THE ANALYSIS OF HUMOR IN THE MOVIE SCRIPT ENTITLED "*HOW I MET YOUR MOTHER"* BY USING HYME'S MODEL OF S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G AND COMVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE

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Abstract

This study aims at analyzing the humors in the movie script entitled "*How I Met Your Mother*" by using Hymes's Model of S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G and conversational implicature. The findings show that all of the implicatures are caused by the maxims which are broken, which are five maxims of relation, three maxims of quantity, two maxims of quality and two maxims of manner. Maxim of relation is the most appearing maxim and other two maxims; maxim of quantity and maxim of manner just take a small part of the conversation. While for the analysis of S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model, the aspects which appear in the conversations are Setting and Scene (three appearances), Participants (two appearances), Ends (five appearances), Keys (four appearances) and Genre (two appearances). Act sequences and Norms do not appear at all, while Ends appears in all of the conversations. It is because the focus of this research is on the implied meaning that can promote humor.

Key words: *humor, Hymes's model of speaking, conversational implicature*

1. Introduction

In our daily communication, we always want to form and keep good relationships with others, avoid embarrassment, misunderstanding, and maintain interpersonal and social harmony. So, proper words and behaviors in proper places at the proper time to the right person is the highest rule in interpersonal communication. According to Duranti (1997), language is a guide to the world. It is not usually spoken in exactly the same way by one to another (Richards et.al., 1992). People have to know and understand the differences that occurred. Therefore, language is not simply a means of communicating information. It is also an important means to establish and maintain relationship with other people in society.

In order to maintain interpersonal relationship people often use humor in communication. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, humor is the quality of something that makes it funny or amusing. Humor enables us to express sincerity, generosity, and kindliness to others. The power of humor is not only about to make people laugh, but also to maintain interpersonal relationship.

Communication does not only appear in our daily lives. It also appears to amuse people through movies. A good movie has a good story, good actors, good actresses, good language, and gives the audience a visual and real life to experience. Related to the use

of language in movies, it is common that the conversations involved in have humor in them, like in comedies. A film entitled *How I Met Your Mother* is one of the films whose genre is comedy. This film uses many indirect utterances to convey meaning in its conversations. Specifically, it appears that the writer of the manuscript often uses Gricean Maxim of Conversation and Conversational Implicature theory in making the conversations for the characters. Furthermore, it seems that there are also some other factors involved to promote the appearances of the humor.

Considering the factors to promote the humor, it is urgent to see how the humor in the film can be promoted. Therefore, the writer tries to analyze the conversations in the film by using Hymes's S-P-E-A-K-I-NG model and conversational implicature based on the Grecian Maxim of Conversation.

2. Theoretical Consideration

1.1 The Conversational Maxim and the Conversational Impicature

The Gricean Maxim is a way to explain the link between utterances and what is understood from them (Thomas, 1995). It can be said that it is a general rule that we follow in conversation. It is rules how to be cooperative in communication, which was proposed by Grice in 1975. This maxim can be divided into four:

        a.   Maxim of Quality

Try to make your contribution one that is true, specifically:

- Do not say what you believe to be false

- Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence

b. Maxim of Quantity

- Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange

- Do not make your contribution more informative than is required

c. Maxim of Relation

- Make your contributions relevant

d. Maxim of Manner

Be perspicuous, and specifically: avoid obscurity; avoid ambiguity; be brief; and be orderly.

In relation to humor, The Gricean Maxims are often purposefully broken by comedians and writers. The reason why it is done is that they may hide the complete truth and manipulate their words to make the effect of humor. Furthermore, breaking a maxim can create a conversational implicature (Sperber, 1998). By clearly breaking the maxim, it is possible that we can imply something beyond what they say. In this paper the conversational impicature is labeled Maxim Broken. It is because the implicature

which appears in the conversation is all from the Gricean maxim which is broken.

2.2 Hymes's S-P-E-A-K-I-NG Model

The language used by the any speaker is always influenced by a number of social factors which define the relationship between the participants. They adjust the way they talk to their social situation. In this paper, the social factors are related to factors that influence the players to choose the maxims in conversation of the drama seen from the lens of Dell Hymes's Model.

Hymes developed a model in communication interaction which assists the identification of linguistic components of the context in which language is used. According to Hymes, the model is developed to promote the analysis of discourse as a series of speech events and speech acts within a cultural context. The model is as follows:

    a. *Situation (Scene and Setting)*: Scene is the "psychological setting" or "cultural definition" of a scene, like the range of formality and sense seriousness. Setting refers to the time and place of a speech act and, in general, to the physical circumstances

    b. *Participants*: Audiences or those who involve in the speech situation.

c. *Ends*: It is the purposes, goals, and outcomes of the conversation.

d. *Act sequences*: It is the order or plot of the event in which the conversation appears.

e. *Key*: Cues that establish the "tone, manner, or spirit" of the speech act. It can be established through the intonation, some emphasizing of telling something, or the gesture and movement.

f. *Instrumentalities*: Forms and styles of speech; using the many forms of dialect features or the use of standard grammatical form.

g. *Norms*: Social rules governing the event and the participants' actions and reaction.

h. *Genre*: The kind of speech act or event or the kind of story. (Hymes, 1974).

2. Findings

The analysis will be divided into three parts for each case; the conversation, the maxim that is broken and the implied meaning, and the analysis using Hymes's model. The conversation will give an example of the conversation in the comedy. While, the maxim being flouted will discuss about what maxim is flouted in the conversation and the explanation about how it is flouted. Fur-

thermore, the implied meaning will discuss about what is actually implied in the utterance.

Then in the analysis using Hymes's model, will be discussed about some significant variables that affect the conversations to promote humors. That is why some others will be eliminated. In other words, the variables of Hymes's model which will be used are those which meet the significance of humors in the conversation.

Case I

Conversation:

Marshal took his best friend to have brunch. Ted and Robin thought that brunch was for those who were in a relationship (it was not appropriate for a man to take a brunch with another man). Robin told her opinion to marshal that brunch was very girly and Marshal refused it.

    (1) Ted   : You invited him to brunch?

    (2) Marshal : Yeah, I invited him to brunch. Why? is that weird?

    (3) Ted   : Yes. That's why I was all, "You invited him to brunch?"

    (4) Marshal : Why can't two guys who are friends go to brunch?

    (5) Ted   : Because brunch is kind of...

(6) Robin   : Girly.

(7) Marshal   : Girly? Breakfast isn't girly. Lunch isn't girly.
             What makes brunch girly?

(8) Ted   : <u>Oh</u> I don't know. There's nothing girly about a
             horse. Nothing girly about a horn. but put them
             together and you get a unicorn.

Maxim broken:

a. *Relation (in utterance 8).* Ted's answer was not relevant to
    answer Marshal's question. Instead, he used an analogy to
    answer it (using horse, horn, and unicorn to refer to break-
    fast, lunch, and brunch).

b. *Manner (in utterance 8).* Ted gave an unnecessarily com-
    plicated and confusing answer to respond to Marshal ques-
    tion.

c. *Quality (in utterance 8).* Ted was expressing uncertainty to
    Marshal by saying "I don't know"

Implied meaning in utterance 8:

Ted implied that, for a man, to go brunch with another man is
something weird. However, he did not want to say it to Marshal di-
rectly. Instead he made an analogy indicating that brunch is girly.
It can be seen from Ted's analogy that he referred "brunch" (origin
words: "breakfast and lunch") as "unicorn" (a "horse" that has
"horn").

The Analysis using Hymes's Model

(*S-P-E-K)*

a. *Scene:* the scene of the conversation was informal since they talked with their friends, one to another. The utterance expressed in (8) was to make the indirect speech. By that indirect speech, actually the humor was maintained.

b. *Participants:* the participants of the conversation are Ted, Marshal, and Robin. Ted and Marshal were good friends, while Robin was a person who liked to speak directly without thinking about what other people would feel about her utterance. Since Ted and Marshal were good friends, it appeared in (5) Ted actually wanted to express "to get brunch is girly" in a delicate expression. However, he did not find any and in (6) since Robin did not care about what Marshal would feel, she could directly say that it was "girly". In (8), again, Ted tried to express what he felt about brunch in a delicate way. That is why he used an analogy to express "brunch is girly".

c. *Ends*. Ted's goal of saying utterance (8) was that, as a friend he did not want to hurt Marshal. That is why he expressed it indirectly. Furthermore, this utterance is the main point of how the humor was promoted.

    d.   *Key*. Ted's utterance in (8) was using some high tones to emphasize some words that he intended Marshal to understand. He used the high tones because he analogized some words with some others that could represent what he implied. The words are "horse" to label "breakfast", "horn" to label "lunch", and "unicorn" to label "brunch".

Case II

Conversation:

Ted and Robin were in a relationship. When Robin wanted to take a bath, she found a women moisturizer in Ted's bathroom. Robin then suspected that the moisturizer was possessed by another girl.

(1) Robin : Whose moisturizer is this, Ted?

(2) Ted   : Um, my sister's.

(3) Robin : So, in other words, some girl you went out with?

(4) Ted   : <u>Um... I love you.</u>

(5) Robin : Why is that still in your apartment?

(6) Ted   : I don't know. I just never threw it out.

(7) Robin : Well, why not? Do you still have feelings for this girl?

(8) Ted   : <u>Yeah. I'm madly in love with her, and the only way I can deal with it is by holding onto a three-dollar tube of lotion</u>.

(9) Robin : Not three dollars! Try 14.

Maxim broken:

a. *Relation (on utterance 4).* Ted' response to Robin's expression was not related to what Robin expected. Robin expected that Ted could give her an assurance about who owned the moisturizer. However, Ted answered it by "I love you", that it had nothing to do with the question.

b. *Quality (on utterance 8).* Ted, in fact, loved Robin and he did not have any feeling anymore to his ex-girlfriend. However, he said "yeah" that was obviously untrue.

c. *Quantity (on utterance 8).* Ted gave Robin many information about how he felt about his ex-girlfriend that was not even important since Robin was only expecting Ted to simply answer "yes" or "not."

Implied meaning on utterance 4:

There are three possibilities why Ted said "I love you" instead of directly said "yes". First, he did not want to answer the question. Second, he had an answer (the answer was "yes") but he did not want to hurt Robin by directly saying "yes". Third, Ted had an answer but he did not want to talk about it anymore so that he tried to change the topic by flattering Robin.

Implied meaning in utterance 8:

Ted actually did not love her ex-girlfriend anymore. However, he said it impliedly. He said "yeah" which means "I still love my ex-girlfriend", with a weak reason following it. By combining a "yeah" and a weak reason to support it, this actually implied that he did not love his ex-girlfriend anymore.

The Analysis using Hymes's Model
(S-E-K-G)

    a. *Setting and scene*: The setting was in Ted's apartment where Robin found other girl's moisturizer and she did not know who owned it. The scene changed through the conversation. First scene was in (1) to (4). It was about Robin's confusion about who owned the moisturizer. By this point, she was actually still in calm condition. The second scene was started on (5) to (7). The scene changed because, knowing that it was another girl's moisturizer, Robin started to be angry to Ted but Ted was still calm. Moreover, since Robin did not believe Ted as he said that he was still in love with his ex-boyfriend, Ted then became angry. That is why the scene changed again in (8) and (9).

    b. *Ends*. There were two indirect utterances expressed by Ted in this conversation, and each of them had its own goal. The first can be found in (4). The reason why Ted said that utterance was that he tried to change the topic as he did not

want Robin to know that the moisturizer was owned by his ex-girlfriend. By expressing "I love you", his goal was to outwit Robin to change the topic since Ted did not want to talk about the origin of the moisturizer. The second can be found in (8). In his utterance, Ted explicitly said that "he still loved his ex-girlfriend". However, as Ted said "the moisturizer costs three-dollars" he actually implied that it was nonsense that the way he remembered his ex-girlfriend was simply by keeping a cheap moisturizer. Further, he implied that it was simply he forgot to throw it away that he kept the moisturizer. Hence, his goal of expressing that utterance was actually to ensure Robin that he did not love his ex-girlfriend anymore.

c. *Key.* In (8) Ted used a high tone in order to proof Robin that he did not love his ex-girlfriend anymore. The high tone was used to emphasize the expression "…a three-dollar tube of lotion". He emphasized that expression because he wanted to ensure Robin that it is nonsense that the way he did to remember his ex-girlfriend was holding her cheap moisturizer. It is common that if one wants to remember others, he/she will keep some things of theirs which mean a lot to him/her and Ted was implying that a three-dollar moisturizer did not mean that much to him.

d. *Genre.* By saying utterance (4), Ted actually wanted to change the genre of the conversation from about "who had the moisturizer" to something else like, for example, "he wanted to get closer to Robin by saying "I love you"." However he failed to do it. Instead, Robin knew that the moisturizer was owned by someone else. Then in utterance (8) to (9) the genre was changed from about "Ted possibly still loved his ex-girlfriend" to "the price of the moisturizer." It was actually not necessary to talk about the price of the moisturizer. However, it seems that the scriptwriter, in (9), wanted to attach some humor in this high tense conversation and I think it works well.

Case III

Conversation:

Marshal, Lily, and Ted lived together in an apartment. Then, Ted decided to move to Robin's apartment. Marshal did not agree with it since Marshal and Lily very depended on Ted since he provided many things for living in the apartment. So, Marshal thought that they needed Ted for living.

(1) Lily   : Why do you think Ted has to stay?

(2) Marshal : <u>Lily... deep within the Amazonian rainforest, there is a type of tree that only grows around the</u>

<u>body of an existing tree. It cannot survive with-
out this tree. It is supported... by this tree.</u>

(3) Lily : We're the outside or the inside tree?

(4) Marshal : The outside tree.

(5) Lily : Shouldn't there be three trees?

(6) Marshal : You and I are one tree. Okay, look, Lily, the point is that we grew around Ted and without him, we're slowly dying.

(7) Lily : What do we do?

(8) Marshal : I think we can marry each other. But we also have to marry Ted.

(9) Lily : I'll tell you right now, my Dad is not gonna pay for that wedding.

Maxim broken:

 a. *Quantity (in utterance 2).* Marshal did not give Lily as much information as she wanted. Instead, Marshal gave Lily analogy that referred them as trees.

 b. *Relation (in utterance 2).* Lily's question was about why Ted had to stay. However, Marshal's answer was about a tree that lived in Amazon. It means that his answer was not relevant to the question.

 c. *Manner (in utterance 2).* Marshal's answer was not brief and could possibly result ambiguity. It can be seen from

Lily's further question "We're the outside or the inside tree?" which means that she did not understand Marshal's analogical answer.

Implied meaning in utterance 2:

Marshal impliedly said to Lily that they really depended on Ted. That is why he really needed Ted to come back to his apartment again. He used the analogy "a type of tree that only grows around the body of an existing tree" to refer to Lily and himself.

The Analysis using Hymes's Model

(E-G)

    a. *Ends.* The goal of Marshal's utterance in (2) was that he tried to tell Lily that they needed Ted in their daily lives. However, he used some analogy to express it that he referred Ted as "the inside tree" and them as "the outside tree".

    b. *Genre.* The main genre of this conversation was that about "Marshal and Lily who needed Ted." However, it also temporarily changed to promote the humor. In (1), it was still about the main genre. Then, it changed temporarily in (3) to (6). It can be seen in Lily's utterance as she talked about trees. Hence, at this point, the genre temporarily changed to "which analogical tree they were". Knowing that the genre changed, Marshal tried to make it clear by

expressing what he meant directly. Furthermore, the genre changed again since Marshal used an analogy again by impliedly saying "we need Ted" to "we also have to marry Ted". Because of that utterance Lily spontaneously said that her father would not pay for their "marriage" to Ted. At this point, again, the genre changed to become "the idea of marrying Ted". By those changes of genre, the script-writer tried to promote the humor.

Case IV

Conversation:

Barney was eager to know the winner of American Football's Super Bowl. He tired to find out the score by asking some people on the road. Then, he finally met Emmitt Smith, a former of three-time Super Bowl winner. However Emmitt did not watch the game since he was not interested anymore in American Football since he was retired.

  (1) Barney   : Emmitt Smith! Oh, thank God.

  (2) Emmitt   : Yeah, I get that a lot.

  (3) Barney   : You got to tell me, who won the Super Bowl??

  (4) Emmitt   : <u>The game was last night? You know, once you win two or three of those things, it's kind of like, eeeehhhh</u>

(5) Barney   : But you're Emmitt Smith. You're a football
                  player, it's Super Bowl Sunday. What
                  could possibly be more important than
                  football?!
(6) Emmitt   : Dance, my friend. Dance.
(7) Barney   : Nooooo!!!!

Maxim broken:

   a. *Relation (on utterance 4).* Barney asked Emmitt about who
      the winner of Super Bowl was. However, Emmitt an-
      swered it irrelevantly by saying about his personal opinion
      about the Super Bowl.

Implied meaning on utterance 4:

Emmitt implied that he did not follow the Super Bowl anymore.
By then, he did not know who the winner was. It can be seen in the
expression "The game was last night?" that implies he did not fol-
low the game. Further, the expression "it's kind of like, eeeehhhh"
implies he did not care about the game anymore.

The Analysis using Hymes's Model
(P-E-K-I)

   a. *Participants.* There are two participants in this conversa-
      tion: Emmitt and Barney. Emmitt was a former football

player who had won several American Football's Super Bowls. Hence, there was a big possibility that he knew who won the super bowl. However, he did not know about it. He even did not care about it anymore. When Barney eagerly asked him about it, he just simply said that he loved dancing better than football. When he explained about it that was the moment when the humor appeared.

b. *Ends.* Emmitt utterances in (4) indirectly said that he did not know the winner of the super bowl. Further, when he said "…eeeeehhhh" with an underestimating tone, it implied that he did not care so much about the game. Thus, the humor was actually appearing when he said that expression.

c. *Key.* There were two tones in this conversation that established the appearances of humor. First, Emmitt's expressing "…eeeeehhhh" on (4); and Barney's expressing "Nnnooooo!" in (7). Emmitt's expression "…eeeeehhh" also showed an implication that he did not care about the game. As the expression was followed by an underestimating face, he actually shared the sense of humor. Furthermore, when Barney expressed "Nnnoooo!" he did not scream and he was on his knees, looking up like doing a protest to God. By doing so, the humor was established.

Case V

Conversation:

Marshal underestimated Barney that he could not finish the marathon race in Manhattan. However, Barney was very sure that he could finish the race. Then Marshal proposed a bet to Barney.

(1) Barney   : You don't need to train for a marathon. You just
run it.

(2) Marshal : You're kidding, right?

(3) Barney   : Not at all. I could run a marathon anytime I
wanted to.

(4) Marshal : So like tomorrow, you think you could wake up,
roll out of bed, and just run the New York City
Marathon?

(5) Barney   : Absolutely.

(6) Robin   : Barney, we're talking about 42 kilometers.

(7) Barney   : Thanks, Canada. I'll take it from here. Barney, it's
like 26 miles.

(8) Marshal : I will bet you 50 bucks you don't even finish the
race. How about that?

(9) Barney   : <u>Gee, Grandpa, if I win, maybe I can buy myself
an ice-cream cone. Make it $ 10.000!</u>

Maxim broken:

a. *Quantity (in utterance 9).* Barney actually should just have said "Make it $ 10.000!" instead of saying the whole utterance he expressed. It was much more that was needed

b. *Relation (in utterance 9).* Since Marshal's question was about the bet, he actually wanted to know whether Barney agreed to it or not. However, Barney replied it by saying something about buying ice-cream cone.

Implied meaning on utterance 9:

Barney implied that the $50 bet was just for children and not sufficient for adults (implied in the utterance "maybe I can buy myself an ice-cream cone"). By saying so, he did not agree to bet for $50. Further, he proposed to bet for $10.000 that he thought was sufficient for adults.

The Analysis using Hymes's Model

(S-E-K)

a. *Setting and scene.* The setting of the conversation was in a bar located in United States. That is why the cultural value used was based on the American culture. Related to the culture, Americans commonly use miles unit instead of meters unit to refer to distances. Yet, Robin, who was from Canada commonly used meters unit instead of miles unit. As seen in (6), Robin said "42 kilometers". Then Ted in

(7) responsed it by saying "thanks Canada" which implied that "you cannot use miles here, instead you have to use kilometers". In short, the different cultural definition between Robin and Ted could significantly promote the sense of humor.

b. *Ends.* In (7), Ted referred Robin as Canada. His goal was actually to imply that the meters unit is not commonly used to refer to distance in the United States. They commonly use miles unit. That is why Ted converted 42 kilometers expressed by Robin to 26 miles. Thus, the humor was established by Ted when he did it. Moreover, in (9), Barney's utterance actually implied that he thought $50 bet was not sufficient.

c. *Key.* In (9), Barney talked like a child to imply that he did not agree with a $50 bet that he thought as a children betting. Since he expressed it by acting like a child, the humor was promoted by Barney when gave response to Marshal's bet.

3. Discussion

From the five conversations in this paper, it appears that all of the implicatures are caused by the four maxims which are broken. It can be seen that there are 12 maxims which are broken.

They are; five maxims of relation; three maxims of quantity; two maxims of quality; and two maxims of manner.

Furthermore, the maxims of relation are the most appearing maxims which are broken. It is because the participants in this film frequently respond one's questions with very obviously irrelevant answers. Very often, they change the subject to respond the questions. Moreover, they also make some analogies to respond to them. Besides that, the maxim of quantity is also often broken to produce the implicature. This strategy is frequently used in the film to respond to someone by giving more information than it is required. The actors do that in order to express their disagreement or to tease, mock, and make fun of someone. The other two maxims, the maxim of quality and the maxim of manner just take a small part in the conversation.

When we see the analysis of S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model, there are six models appear in the conversations. They are; Setting and scene (tree appearances); Participants (two appearances); Ends (five appearances); Keys (four appearances); Genre (two appearances). While, Act sequences and Norms do not appear in those conversations. Ends appears in all of the conversations. It is because the focus of this research is on the implied meaning that can promote humor. Then, it appears that every implied meaning has its own goal (end) to promote the humor. Furthermore, some variables on this model are also effective and significant to promote

the humors in the conversations. Meanwhile, we see that there are two variables that do not appear. Just because they do not appear, it does not mean that they cannot be used to promote the humor. They can also promote it, but unfortunately they do not take the significant parts in the conversations in this paper.

4.   Conclusion

It can be concluded that breaking the conversational maxims is effective to produce the implicatures in this film. Furthermore, the use of conversational implicatures in the conversations in this film is very effective to produce humors. In addition, the variables on Hymes's model can also be a big consideration to promote humors in comedy films.

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