

## The Role of Cooperative Principles and Presupposition as Comic Generators in a Ghanaian English Comedy: A Case Study of Nurse Awuni's Youtube Video

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### ARTICLE INFORMATION

**Received:** April 08, 2021

**Accepted:** May 14, 2021

**Volume:** 3

**Issue:** 5

**DOI:** 10.32996/jeltal.2021.3.5.1

### KEYWORDS

Cooperative Principle; Grice's Maxims; Presupposition; Conversational Implicature

### ABSTRACT

Comedy is a common genre but quite complex to analyze linguistically. It consists of enormous discourse considered humorous or amusing by causing laughter in any entertainment medium. Several studies have investigated the relationship between comedy and cooperative principles in the analysis of everyday interaction. However, little attention has been paid to the role of cooperative principles and presupposition as comic generators in areas such as mass or social media, particularly on YouTube. This study concentrates on the analysis of extracts from a Ghanaian comedy on YouTube, Nurse Awuni, which give rise to humor by identifying the violation of Grice's (1975) cooperative principles and its maxims employed by the characters. It attempts to answer the following research questions. First, how often are Grice's (1975) cooperative principles and its maxims employed, flouted or violated in the Nurse Awuni's comedy? And What is the role of conversational implicature and presupposition as comic generators in the Nurse Awuni's comedy? Quantitative analysis with a collection of empirical data has been followed to analyze the violation and keeping of the cooperative principles, maxims and presupposition, and conversational implicature of the Nurse Awuni's comedy from a strictly linguistic and pragmatic perspective. From the results, it is evident that interlocutors sometimes deliberately flout the conversational maxims so as to create comedy in different conversational effects such as humor, sarcasm, irony, insults etc. Again, a comedian may constantly digress from the subject and content of conversation to make him, or her appear naive and create an awkward situation by saying something narrow-minded. Moreover, the research investigated presupposition as a crucial comedy generator. Finally, the results indicate that the use of conversational implicature and its maxims is much more abundant than the use of presupposition.

### 1. Introduction

Since the inception of the discipline of linguistics, linguists have provided a comprehensive theory of language as a medium of communication of thoughts, feelings, as well as comedy. To this end, a number of theories have been written according to the linguists' foci and interests. Among this approach is pragmatics, which spotlights on conversational implicature, as a process in which the speaker induces and a listener deduces. It studies how words can be interpreted differently depending on the circumstances. Unlike semantics, which investigates word meaning in a specific language, pragmatics studies speaker's meaning which is distinct from word or sentence meaning. Thus, pragmatics studies what people mean by the language they use. Additionally, pragmatics studies how interlocutors master distinct ambiguity since meaning depends on how, when, where, etc. of an utterance was made. Pragmatics comes forth as a distinctive field of study largely because of the frequent failures of semantics in providing sufficient explanations with respect to meaning. While semantics concentrates on the literal meaning of an expression, it does not consider the context in which it is expressed (Cutting, 2002). In this same vein, even intending to create humor language, users can detect the hidden meaning and intentions of comedian's action as a result of their pragmatic competence. Moreover, Yule (1985) explains pragmatics as a branch of language that focuses on how participants interpret what

they mean. Meaning in pragmatics has a central role in communication which occurs in the social organization; therefore, pragmatics takes the importance of context, especially in showing the meaning underlying a certain expression.

Also, Grice (1975) proposes that conversation is based on a shared principle of cooperation, and his work on the Cooperative Principle (CP) led to the development of pragmatics as a distinct discipline within linguistics. Since the significant aim of communication in pragmatics is to give and receive information, interlocutors try to adopt a cooperative behavior to convey their intentions and transfer their utterances implicitly. In this regard, Grice (1975) assert that communication acts reside on the Cooperative Principle, in that interlocutors adhere to their participants in their conversations. Grice (1975) explained both cooperative principle and conversational implicature in his article "Logic and Conversation" and claimed that the process of producing and perceiving these implicatures is based on the following principles: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (p. 48).

Furthermore, presupposition has been a widely discussed topic in the philosophical and linguistic tradition since the beginning; Frege, in *Über Sinn und Bedeutung* (1892), claims that the use of a singular term presupposes the existence of the individual denoted.

That is to say, the existence of presupposition is liable to circumstantial elements like speakers' willingness to maintain a cooperative attitude with their interlocutors. Therefore, in this view, presupposition can be viewed as a pragmatic occurrence related to contextual positions. Though Linguistic researchers have tackled the problem of presuppositions within semantic theories, formal representations of language structure aimed at modelling the growth of information in the course of discourse, like Update Semantics (Heim 1992) and Discourse Representation Theory (Kamp and Reyle 1993).

To conclude, it is against this background of Grice's four propounded maxims under cooperative principle and conversational implicatures and presuppositions that the Nurse Awuni comedy on YouTube are critically analyzed to find out the applicability and significance of the theories mentioned above. This material further aims to analyze the collected data using the maxims, which will help future researchers and language learners know how universal and practical these theories work and unveil what comedians presupposed before adhering or violating or flouting some maxims in the communication process.

### **1.1 Research questions**

1. How often is Grice's (1975) cooperative principles and their maxims, employed, flouted or violated in the Nurse Awuni's comedy?
2. What is the role of conversational implicature and presupposition as comic generators in the Nurse Awuni's comedy?

## **2. Literature Review**

A quantum of studies has been in existence since the notion of the Cooperative Principle and the conversational maxims was introduced by Grice in 1975. This is because the universality, applicability, and predictability of different spoken and written language among interlocutors within different situations and cultures are crucial to be examined. This is evident in the works of Devine (1982), Bouton (1988), Sarami, (1993), Alvaro (2011), and Kheirabadi and Aghagolzadeh (2012).

### **2.1 The Cooperative principle**

According to Grice 1975, cooperative principle is a principle of conversation that expects participants to make a "conversational contribution such as required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange. Therefore, the conversational maxim proposed by Grice 1975, can be categorized into four maxims: quality, quantity, relation and manner.

#### **Maxim of Quality**

The Maxim of Quality requires information provided in conversations to be genuine. Here, a speaker is obliged to say what is believed to be true and therefore desist from any other information he or she lacks adequate evidence. However, a cooperative speaker may deliberately intentionally violate a maxim, as long as the speaker or the context provides enough indicators for the target audience to notice it. Maxims and its flouting are crucial to conveying information indirectly by using sarcasm or irony. For example, Man:

*"You are wearing nurses' uniform "*

*Nurse: "No! I'm wearing judges' uniform "*

In the above-stated scene, the nurse ostentatiously violated the maxim of quality, requiring a speaker not to say what he/she believes to be false or lack adequate evidence. Here, the speaker could have simply said "Yes" because it can be deduced clearly from the scene that she was in a nurse's uniform but rather she chooses to lie.

### **Maxim of Quantity**

This is where interlocutors are required to be as informative as one possibly can and provide as much information as needed, and no more. I am so doing that interlocutors again try to remain truthful and do not give false information or enough evidence does not support that. Without notwithstanding, especially in comedy, characters sometimes deliberately give more or less information than is needed within a conversation, with the hidden aim of creating humor. For example;

*Man: "You are wearing foot (sneakers) too?"*

*Nurse: "No! This is combat"*

Per this data, the quality maxim was violated as the nurse provided a false answer. This is because she was in foot (sneakers) and not combat in the scene. Since the expected answer was either "Yes or No", the maxim of quantity which stipulates that our contributions must be more informative as required, was again violated in the comedy.

### **Maxim of Relation**

This is where a speaker is required to provide information relevant to the subject of discussion only. For example, if the listener needs a specific unit of information from the speaker, but gets less or more than the expected number, then the maxim of relation and the quantity maxim is said to have been violated by the speaker. The maxim of relation is likely to be flouted in comedies, especially when a speaker responds or makes an observation that is deliberately not relevant to the subject or content discussed. For example,

*Man: "So all this while you are a nurse?"*

*Nurse: "No! I'm a shoeshine..."*

From the above data, it can clearly be deduced that the maxim of relation is flouted because the comedian nurse deliberately gave an answer that is not relevant to the subject or content that is being discussed.

### **Maxim of Manner**

When comedians are intentionally ambiguous, the maxim of manner is said to be flouted. This is according to the maxim of manner. Interlocutors are to be clear, as brief, and as orderly as they can in order to avoid obscurity and ambiguity. Though comedians are primarily tasked to create humor in their delivery, they should be mindful of unduly free, as excessive sarcasm may result in target divergence. For instance,

*Man: "Is this a doorbell?"*

*Nurse: "No! Thus, a moonlight"*

Here, since moonlights are not used on gates, the situation in context should not have caused its name, therefore violating the manner maxim. In reference to presupposition, it is presupposed that since they are co-tenants, the man is aware of the existence of the doorbell at the main entrance of their house

In summary, the unconscious nature of humans makes the flouting of some maxims in our daily conversations and interactions a common phenomenon. Thomas 1995:63) put it in a better way saying "If all of the maxims are being observed, there will be no additional set of meaning added to the conversation" (Thomas 1995:64). It further pinpoints five ways in which a speaker may either flout or violate such maxims. These include flouting a maxim, violating a maxim, maxim infringement, and opting out of a maxim. In linguistic communication, flouting a maxim is when a speaker chooses to ignore one or more of the maxims, with the help of a conversational implicature. Avoiding maxims by using conversational implicatures means that the participant adds meaning to the literal meaning of the utterance. The conversational implicature that is added when flouting is not intended to deceive the recipient of the conversation, but the purpose is to make the recipient look for other meaning (Thomas 1995:65). Flouting a maxim also signals to the hearer that the speaker is not following the co-operative principle (Cruse 2000:360). Also, violating a maxim is when an interlocutor fails to observe one or more maxims with the intention to create humor by using an implicature in the form of entertainment. Again, a participant is termed to have infringed a maxim in a conversation when the speaker has no intention to use an implicature, nor does not have the intention to deceive the recipient of the conversation. Instead, infringement occurs when someone is learning a language. Lately, opting out of a maxim happens when speaker is displaying his or her unwilling to cooperate in the way a maxim operates. It is often when a speaker wants to withhold the truth

for reasons that are ethical or private. In that instance, the non-observance is not designed to create a false implicature or to appear uncooperative

## **2.2 Presupposition**

Presupposition can be used to account for the generation of comedy. For that matter, comedians violate some maxims because comedy in verbal communication is a linguistic mechanism that is usually provoked by presupposition at the audience level when it is surprising to the character that hears it. With pragmatics as a branch of linguistics, a presupposition is an unspoken assumption about the world or background belief relating to an utterance whose truth is taken for granted in discourse. (Saeed, 1997: 93) depicts that when we presuppose, we assume it. The study of presuppositions is considered a crucial prerequisite for understanding the content expressed by interlocutors and the coherence of the semantic relations between the sentences that constitute a discourse. In this regard, therefore, they play a purely semantic role. Furthermore, Yule (1996) points out that presupposition is generally described as constancy under negation. It means that a presupposition of a statement is constant even when that statement is negated.

1. *Everybody knows that John has got married.*

2. *>> John has got married.*

3. *Everybody doesn't know that John has got married.* 4. *>> John has got married.*

(From Yule, 2010: 27). From the example,

sentence (1) and its negated counterpart (2) both presuppose the same meaning (2) and (4).

There are two approaches in studying presupposition, semantic and pragmatic. Presupposition is solely based on deduced logic and pragmatics, respectively. Again, Grundy (2008) highlights that the accommodated beliefs necessary for an utterance to make sense are known as semantic presuppositions while the accommodations needed for an utterance to be appropriate are known as pragmatic presuppositions. In other words, semantic presupposition aims at making sense of the utterance by the addressee whereas, pragmatic presupposition aims at making appropriate or suit to the utterance. Also, presupposition is a special thing in pragmatics. The thing that makes presupposition special is the various respects in which the behavior of presupposition sharply differs from other aspects of meaning. In this study, presuppositions will be discussed as a pragmatic phenomenon: which is in accordance with Levinson's notion that "semantic theories of presupposition are not viable because semantics is concerned with invariant stable meanings and presuppositions are not invariant or stable" (1983: 204). According to Levinson (1983) presuppositions have the following properties:

1) *Defeasibility*: in certain contexts, our knowledge of the world can annul or block the presupposition that is liable to 'evaporate'. For example:

Sue cried before she finished her thesis → Sue finished her thesis

Sue died before she finished her thesis ⇒/Sue finished her thesis

2) *Non-detachability*: difficulty to obtain expressions with similar meanings and different presuppositions. If we consider, for example, the utterance

John regrets that he ate all the pudding

It is difficult (if not impossible) to find a synonym of regret with which the clause does not presuppose 'he ate all the pudding'.

3) *Constancy under negation and questioning*: the turning of a declarative affirmative clause into a negative or an interrogative does not change its presuppositions. The three examples below presuppose that John ate all the pudding:

*John regrets that he ate all the pudding before dinner*

*John does not regret that he ate all the pudding before dinner Does John regret that he ate all the pudding? Exceptions to this behavior is are cases of cancellation in negative utterances:*

*John does not regret that he ate all the pudding because he did not eat all of it. In questions, the listener may correct the speaker's wrong presuppositions (but this may also be done in statements):*

*A: Did she regret doing a PhD? B: No, because finally she didn't do any*

A: *Mary regretted doing a PhD. B: No, because finally she didn't do any*

4) *Constancy in modal and conditional contexts*: the turning of a categorical clause into a moralized or a conditional clause does not change its presuppositions. For example, the presupposition 'John ate all the pudding' still holds in the following cases:

*John may regret that he ate all the pudding.*

*If John regrets that he ate all the pudding, he is not the same as he used to be. There are some expressions yielding inferences that do not survive negation but survive in conditional contexts: even, just, only.*

### **2.3 Presupposition and Conversational Implicature**

In this current study, presupposition is taken into consideration as a crucial comedy generator in pragmatically adequate language use. Presuppositions are supposed to contain information that an interlocutor already knows or is not surprising for him/her, so that when presuppositions contain surprising information, they may well provoke humor. This is in relation to Höfle's view (2002: 42) that an "element of surprise is also determining when the audience attending a comical event expects to laugh". He argues that, probably, the inherent pleasure of that laughter is related to the one we feel when we discover something unexpected that confirms our high opinion of ourselves. According to Carretero's (1999), Presupposition and Conversational Implicature are similar in that they share the defeasibility and non-detachability properties. However, what distinguishes both is the fact that presuppositions are conventional and need not be calculated. In addition, presuppositions tend to be more linked to linguistic concrete lexical items or syntactic structure. Presupposition is when a speaker makes certain assumptions when conveying information to the listener regarding background knowledge. Also, Implicature may be conversational and conventional. Conversational implicature is when the speaker makes inferences through word meanings and context. For example, 'I put aside some of my paychecks to save for a new car.' The use of the word 'some' indicates that the speaker also used part of his or her paycheck for other things. On the other hand, conventional implicature is when an interlocutor uses words such as 'but,' 'still,' 'although,' 'therefore,' and 'even' to establish a relevant relationship between two clauses. There is a disparity in whether or not conventional implicatures exist within the linguistics community or if they are a type of presupposition. For now, sentences such as the following are considered conventional implicatures: 'Sandy is tired, but she is motivated.' This sentence implies that being tired generally affects motivation, but not for Sandy.

#### *A. 2.4 Presuppositions and Scalar Implicatures:*

Presuppositions and scalar implicatures are traditionally considered to be distinct phenomena, but recent accounts analyze (at least some of) the former as the latter. All else being equal, this "scalar implicature approach to presuppositions" predicts uniform behavior for the two types of inferences. Initial experimental studies comparing them yielded conflicting results. While some found a difference in the Response Time (RT) patterns of scalar implicatures and presuppositions, others found them to be uniform.

1. *Quantity: all, most, many, some, few...*
2. *Frequency: always, often, sometimes...*
3. *Modality: must, should, may...*

The use of one of these terms implicates that a higher or stronger term cannot be used, as in

"Some of the students missed the English class" which implicates that "Not all/most/many of the students missed the English class"

Scalar implicatures lie halfway between implicatures and presuppositions and they have the following properties common to presuppositions:

1. *They are tied to particular words*
- 2) *The implicatures arisen have constancy under negation and questioning*

Some of the students went to the match. (not all) Some of the students did not go to the match. (not all) Did some of the students go to the match? (not all)

However, other properties make them different from presuppositions: a) Scalar implicatures may be reinforced:

Some of the students, but not all, missed the English class.

You may win, although in fact, you're not very likely to win.

Reinforcement of presuppositions, however, would be considered as redundancy:

John realized that Helen was ill. In fact, Helen was ill.

b) *Scalar implicatures*, unless reinforced, belong to the irrealis, not to uncontested knowledge:

Some of the students missed the English class.

(No absolute certainty that "Not all the students missed the English class").

c) *Scalar implicatures have calculability*, that is, they need to be calculated due to their gradeability. For example, the quantity of many is calculated in a different way if the following utterance is made by the company's Managing Director or by the Trade Union representative

Many of the workers joined the strike.

Concerning models, the utterance below would be differently interpreted if uttered by the seller of the programmed or by a close friend of the speaker.

In the first days, you may find it difficult to use this program

### **3. Methodology**

A quantitative analysis with a collection of empirical data has been followed to analyze the violation and keeping of the cooperative principles, maxims and presupposition, and conversational implicature of the Nurse Awuni's comedy from a strictly linguistic and pragmatic perspective.

#### **3.1 Subjects**

The subjects of this paper are characters in a Ghanaian English comedy in which a nurse and her next-door neighbor met at the main entrance of their house one fateful afternoon and engaged in a conversation. The data for the paper is also based on the implicit urges taken from "Nurse Awuni's comedy" on YouTube (Christiana Awuni Tv). The motive behind choosing the video was based on the current trend in Ghana about the perception that most Ghanaians are fond of asking already known questions in course of their dialogues.

#### **3.2 Instruments**

This study attempts to investigate the role of cooperative principles and presupposition as comic generators in a Ghanaian English comedy: a case study of nurse Awuni's Youtube video by means of two linguistic and pragmatic resources namely: non-adherence of the maxim, and the inferences of a character's statement, in order to facilitate the analysis of the extracts. The rationale behind this categorization is to clearly observe and understand how an interlocutor may choose to violate or flout a particular maxim to sound as sarcastic, a narrow-minded person, create laughter or humor, and the intentions behind such utterances.

#### **3.3 Data Collection Procedure**

This study concentrates on the analysis of extracts from a Ghanaian comedy on YouTube, Nurse Awuni, which give rise to humor by identifying the violation of Grice's (1975) cooperative principles and its maxims employed by the characters. In so doing, a quantitative analysis with a collection of empirical data has been followed to analyze the violation and the keeping of the cooperative principles, its maxims and presupposition, and the conversational implicature of the Nurse Awuni's comedy from a strictly linguistic and pragmatic perspective.

From the results, it is evident that interlocutors sometimes deliberately flout the conversational maxims so as to create comedy in different conversational effects such as humor, sarcasm, irony, insults etc. Again, a comedian may constantly digress from the subject and content of conversation to make him or her appear naive and create an awkward situation by saying something narrow-minded.

Moreover, the research investigated presupposition as a crucial comedy generator. Finally, the results indicate that the use of conversational implicature and its maxims is much more abundant than the use of presupposition.

#### **3.4 Data Analysis Procedure**

The non-adherence of the maxims indicates the avoidance or flouting of maxims. Thus, violation, infringement, opting out etc. will be analyzed and the maxim(s) concerned are stated in each extract. To detect Grice's cooperative principles in this paper, two sub categories have been distinguished namely; the violation and flouting of maxims by the characters. Moreover, the

relationship between characters and the frequency of maxims violated or flouted will also be commented on in the "Discussion" since the study of the frequency of each phenomenon (maxims, presupposition and implicature will help depict the main speaker in the Nurse Awuni's comedy of the film and to see whether the use of these linguistic features can serve as comic generators. The relationship between presupposition and maxims will be duly noted in the analysis of the results—for example, the relation between presupposition and flouting or violation of the Maxim of Quality.

The inferences of a character's statement will also display the presupposition and implicatures that result from the adherence of the various maxims. Presupposition especially serves as a comic generator when it is surprising to the character that hears it. Thus, audiences are likely to be surprised and at the same time laugh because the participants presuppose something that the target group are already aware of. Again, it throws more light on an instance in which the speaker suspects that the addressee is not following a dialogue. Both implicature and presupposition function as witty elements in conversation that, in some cases, are related to the non-adherence of the conversational maxims so that the pragmatic enrichment of communication is greater.

#### 4. Findings and Discussion

The selected comedy will be analyzed based on the Grecian's conversational maxims and how implicatures and presupposition are sometimes used as a comedy generator by adopting both pragmatic and conversation analysis. The samples selected are as follows,

*Man: "You are wearing nurses' uniform "?*

*Nurse: "No! I'm wearing judges' uniform "*

In the above-stated scene, the nurse ostentatiously violated the maxim of quality, requiring a speaker not to say what he/she believes to be false or lack adequate evidence. Here, the speaker could have simply said "Yes" because it can be deduced clearly from the scene that she was in a nurse's uniform but rather she chooses to lie. However, one can also urge that since it is a comedy and with the hidden goal to create laughter. The nurse intentionally flouted the maxim of quality in order to fulfill the humor aspect of her job. Again, the quantity maxim which requires interlocutors to make their contribution as informative as needed for the current purpose of the exchange, is violated because the question "You are wearing nurses' uniform" just need a "Yes or No" response. Here, since it is a comedy, it is evident that the nurse presupposes that the nurses' uniform is very familiar in the Ghanaian setting and therefore for the man to ask her such a question, she finds it unnecessary. The conversational implicature is that the nurse was reluctant to answer the question because she was expecting the man to know much as she was in the well-known nurses' uniform. Therefore she found it less important to ask the question in the first place.

*Man: "Mom! Are you going to work"?*

*Nurse: "No! I'm going to play"*

Here, the quality maxim is once again violated because a nurse in her uniform is presumably going for work or returning from work, thereby refusing to tell the truth. Also, nurses' uniforms are not entertainment cloth for her to reply. The nurse's unwillingness to give him the correct responses can presuppose that the woman finds the question irrelevant. The implicature of this particular conversation is the fact that nursing in the Ghanaian setting is a noble profession that comes with a serious mentality and attitude.

*Man: " You are wearing foot (sneakers) too?"*

*Nurse: "No! This is combat"*

Per this data, the quality maxim was violated as the nurse provided a false answer. This is because she was in foot (sneakers) and not combat in the scene. Since the expected answer was either "Yes or No", the maxim of quantity which stipulates that our contributions must be more informative as required, was again violated in the comedy. The implicature of this scene is that per the answer given by the nurse the question was irrelevant because the man could clearly see that she was wearing afoot. Though one may argue from a different perspective that the man is either not familiar with foot or does not know the difference between a foot and combat, it is a comedy and the audience are presupposed to gain interest in the comic aspect. Furthermore, for the nurse to bring in the issue of combat, the maxim of quality is flouted.

*Nurse: "Have you finished"?*

*Man: "Ei Sorry! Don't be offended"*

The manner maxim which requires a speaker to be brief in his/her conversation is violated here. The man could have simply reply "No! I have not", instead of saying the former, thereby, violating the manner maxim. Also, the woman as a comic nurse

deliberately flouted the quality maxim in the sense that she did not say the truth because even after making that utterance, she was still found in the conversation. What you believe is false. The presupposition here is that, such a rude statement from the woman results from finding the conversation irritating and disgusting.

*Man: "Are you a nurse"?*

*Nurse: "No! I work at the zoo"*

Though the woman is in her nurses' uniform and, for that matter, portraying her as a nurse in the comedy, the comic aspect of her as a comedian accounts for her deployment of sarcasm in that instance. The implicature here is that human communication goes beyond verbal in that speakers should also be able to deduce meanings from other non-verbal objects such as clothes. Moreover, it presupposes that there are peculiar uniforms for special professions that, upon seeing, one should infer meaning from.

*Man: "So all this while you are a nurse"?*

*Nurse: "No! I'm a shoeshine..."*

From the above data, it can clearly be deduced that the nurse intentionally provided a false answer, hence flouting the maxim of quality. The maxim of relation is also flouted because the comedian nurse deliberately gave an answer that is not relevant to the subject or content that is being discussed. However, it's presumed that Ghanaians may be aware of an ongoing event or something but will ask. She further asked that question, "Can't you see my box and stick?" of which she had nothing of that sort at that particular moment. Moreover, it was not all that necessary since such information was not relevant. Also, it seems to make that part of the conversation ambiguous since some audiences are likely to wonder why her shoeshine box and stick did not appear in the scene.

*Man: "You are wearing watch too"?*

*Nurse: "No! This is not watch, it's a wheel cap"*

For her choosing to give a false answer makes her violate the quality maxim once again. And with the addition of "It's a wheel cap" it makes the conversation too long which aids to violate the quantity maxim. This because the respondent did provide a false answer and added extra information that was not relevant to the said conversation.

*Man: "Is this a doorbell"?*

*Nurse: "No! Thus, a moonlight"*

The quality maxim which requires a speaker to make only an utterance believed to be true and must therefore desist from any other information he or she lacks adequate evidence is violated because the speaker provided a false answer, thereby violating the quality maxim. Also, since moonlights are not used on gates, the situation in context should not have caused its name, therefore violating the manner maxim. In reference to presupposition, it is presupposed that since they are co-tenants, the man is aware of the existence of the doorbell at the main entrance of their house.

*Man: "Do we sell medicine at the hospital"?*

*Nurse: "No! We sell kerosene and petrol"*

*Man: "The nurses, do they put on cap"?*

*Nurse: "No! We put on helmet"*

The above sample is also a clear indication of the quality maxim violation because all the responses are not in line with the questions asked during the conversation. Thus, the speaker intentionally caused humour by giving an ironic answer. The inclusion of kerosene and petrol is irrelevant with regards to the content of the discussion, hence the maxim of manner being questioned. However, the implicature the scene is trying to portray is the fact that the character in a comic way alerting interlocutors especially Ghanaians, to refrain from utterances that do not add anything good to conversations

## 5. Conclusion

The research sought to investigate how interlocutors sometimes deliberately flout the conversational maxims in order to create comedy. According to the research, it is evident that the maxim of quantity was flouted the most times in order to create comedy. The characters tend to make their utterances shorter than it could be expected to achieve different conversational effects such as humor, sarcasm, irony, insults, etc. Secondly, the maxim of quality, the maxim of relation and the maxim of manner, in that order was followed. Comedians most often tend to deploy a different kind of strategies in order to create laughter, and one of them is having the characters flout the maxims, as can be seen in the result of this current study. More so, there was a difference in what maxims the two characters flouted and how often they did so. The degree to which the two characters flouted the maxims varied a great deal. The results from the above-analyzed data is evident that the nurse used the most flouts, a majority of which were flouts of the maxims of quantity and quality. The reasons for flouting of the maxims come in diverse ways. Thus, the maxim of quality was flouted to create laughter, humor, give advice, or make a statement that creates sarcasm and the maxim of quantity flouted to create a comic effect. The maxim of relation was flouted when the two characters constantly digress from the subject and content of the conversation to make them appear naive and create an awkward situation by saying something narrow-minded. Also, the maxim of manner was flouted in order to create insult or sarcastic comments.

In summary, one important difference that came out in the results was that some maxims were flouted more than others; that is, the maxims of quantity and quality were flouted more often than the maxims of relation and manner. Another important difference was that some characters flouted more maxims than others; the nurse being a respondent in the comedy flouted the most maxim, whereas the man flouted the least. Moreover, the presupposition is taken into consideration as a crucial comedy generator because both presupposition and conversational implicature are similar and therefore share some defeasibility and non-detachability properties. A clear indication is when interlocutors in the comedy presumably violated some maxims in order to entertain their target audiences. Finally, the results indicate that the use of conversational implicature and its maxims is much more abundant than the use of presupposition.

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