He is simply a coworker of mine.

Joey: You are going on a date with the man, come on! There has to be a problem with him!

Chandler: Joey, please act like a civilized person.

He must have a hump, then. A hairpiece and a hump?

Phoebe: Does he consume chalk?

(They all gape with puzzled looks.)

Phoebe: Simply because I do not want her to experience what I did with Carl—oh!

Monica: Alright, everyone, unwind. Not even a date, this. Just two people going out to dinner without engaging in sexual activity. To me, it sounds like a date, Chandler.

Violation Criteria

(Episode 1 of Season 1)

Friends began with Chandler, Phoebe, and Joey pestering Monica to tell them about her most recent date. They started speculating without any proof because Monica was hesitant to reveal more, as she had no obvious relationship. Come on, you are going out with the guy," Joey sternly commanded. He must have a problem. While Phoebe asks if he can eat chalk, Chandler critiques Joey's poisonous tongue and wonders if he has a hump or a hump plus a hairpiece. Chandler's inquiry is odd. The three made this incorrect assumption that it was a typical breach of the concept of cooperation, despite never having met Monica's date. On one side, it was a friendly conversation between friends, but on the other, it was an attempt to coax Monica into revealing more information about him. In any event, the audience was excited by the laughter that resulted from the three people's performance. There were chuckles here and there.

Breaking the Relationship Maxim

The relevance principle states that words used in communication should be relevant to the substance of the communication and should not be used in isolation. If not, it will result in faulty communication or unanticipated outcomes. The play's many humorous situations are a result of the breach of this rule.

Ross has now arrived (time lapse).

Ross: Hello, horrified.

Joey: I want to commit suicide as this guy says hello. Do you feel alright, sweetheart?

Ross: I get the strangest sensation that someone has reached down into my throat, grabbed my small intestine, dragged it out of my mouth, and tied it around my neck.

Monica: Cookie?

Monica says that Carol moved her belongings out today (telling the others this).

Oh, Joey.

Ross, let me grab you some coffee

Thanks, Ross.

Phoebe: Oh my! Oh! (She starts to scratch the air in Ross's immediate vicinity.)

Ross: Hold on, hold on! Stop sprucing up my aura! No, please respect my vibe.

Phoebe: Alright! Be hazy!

Ross: You are sure I will be OK? I mean, everybody. I am hoping she will be overjoyed. No, you do not, Monica.

Ross: I don't, she left me, to heck with her!

You had no idea she was a lesbian, Joey...

Oh, no! OK?! Why does that continue to be everyone's focus? How could I know if she had not told me? Sometimes, I wish I were a lesbian, says Chandler. (They are all fixed on him.) Is that what I said?

(Episode 1 of Season 1)

Earlier, when Ross was unhappy because his lesbian ex-wife had removed her belongings, this Scene was mentioned. More or less, everyone expressed pity for Ross. Phoebe even started to remove the odor from Ross's head. Ross and Phoebe also got into a small argument. Ross's remark, "to heck with her, she left me," further demonstrated his genuine feelings for his ex-wife. Joey then made fun of Ross for being unaware that his wife was a lesbian. Ross was deeply hurt and indignant. He explained the need for people to persist with this issue. At first, she had no idea that she was a lesbian. How was she to know that she was married? Regardless of your feelings toward Ross and her ex-wife, you are now discussing them. Chandler Stone's startling remark, "Sometimes I wish I were a lesbian," instantly drew everyone's attention to him, and they all began to stare. Regardless of its intended use, Chandler's heartfelt response is inappropriate in this situation. The audience erupted in laughter as well, demonstrating the substantial dramatic impact of Chandler's shaky monologue.

Breaking the rule of conduct that is impertinent

Disregard for details

[Scene Central Perk, everyone is there.]

Phoebe: You do not realize it, but for us, kissing is just as significant as any other aspect of

it.

Joey: Oh, yeah! Y'serious?

Phoebe: Oh, absolutely

Rachel: That first kiss will teach you everything.

Monica: Certainly.

Yes, kissing serves as an opening act for us, Chandler. Like the stand-up comic, you have to endure before Pink Floyd releases.

Ross: Yes, and it is not that we dislike the comedian; instead, it is just that we did not purchase the tickets for that reason.

Chandler: The issue is that, regardless of how fantastic the performance was, you gals keep seeking the comedian after the event is finished, you know? We are driving and battling traffic, trying to stay awake.

Rachel: OK, a small quantity of advice: bring the comedian back. Otherwise, you will be listening to that CD by yourself at home the next time.

Joey: (pause).... Are we still discussing sex?

(Episode 2 of Season 1)

Speaking of kissing, they are doing so at Central Perk. Men, according to the ladies, have no idea how important kissing is to women. Chandler draws a striking comparison. Since it is a popular event, Ross said, the audience at a Pink Floyd concert typically needs to be patient to watch a discussion show before the band takes the stage. No one despises talk programs, but that is not the reason that viewers purchase tickets. Rachel then bluntly told the men that if they did not want to listen to records at home later, they would be better off putting on talk show actors. Chandler then complained that girls would watch chat programs after the band finished playing.

The metaphor in the conversation was so spot-on that it earned plaudits from the audience, but it missed a key person who valued food and sex equally, Joey. He did not grasp the metaphor. Are we still discussing sex? he questioned after pausing for a bit. Joey thinks their conversation is confusing. Sexual activity is sexual activity. How is it connected to musical performances and talk shows? Joey's comment was the icing on the cake in this Scene and received the most cheers.

Ambiguity

Rachel: (while talking on the phone) I simply... I cannot wed him! I apologize. I am not in love with him. Well, it is important to me!

Hey, Daddy, pay attention to me! Everyone has said to me my entire life, "You are a shoe!" You are a shoe—three times—you are a shoe. I just paused today and thought, "What if I do not want to be a shoe? What if I want to be, say, a purse? Maybe a hat or an accessory. No, I do not want you to buy me a hat; I am just stating that I am a hat person. Daddy, it is a metaphor!

(Episode 1 of Season 1)

After making her getaway, Rachel went to Monica's residence and called her father to explain her motivation. She stated that since she did not love him, she could not wed him. Although we were unable to hear what his father stated over the phone, we were able to infer from Rachel's "it matters to me" that it was unnecessary for you to love Barry in order to wed him. Rachel continued by saying that she used the example that everyone had always thought of her as a pair of shoes, but all of a sudden, Rachel decided she did not want to be a shoe. What if she desired to be a wallet instead? Maybe a hat? It was clear that Rachel's meaning was lost on the father on the other end of the phone. The father frequently has to use his wealth to fulfill his daughter's needs because he is a wealthy doctor. He was also accustomed to reading his daughters' statements as suggestions for purchasing. In addition to expressing his father's powerlessness, Rachel's statement, "I am not saying I want you to buy me a hat, I am saying I am a ha - It is a metaphor, Daddy," also illustrates his prior way of life, which involved continually begging for money and selling his possessions. His father became vague as a result of Rachel's simile, which also made the crowd giggle.

Extraneous prolixity

Ross tries to hug Rachel, but his umbrella pops open. He reclines, defeated once more. The others wait for Rachel to explain while there is a brief moment of stillness. Do you want to inform us right away, or should we wait for four wet bridesmaids? Monica Oh my goodness, it started around 30 minutes before the wedding. I was in the area where we stored all the gifts when I noticed this gravy boat. This is a very stunning LaMauge gravy boat. When all of a sudden, I realized that I was more turned on by this gravy boat than by Barry (to the waitress who delivered her coffee), Sweet'n' Lo? Then I started to panic, and that is when it dawned on me how much Barry liked Mr. Potato Head. I mean, I have always known that they looked familiar, but... In any case, I had to go and began to ask myself, "Why am I doing this, and who am I doing this for?" (to Monica) Anyway, you were the only person I knew who lived in the city, and I know that we have drifted apart, but I did not know where to turn.

(Episode 1 of Season 1)

Rachel fled to the Central Cafe while wearing a wedding gown. After greeting everyone, she remained silent. Monica persuaded Rachel to share her motivation for running away with everyone. In truth, Rachel recognized she did not love Barry before the wedding. Rachel's words, however, are not clear due to the emotional excitement she is experiencing. She begins by describing the boat-shaped steamed meat dish in the gift room, then discusses Barry's appearance and his sexual interest before claiming that he was unsure of why he wanted to get married, who he got married for, and other topics, which caused the audience to sound wordy but hysterical. In truth, Rachel wanted to say that she had been living by her

parents' and friends' wishes, had a happy marriage, and had a child, but at the wedding, she suddenly realized she did not love Berry at first and wanted to live her own life. She fled from marriage because of this. Although Rachel's chattering narrative also makes clear what she means, the language is too concise, flouting the cooperative principle and eliciting a laugh from the reader.

Irregular

[Scene: Monica and Rachel are watching *Three's Company* with Chandler, Joey, Phoebe, and Monica.]

...

Monica asks Joey, "Are you done with that?" as she takes a drink from him.

Joey: I am sorry, but I am having trouble swallowing.

Monica: What kind of paper ball is this?

Oh, yeah, it would be mine, said Chandler. I wrote a note to myself, realized I did not need it, balled it up, and now I wish I were dead. (He notices Monica glaring at him.)

(Monica fluffs a cushion while she speaks.)

Phoebe: She has fluffed that pillow already. Monica, you have already messed up that-
(Monica glares at her.)

However, it is all right!

...

(Episode 2 of Season 1)

The mother of Monica will be visiting. Monica is quite anxious. She never stops cleaning. Joey throws the paper ball and bangs the pillow on the sofa after she inquires about the status of his beverage. Her anxious expression makes everyone nervous. The order of words in this conversation between Chandler, Joey, and Phoebe is entirely illogical, which keeps the audience cheering. Additionally, it prepares the ground for Monica's entrance and illustrates the complexity of Monica's relationship with her mother. Despite the actors' anxiety, the audience found the sequence to be very humorous.

CONCLUSION

Verbal comedy is undeniably the cornerstone of sitcoms as a prominent artistic genre. Despite a rich theoretical landscape in linguistic humor, there remains a notable scarcity of research conducted from a pragmatic standpoint. This study addresses that gap by analyzing the humorous conversations in *Friends* through a pragmatic lens, specifically focusing on how characters achieve comedic effects by flouting Grice's Cooperative Principle. This analysis provides a deeper appreciation for film and television productions by revealing the intricate linguistic mechanisms that underlie their humor. Furthermore, this study significantly enhances our understanding of the internal workings of verbal comedy, validates the Cooperative Principle's utility in explaining humor, and advances the broader

field of humor mechanisms within pragmatic theory. Ultimately, these insights provide valuable guidance for future English students in understanding and engaging in nuanced verbal interactions.

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