

## **VIOLATION OF GRICE'S MAXIM OF COOPERATION IN STAND-UP COMEDY HUMOR**

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### **Abstract**

Stand-up comedians use violations of the same cooperative maxim to create humor. The comedians in this study, namely Arie Kriting, Ridwan Remin, Wira Nagara, and Babe Cabita, use violations in their performances. The urgency of this research is the need to understand the principles of language and communication, especially Grice's cooperative maxim, which is regularly applied by comedians but is effective in creating humor that is relevant to the social culture of Indonesian society. The purpose of this study is to identify, describe, and analyze violations of four Gricean maxims—quantity, quality, relevance, and implementation—and to analyze the role of violations in their humor. A qualitative approach with descriptive analysis was used. Data in the form of video broadcasts uploaded to YouTube were then transcribed and analyzed using heuristic techniques. The analysis process included identifying setups and punchlines, transforming each violation of Grice's principle, and interpreting the humorous purpose hidden behind the violation. The result is equality in principle violations. Each performance described embodies each of these principles in a different way and with very distinctive characteristics. The dominant violations are violations of the maxim of quality and the principle of relevance, by making explicit claims that are misleading, or constructing a series of statements that are implausible.

**Keywords:** Violation of Cooperation, Stand Up Comedy, Humor

### **Introduction**

Humor is one of the most powerful forms of communication, yet the most difficult to define because it contains implicit meaning in every pause. Furthermore, the *stand-up comedy phenomenon* in Indonesia has grown rapidly over the past decade. *Stand-up comedy* serves as a means of entertainment, social criticism, and personal expression (Nisa et al., 2023). *Stand-up comedy* has a distinctive characteristic: the comedian builds a one-way interaction with the audience, relying entirely on storyline and wordplay. Comedians like Arie Kriting, Ridwan Remin, Wira Nagara, and Babe Cabita are prominent examples of utilizing this linguistic style.

This phenomenon has become an important subject in the study of pragmatics, a branch of linguistics that

studies meaning in context (Mukminin, 2025). Theories such as Grice's Maxim of Cooperation explain that communication operates under the assumption of cooperation and adherence to certain rules (Sari et al., 2024). However, humor thrives by breaking these rules. By intentionally providing irrelevant, inaccurate, or ambiguous information, humorists force listeners to think more deeply and discover hidden meanings.

Several previous studies have examined violations of Grice's maxims in humor across various languages and contexts. Studies such as Attardo (1994) and Raskin (1985) lay the theoretical foundation that humor results from violations of these maxims. In the context of the maxim of cooperation, several researchers have studied humor in film, television, and social media

(Sitorismi, 2025). This demonstrates the familiarity of violations of the maxim of cooperation. For example, Prameswari & Nur (2025) examined violations of the maxim of cooperation and conversational implicatures in the film "Kakak adalah maut," while Damars & Ridwan (2025) examined violations of the maxim of quality in the humor of the YouTube series "Nicht Lachen." However, research into the *Indonesian stand-up comedy genre* from the perspective of violations of the maxim of cooperation is still very limited.

Based on previous studies, there is a significant research gap. Most studies have discussed humor from a general perspective, without addressing the role or purpose of humor in broadcasting. The importance of this research lies in a deeper understanding of how humor functions as a communication tool. *Stand-up comedy* will become an object of research that is not just a form of entertainment but also a tool for social criticism through humor.

## Method

A qualitative approach with a descriptive design was used to examine violations of Grice's maxim of cooperation in Indonesian *stand-up comedy*. This approach allowed the researcher to conduct an in-depth study of violations of the maxim of cooperation in the humor strategies of four comedians: Arie Kriting, Ridwan Remin, Wira Nagara, and Babe Cabita, each with its own unique style and persona. Data collection was conducted through non-participant observation of their YouTube videos, followed by transcription (Nisa et al., 2021). To ensure data validity, this study utilized source triangulation, comparing transcripts with video recordings, and theoretical triangulation by linking findings to the concept of humor. All

these processes were designed to ensure the accuracy of the analysis.

## Finding and Discussion

Violations found in *stand-up comedy performances* by comedians violate several maxims of collaboration. This occurs to create humor in *stand-up comedy punchlines*. Some of the violations found include violations of the maxim of quantity, violations of the maxim of quality, violations of the maxim of relevance, and violations of the maxim of manner. Some comedians discuss education, politics, everyday life, and race and culture.

## Education

Education in Indonesia has become a public spotlight, especially for comedians, to be used as material for *stand-up comedy performances* because many policies are raised and become material for criticism through humor.

### *Violation of the Maxim of Quantity*

The maxim of quantity contains rules for speakers to provide as much information as necessary, no more and no less. Violations occur when comedians provide excessive and irrelevant information, which becomes the point of the humor.

(1)	CONTEXT: COMIC ARIE KRITING IS TELLING ABOUT THE CHANGE OF SCHOOL SUBJECT NAMES
	It used to be called PMP (Pancasila Moral Education), then PPKN (Pancasila and Citizenship Education), and now PKN (Citizenship Education). <b>Maybe next year, they'll change it to PK (Sexual Offenses).</b>
	(YPd1: 3.35-3.52)

Discourse excerpt (1) Arie Kriting said " Maybe next year they want to change it to PK (Sexual Offenses) too " giving an exaggerated prediction about the change in the name of the subject from PKN, which is explicitly irrelevant to the essence of the subject matter. This oddity makes the audience laugh because the information conveyed is very illogical and too sexual. The humor lies in the punchline at the end of the sentence, namely " Maybe next year they want to change it to PK (Sexual Offenses) too ". The setup is that Arie as a comedian is discussing the change in the name of the subject, which is a fact. However, he deviates from the fact by providing excessive and illogical information because from PKN to PK. PKN itself contains citizenship material, while PK contains sexual crimes material. The goal is to satirize the education system that keeps changing the names of subjects without touching on the important moral essence. The comedian uses this exaggerated humor (hyperbole) to show how absurd these changes are and the word play of changing PPKN to PKN (missing the letter P), then PKN to PK (missing the letter N).

#### ***Violation of the Maxim of Quality***

This proverb requires the speaker to speak the truth. The offense occurs when the comedian says something that is clearly untrue or unreasonable, presented as fact.

#### ***Violation of the Maxim of Relevance***

This maxim requires the speaker to provide information relevant to the topic of conversation. Comedians violate this maxim by presenting seemingly unrelated ideas.

(2)	CONTEXT: COMIC ARIE KRITING IS TELLING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRIVATE AND STATE CAMPUS
	<p><b>I feel proud</b> of my campus because it turns out my campus is much more sophisticated than campuses in other countries. It's like a machine that uses <b>sugar cane as its raw material and then processes it in such a way that it produces sweet sugar</b>, which is already sweet. <b>If my campus takes cassava, teak, sea roots, and cassowary, it's processed in such a way that it produces sweet sugar, which is more sophisticated, right?</b></p>
	(YPd1: 1.11-2.17)

The excerpt of discourse (2) said by Arie Kriting as a comedian that his campus is much more sophisticated than other campuses in other countries is not a fact. This is a claim that is not literally true. The excerpt is subjective because he studied at a private campus. Furthermore, he supports his claim with the analogy that state campuses put in "sugar" and take out "sugar", while his campus puts in "cassava, sea roots, cassowary" and takes out "sweet sugar". This analogy is a non-factual hyperbole, which is precisely the core of his joke. The humor is in *the punchline* which contains a ridiculous analogy. The setup is a serious claim that his campus is "more sophisticated" than state campuses. The punchline is an absurd metaphor with state campuses changing their students from "sugar" to "sugar", while his campus changes "cassava, sea roots, cassowary" to "sweet sugar". Sugar in excerpt of discourse (2) means that the quality of its students is good both in terms of *hard skills* and *soft*

skills. The goal was to eliminate feelings of *inferiority* and foster pride in himself and his fellow private students. In this way, Arie transformed a weakness (failing at a public university) into a unique and humorous strength. It was a form of self-defense mechanism into a joke.

(3)	CONTEXT: COMIC ARIE KRITING IS CONNECTING MORAL EDUCATION WITH THEORIES IN TEXTBOOKS
	<p>What stuck with me the most was the criterion for a good child being to help old ladies cross the river. <b>Because of this statement, I felt like I'd failed as a good child because there weren't enough old ladies to help cross the river.</b></p>
	(YPd1: 4.26-6.02)

While discussing moral education in Indonesia, Arie suddenly shifts to the topic of "helping grandmothers cross the river," which he considers the only criterion for a good child he remembers from textbooks. This topic seems irrelevant to the issue of moral education in general. However, this irrelevance actually becomes a bridge to a humorous *punchline*, where he concludes his failure to be a good child is due to a "lack of grandmothers." The humor lies in the *punchline* that summarizes the results of his research. The setup is that he feels he has failed to be a good child because he has never "helped grandmothers cross the river," which is the only moral lesson he remembers. The punchline is a completely irrelevant conclusion that his failure is caused by a "lack of

grandmothers" in Indonesia. The goal is to criticize the moral education curriculum that seems theoretical and unrealistic. The comedian uses this irrelevant idea to highlight the gap between the theory taught in schools and the reality faced by students.

### Political

Issues related to politics are often used as material in *stand-up comedy performances* by comedians to criticize in a subtle way.

(4)	CONTEXT: COMICIAN RIDWAN REMIN IS EXPLAINING THE FREE LUNCH BUDGET
	<p>How many school children will there be in 2023 and 2024? There are more than 50 million. <b>If you give one child 20,000 rupiah for food, that's 2 trillion rupiah in 2 days. 2 trillion rupiah for 2 days, what will you give them on the third day? Both are gone, leaving only the t.</b></p>
	(YPol1: 3.51-4.09)

### *Violation of the Maxim of Quantity*

This proverb provides just enough information without being excessive. Comics violate this proverb by providing unreasonably excessive information.

When discussing the "free lunch" program, comedian Ridwan Remin provides very specific and exaggerated calculations. He outlines the number of schoolchildren, the cost of food per child, and calculates how long it will take for the 2 trillion rupiah fund to run out. While this calculation seems accurate, it is presented in an exaggerated comedic context. His humor culminates in the statement "what will you give them on the third

day, when the two are gone, only the t is left," which absurdly separates the numbers from the letters in "2 trillion." The setup is facts about the free lunch program and Prabowo's assets. The humor explodes with ridiculous mathematical calculations and illogical conclusions. The reason behind the discourse fragment (4) is to satirize political programs that sound too excessive or unrealistic.

### ***Violation of the Maxim of Relevance***

This maxim requires the speaker to provide information relevant to the topic. Comedians violate this maxim by presenting seemingly irrelevant information, which is then combined with a *punchline*.

(5)	CONTEXT: COMICIAN RIDWAN REMIN IS EXPLAINING THE FREE LUNCH BUDGET
	Of all the choices, <b>there aren't any girls</b> , why would I vote for them? They're all men. <b>I'll just vote for a girl who's resigned to it</b> .
	(YPol1: 2.09-2.48)

Ridwan Remin as a comedian deviates from the serious reason for abstaining from voting (dislike of democracy) to a completely irrelevant reason, "Of all the choices, there are no girls." This is a surprising leap of logic. He then reinforces this irrelevance with an even more ridiculous *punchline*, "I voted for a girl who just gave up." The setup is the serious topic of abstaining from voting. The humor lies in the *punchline* that is completely irrelevant to the political issue, making the audience laugh because of the mismatch between the topic and the reason. *The punchline* used by Ridwan leads to sexual things.

The goal is to lighten the atmosphere on a serious political topic. By presenting a ridiculous and personal reason, Ridwan turns a heavy political issue into something light, funny, and more easily accepted by the audience.

### ***Violation of the Maxim of Manner***

Implementation bidal demands clarity, conciseness, and orderliness. Comics often ignore this by using ambiguity, vagueness, or an unusual delivery style to build humor.

(6)	CONTEXT: COMIC RIDWAN REMIN DISCUSSES PRABOWO'S PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE TAGLINE
	People's <i>tagline</i> is just continue , whether he wins or not, his life continues.
	(YPol1: 3.25-3.30)

Comedian Ridwan Remin in discourse fragment (6) makes an ambiguous statement regarding Prabowo's *tagline* (a short phrase used in the campaign) which reads "Continue!" However, he does not provide further explanation, leaving the audience to interpret it themselves, which is then followed by a joke about wealth assets. The humor lies in the *set-up*. This ambiguity creates confusion that makes the audience think for a moment. The comedian allows this ambiguity to be part of his humorous narrative. By using ambiguous statements, the comedian avoids direct confrontation, but succeeds in satirizing Prabowo's social status which will not be affected by the election results, which ultimately provokes laughter from the audience who understand the context by using ironic statements.

### ***Everyday life***

The comedians consistently violate Grice's maxims of cooperation to create humor that focuses on metaphor and personification in themes related to everyday life. Each violation aims to connect trivial matters with profound emotional experiences, particularly those of love and heartbreak, which characterize their characters.

### ***Violation of the Maxim of Quantity***

This proverb demands that the speaker provide only the necessary information. Wira, as a comedian, violates this principle by providing excessive, even irrelevant, information in a straightforward parable.

(7)	CONTEXT: COMIC WIRA NEGARA DISCUSSING HIS HOBBIES
	Now that it's <b>the rainy season</b> , my hobby is <b>hanging out laundry</b> . Why? Because I finally know <b>how painful it is to hang it up</b> .
	(YH1: 0.50-0.55)

When explaining his new hobby in discourse fragment (7), Wira provides very detailed and unnecessary explanations such as "Now the rainy season is perfect for my hobby is hanging out the laundry." This quantity of information not only explains his hobby, but also includes details related to the season. This information is excessive for a joke, but it becomes a strong foundation for an emotional *punchline* . *The setup* is a series of seemingly trivial hobbies (hanging out the laundry). The humor explodes in *the*

*punchline* that connects these hobbies with the metaphor of heartbreak, "because finally I know the pain of being hung up." His goal is to turn trivial things into a universal emotional experience. By using excessive information about hobbies, he creates a strong foundation for a *punchline* that elicits laughter and a sense of connection from the audience who have experienced something similar.

### ***Violation of the Maxim of Quality***

This proverb requires the speaker to convey truthful information. Wira violates this proverb by knowingly claiming things that are unreasonable or impossible in reality.

(8)	CONTEXT: COMIC WIRA NEGARA DISCUSSES HIS ENCOUNTER WITH A WOMAN
	There was a girl squatting in the middle of the road. I asked, "What are you doing?", "This guy is <b>gluing asphalt</b> , "Why are you gluing asphalt?", "Well, it's just preparation, who knows, maybe <b>my love will break up in the middle of the road</b> ."
	(YH1: 1.14-1.25)

Wira claims he encounters people who give absurd answers to simple questions. For example, he asks a woman he meets on the street , "What are you doing?", "This guy is gluing asphalt," "Why are you gluing asphalt?", "Well, it's just to prepare, who knows, maybe my love will break up in the middle of the road." Of course, no one would give such an answer. This claim is an incorrect use of hyperbole. *The setup* is a seemingly normal interaction. The humor arises when the

punchline presents absurd answers, connecting physical events to the abstract concept of love. The purpose of Wira Negara's *stand-up* is to criticize or laugh at people who are too melodramatic about love. By making clearly false claims, Wira invites the audience to see the humorous side of emotional suffering.

### ***Violation of the Maxim of Relevance***

This proverb requires the speaker to provide information relevant to the topic being discussed. Wira violates this principle by connecting two completely irrelevant things. This can be seen in the following passage.

(9)	CONTEXT: COMIC WIRA NEGARA DISCUSSES HIS ENCOUNTER WITH A WOMAN
	<p>This rain is said to bring disease, so to ward off disease, <b>I exercise</b> . Usually, the first exercise is <b>running, escaping reality</b> . Rock climbing, <b>climbing hills of too high expectations</b> . Then fitness to be strong, <b>strong enough to see him happy with someone else</b> .</p>
	(YH1: 2.00-2.15)

In discourse fragment (9), Wira begins with the topic of "rain" and then connects it with various other activities that are not logically relevant, such as "escaping reality", "rock climbing to climb a hill of too high hopes", and "fitness to be strong to see him happy with someone else". Sports and heartbreak are two different things. Both become relevant only within the comedian's internal logic. *The setup* is a description of common activities. His

humor when he connects these activities with irrelevant emotional experiences, creates an absurd narrative, but can be understood by the audience. His goal is to build a character as a melancholic and poetic individual. Through this violation of relevance, Wira strengthens his poetic persona who always sees suffering in everything, which is the hallmark of his humor.

### ***Violation of the Maxim of Manner***

This proverb requires the speaker to convey information clearly and unambiguously. Wira violates this principle by using poetic and metaphorical language, which makes the meaning literally ambiguous.

(10)	CONTEXT: COMIC WIRA NEGARA DISCUSS RAIN BY EATING CHICKEN NOODLES
	<p>Rain also makes me hungry, right? I was looking for something delicious. Oh, chicken noodles. I met a man <b>selling chicken noodles and meatballs</b> . I asked him, "Sir, do you have the chicken noodles?" "All gone, sir." "Are there any meatballs?" "All gone, sir." "What's left?" "All that's left is regret." "Well, <b>there's only one regret</b> ."</p>
	(YH1: 2.25-2.48)

In the discourse fragment (10), Wira wants to order chicken noodles, but they are all gone. Wira asks again, "What's left?" The chicken noodle vendors answer, "All that's left is regret." In the end, Wira doesn't order chicken

noodles, but instead orders regret, “there’s only one regret.” This statement is ambiguous literally because “regret” is not a food. The humor stems from this ambiguity, forcing the audience to understand its meaning figuratively. *The setup* is a common interaction at a food vendor. The humor emerges in *the punchline*, which presents a poetic and ambiguous phrase as an order, creating irony and laughter. The purpose of Wira’s material is to perfect his poetic character. By using language that is not straightforward, Wira transforms everyday dialogue into a distinctive poetic joke, showing that he is consistent in every aspect of his performance. This makes Wira’s comedy more than just jokes, but a structured narrative.

### Race and Culture

Comedian Babe Cabita expertly violates Grice’s maxims of cooperation to create his own unique humor, often employing absurd logic and ridiculous analogies. His humor centers on unexpected

(11)	CONTEXT: COMIC BABE CABITA DISCUSSES BEAUTY TRENDS
	Oh, but don't get me wrong, I also <b>had my lips embroidered</b> , but I <b>used circumcision thread</b> , which is <b>why they're so swollen</b> . My friends are really clever. <b>They embroidered their lips using this fishing line</b> . Thank God, now my lips look like tilapia.

(YRB1: 2.28-2.42)

similes that connect modern things with something ancient or strange.

### *Violation of the Maxim of Quantity*

This proverb requires the speaker to provide sufficient information. Babe

Cabita violates this by providing excessive and irrelevant details, which is precisely the point of his humor.

When explaining the “lip embroidery”

(12)	CONTEXT: COMIC BABE CABITA DISCUSSES THE WORK OF SHAMANS
	Nowadays, shamans <b>advertise their work online</b> . It's scary, isn't it? I can't imagine their scary faces, long beards, black clothes, dark rooms, skulls, and laptops. It's possible that if you want <b>to send black magic, you just need to type in the text, send the black magic, and send the nails via email</b> .

(YRB1: 4.32-4.53)

procedure, Babe Cabita provides exaggerated and absurd details such as “I also had my lips embroidered, but I used circumcision thread.” He not only makes an untrue claim, but also adds absurd details about circumcision thread, which clearly has nothing to do with lip embroidery. His *setup* is a common fact about modern beauty trends. The humor lies in *the punchline* that provides unnecessary and illogical information, namely the use of “circumcision thread” and “fishing thread” for lip embroidery, which results in humorous consequences such as “swelling” or “tiger fish lips.” The goal is to satirize extreme beauty trends. By creating exaggerated and ridiculous analogies, comedian Babe Cabita in the discourse fragment (11) highlights the strangeness of these beauty procedures and makes the audience laugh.

### *Violation of the Maxim of Quality*

This proverb requires the speaker to convey accurate information. Babe Cabita violated it by deliberately making a factually incorrect statement and then presenting it as if it were true

Babe Cabita claims that modern shamans send "black magic via email." This claim is patently false. The comedian deliberately misrepresents facts to create a strong humorous premise. His *setup* is a simple, real-world observation (modern shamans). The goal is to turn a serious topic into a joke. By comparing the supernatural (black magic) with a familiar modern concept (email), Babe Cabita turns a frightening topic into something humorous and non-threatening.

#### ***Violation of the Maxim of Relevance***

This proverb requires the speaker to provide information relevant to the topic. Babe Cabita violates this principle by connecting two completely irrelevant things.

Babe Cabita in discourse excerpt (13) says that people who lose their belongings and go to a shaman will get the answer, "thieves are also the people closest to them." He then connects this statement with irrelevant logic, namely "if you are far apart, it's not called a thief but a long-distance relationship." The concept of "LDR" (*Long-Distance Relationship*) is not relevant to theft, but the comedian connects it to create humor. *The setup* is a common and logical situation about losing something. The humor appears in the punchline that makes an irrelevant analogy (thief vs long-distance relationship), making the audience laugh because of the inconsistency of the logic. This highlights clichés or stereotypes. Babe Cabita uses reverse logic to laugh at clichés that exist in society, such as the shaman's answers which tend to be common and predictable.

#### **Conclusions**

Based on an analysis of the stand-up comedy performances of comedians Arie Kriting, Ridwan Remin, Wira Nagara, and Babe Cabita, it can be concluded that their humor strategies consistently rely on deliberate violations of Grice's maxims of cooperation. Each comedian has his own unique characteristics in utilizing these violations. Wira Nagara tends to use violations to create poetic and melancholic humor, Babe Cabita with his absurd analogies, Arie Kriting with criticism of educational content, while Ridwan Remin focuses on political satire and social criticism.

Overall, the four main maxims of Grice's maxims of cooperation (Quantity, Quality, Relevance, and Execution) are systematically violated to achieve humorous effect. Comics often provide excessive or unnecessary information, make false or hyperbolic

(13)	CONTEXT: COMIC BABE CABITA DISCUSSES CASES IN SHAKUMANISM
	<p>For example, if we go to a shaman, for example, if we lose something, we go to a shaman. What will they say? "Hmmm, it seems like <b>the thieves are also those close to us</b> ." Of course, if you want to <b>steal, you have to be close</b> . <b>If you're far away, it's not called stealing, it's LDR.</b></p>
	(YRB1: 4.55-5.03)

claims, connect two logically irrelevant things, and use ambiguous language. Humor is created by *punchlines* that present absurd and illogical details. The goal is to satirize and point out the strangeness of a social phenomenon or idea, criticize or ridicule something in a non-threatening way, create surprise, and reinforce the comic's persona. Thus, this analysis confirms that humor in stand-up comedy is not just random jokes, but rather a structured linguistic strategy. Comedians consciously exploit audience expectations of normative communication.

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