

The Humour of *Still Standing* Contradictions between Implicature and Presupposition

*Sayf Hatem Abdalhakeem, Ahmed Sahib Mubarak **

ABSTRACT

The paper studies humour in selected scenes extracted from the American sitcom of 'Still Standing'. It answers the questions: what kind of conversational implicature is used in the above mentioned episode, what kind of presuppositions is used commonly in this episode, and how does the contradiction between the conversational implicature and presupposition happen in this American episode. This study explores how humour is generated from the contradiction between the conversational implicature of speaker1 and the presuppositional trigger of speaker2. The study combines the theories of humour with the theories of conversational implicature and presupposition. Humour is considered in this study as resulting from two contradictory scripts. The study tries to find out how humour is generated in selected scenes. The findings of the study provide an outline of the functions of humour in the American sitcom of 'Still Standing'.

Keywords: Humour, Conversational Implicature, Presupposition, Grice's Maxims, Contextual Defeasibility.

1. Introduction

Humour becomes an important aspect of our daily life. People need to entertain themselves by means of humour to have relaxation after a long day of routines and pressures. It is often used to depict the profound understanding of reality. In addition, humour also has a feature of flexible practicability, which reflects the intrinsic rules and characters of English language from various aspects and different points. Speakers, in any given situation, try to co-operate with each other through the observance of Grice's maxims of the co-operative principle. However, they may breach these maxims in lying, comedy, political debates, etc. (Crystal, 2003:109).

Speakers may also use words to implicate something other than or the opposite of the literal meaning to show a sense of humour. For example:

(1) The two fishermen who had such a great haul of cod that day that their boat sank.

The example above implicates two contradictory ideas, i.e. even though the two fishermen have a great haul of cod, they have got nothing because their boat sank (Audrieth, 1998: 12).

Kempson (1977:140) states that the presuppositions of a sentence are all the sentences that follow both from the truth of that sentence and also from its falsity. But sometimes the speaker's presuppositions differ from those of the listener. In other words, the listener presupposes something but the speaker says another thing. The following example which is extracted from the American comic episode of 'Still Standing' can be mentioned to clarify the idea:

(2) Wife: Do not talk to my husband in that way in front of my son, he's not a bad father but he's stupid! stupid!
Husband: Honey, are you defending me?

* College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Babylon, Iraq. Received on 13/1/2019 and Accepted for Publication on 28/4/2019.

In the dialogue above, the underlying sentence leads the husband to presuppose that 'he is a good father' and his wife defends him, but her complement 'he is stupid! Stupid!' contradicts with the husband's presupposition because she actually rebukes him what causes the audience to laugh.

As far as the researcher could investigate, studying the contradiction between the conversational implicature and presupposition in the American Sitcom of *Still Standing* has not been studied. Therefore, this study attempts to bridge this gap through raising the following questions:

1. What kind of conversational implicature is used in the American Sitcom of *Still Standing*?
2. What kind of presuppositions is used in the American Sitcom of *Still Standing*?
3. How does the contradiction between the conversational implicature and presupposition happen in the American Sitcom of *Still standing*.

2. Approaches of Humour

There are three main approaches to humour. The first approach is called 'incongruity theory'; it is built on the perception or reception of incongruity with the nature of humorous texts. The second is called 'superiority theory'; it reflects a social relationship, i.e. the relation between human and aspects of superiority such as power or dominance. The third is called 'relief theory'; it focuses on relaxation and relief from stress.

2.1 Incongruity Theory

Incongruity theory is the leading approach. It is considered as a linguistic theory. According to this theory, humour is said to have the following elements:

- i. A conflict between what is expected and what actually occurs in the comic scene.
- ii. An ambiguity at some level of language with semantic or pragmatic meaning or both.
- iii. A punchline which resolves the conflict.

The theory of incongruity focuses on the object of humour; it depicts humour as a response to an incongruity, a term broadly used to include ambiguity and inconsistency. Moreover, it focuses on the element of surprise. It states that humour is created out of a conflict between what is expected and what actually occurs in humour. This accounts for the most obvious feature of much humour, i.e. an ambiguity or double meaning which deliberately misleads the audience, followed by a punchline. Incongruity is an umbrella term which makes it the dominant theory of humour since it seems to work in most cases of humour (Latta, 1998: 106).

2.2 Superiority Theory

The theory of superiority is also called 'the theory of aggression, hostility, triumph or derision'. It accentuates the negative element of humour, its aggressive side and is based on the idea that laughter arises from our sense of superiority with respect to someone else. Some people, therefore, laugh at other people's inferiority, stupidity or misfortunes. Plato and Aristotle argue that too much laughter is compatible with leading a good life because while laughing at others, people feel that they are better, smarter or more beautiful. Hobbes (1651) introduces the term 'sudden glory' for this position of superiority, although he does not deny the attitude adopted by Plato and Aristotle, i.e. he adds a new term to the theory (Walte, 2007:21).

According to the theory of superiority, the target of humour is often a group of people, strangers or other nations. Joke tellers are usually members of the more powerful group of the majority who joke about race, ethnicity, age or other aspects that are a sign of otherness of the other group. Almost every nation has its own group that makes fun of; it could be a group that has a lower status such as Turks in Germany or higher status such as Jews; a group with a typically different political, sexual or other orientation or other group with differences of other kind. Such jokes, which are typical manifestations of the prejudice in each society show the need of people to cope with a particular situation. Examples of such jokes are lawyer jokes, woman jokes, physicist jokes, blond jokes, etc. (Gruner,2000: 9).

The theory of superiority, as has been mentioned earlier, emphasizes the social aspect of laughter because the ridiculing of others is usually a matter of a group of people, not an individual. If some people laugh at others, they send

a message to their fellow members that they indeed feel the same way and therefore they also belong to this social group rather than the ridiculed one. Laughter serves here the social function through helping people to identify their group and solidify their social position and bonds within. Not many people can resist such pressure in standing up for their opinions and beliefs assuming that their principles and norms are in conflict with the particular group. Moreover, there are situations in which a person laughs without the feeling of being superior. These situations are not directed at somebody without a target, there can be no such feeling as being better or superior. People laugh because they have been made aware of some general absurdity. Hobbes describes this case as 'laughter without offence', which is said to take place when people laugh at absurdity and infirmities abstracted from persons, and where all the company may laugh together. In this theory, humour is also believed to be a punishment imposed on unsocial persons. Therefore, humiliation becomes 'a social corrective' (Goldstein, 1972: 6).

2.3 Relief Theory

The theory of relief focuses on relaxation and relief from stress. According to this theory, laughter results from joy which appears when one has been indignant at some evil and realizes that one cannot be harmed by it. In other words, laughter is an expression of pleasure at the elimination of something painful or alarming (Goldstein, 1972:10).

Humour has a useful aim of alleviating the strain which is involved in sustained attention. Thus, the theory of relief is concerned with the functions of humour as being interested with relief from strain or constraint. Moreover, it releases excessive tension (Liao, 1998:29).

Furthermore, this theory asserts that the emotional tension is built up to deal with the upcoming stress, social or psychological. The outburst of laughter is used to eliminate the high amount of energy. Besides, the tension which accompanies peoples' thought occasionally exceeds the capacity for controlled thinking which causes a wave of emotion (Berlyne, 1954: 802).

3. Conversational Implicature and Humour

In any given conversation, interlocutors use what is called implicature in their interaction with each other. The word 'implicature' is derived from the verb 'to imply' which means 'to fold something into something else'. Therefore, the humorous utterance that is implied is considered to be folded in and it has to be unfolded in order to be understood. Thus, Grice (1975) uses the term 'implicature' to account for what a speaker can imply, suggest, or mean as distinct from what the speaker literally says (Mey, 1993:99).

Grice (1975 cited in *Ibid.*) classifies implicature into two kinds. The first kind is called as 'conventional implicature', and the second is called as the 'conversational implicature'. The former is basically concerned with the conventional features of the words employed in any given humorous utterance and reveals an implicit meaning which can be generally or conventionally accepted by all people. However, the latter is an implicature which is concerned with the conversational maxims that the speaker will normally obey. In other words, conventional implicatures are non-truth conditional inferences that are not derived from superordinate pragmatic principle like maxims but are simply attached by the convention to particular lexical items (Mey, 1993:99).

However, conversational implicature reveals an implicit meaning that is only assured by participants who are involved in the speech events that is closely related to its context. It is subdivided into two kinds, i.e. particularized implicature and generalized implicature. The former refers to the implicature that requires a specific context, while the latter refers to the implicature that arises without any particular contexts. As long as the current study involves the context of humorous utterances, the researcher is going to use the conversational implicature and it is going to be interpreted further with the use of cooperative principle and its maxims.

Furthermore, the concept of conversational maxims and the cooperative principle was presented by Grice, in order to explain the mechanism by which people interpret conversational implicature. His concept was first exposed at

William James lectures at Harvard university in a form of a paper entitled 'Logic and Conversation' to clarify the distinction between meaning and use of utterances (Thomas, 1995:62).

In any given conversation, the participants want their message to be understood by their interlocutors, so that the purpose of the conversation will be attained. In other words, interlocutors have to make their contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which they are engaged. This is what is meant by the cooperative principle (Ibid.).

There are four conversational maxims proposed by Grice in his 'Logic and Conversation'. Each one of Grice's maxims is not a scientific law but a norm to maintain the conversational goal. Otherwise, the conversational goal will be less functioned when any of the sub-maxims is not fulfilled maximally (Levinson, 1983:101). In other words, Grice's maxims are used to guide those who are conversing with others in order to achieve the purpose of conversation maximally, efficiently and rationally. For this purpose, interlocutors have to speak honestly, relevantly, clearly, and they have to give information as is needed. The conversational maxims can be further enumerated and explained as follows:

1. The Maxim of Quality

The maxim of quality can be subdivided into two sub-maxims, they are as follows:

- i. Do not say what you believe to be false.
- ii. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

2. The Maxim of Quantity

The maxim of quantity can be subdivided into two sub-maxims, they are as follows:

- i. Make your contribution as informative as is required for the purposes of the exchange.
- ii. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

3. The Maxim of Relation

The maxim of relation focuses on the idea that interlocutors have to make what they say relevant to the issue at hand, as it is in Grice's words 'make your contributions relevant'. According to this maxim, it is the relevancy condition that is interpreted in such a way to be directly relevant to any given interaction. It means that the connection between interlocutors can be shown to be one of relevance not only in simple cases of replies (Levinson, 1983:101).

4. The Maxim of Manner

The maxim of manner focuses on the idea that interlocutors should be perspicuous. It is subdivided into four sub-maxims, they are as follows:

- i. Avoid obscurity of expression.
- ii. Avoid ambiguity.
- iii. Be brief.
- iv. Be orderly (ibid.).

4. Presupposition and Humour

Presuppositions arise from two different sources. They either arise from conventional properties of lexical items or they may be conversationally derived, i.e. they might be inferences which are licensed by general conversational principles, in combination with the truth conditions of the presupposing utterance. However, certain lexical items have, in addition to their truth conditional content, a special presupposition content, which is carried through the compositional process to produce a propositional presupposition (Simons, 2001: 431).

Contextual knowledge is necessary for utterances to interpret their meanings. There are certain propositions belonging to the contextual knowledge, they are assumed to preexist in order to interpret the utterances' meaning. Those preexisting propositions are called presuppositions. They pertain to various kinds of knowledge of the world that are shared by the speaker and the listener and become the common ground for understanding any given utterance (Adisutrisno, 2008: 77).

Presupposition is something that speakers assume to be the case before making an utterance. In other words, Speakers have presuppositions, not sentences. It is a proposition that precedes another proposition. To understand utterances, speakers and listeners have to resort to various kinds of general knowledge of the world which they are assumed to share. Presupposition has important role in determining whether the discourse is coherent. The proper presupposition can enhance the communicative value of the utterance. It has a role in the foundation of the speech. For instance: 'John was arrested by the police' presupposes that 'John committed wrong doing' (Rani et al., 2006: 168-170).

The presupposition of statement will remain constant (i.e., still true) even when that statement is negated. For instance: 'Brian's cat is not cute' presupposes that 'Brian has a cat'. This kind of case named constancy under negation (Yule, 1996: 26-27). However, semantic presuppositions, on the one hand, are context free. They are relations of propositions and concern truth and falsehood propositions. For instance: 'A three year old boy named Mike was found at the bus station' presupposes that 'A three year old boy was lost' (Adisutrisno, 2008: 6).

Pragmatic presuppositions, on the other hand, pertain to various kind of knowledge of the world that is assumed to preexist when an utterance is made. They are determinate by the total context in which the utterance is made. They are context-embedded. These various kinds of knowledge are assumed to be understood by the speaker and the listener and also become common grounds for the interpretation of the meaning of the utterance. For example: the three years old boy who was found at the bus station has parents who are quite probably Christians, that they must be very anxious and depressed, that they will try any way to find the whereabouts of their boy, and that they seriously want to get the child back (Adisutrisno, 2008: 78).

Stalnaker (1974:205) claims that one of the primary advantages of the move from a semantic to a pragmatic account of presupposition as being the possibility of explaining some of the presupposition facts in terms of general assumptions about rational strategy in situations where people exchange information or conduct argument. There are two classes of presuppositions that have a conversational source. These are the presuppositions of change of state sentences and the presuppositions of factives. Both of these classes possess two properties that are typical for the conversational implicature and the conversationally derived inference. The two properties are contextual defeasibility and non-detachability (Simons, 2001: 432).

Furthermore, presupposition is indispensable with humour since it depends on the common ground or world knowledge among interlocutors. The listener in any given sitcom may presupposes something from the speaker's implicature, but the listener's potential presupposition contradicts with the speaker's actual presupposition which causes humour. For example:

- (3) "Wife: (talking to Mrs.Bowden) listen lady, never talked to my husband in front of my son like that again and he's not a bad father. He is just a stupid stupid man doing the best job he can (audience laughed).
Husband: honey, are you defending me cause it sounds like it could go either way (audience laughed)."
(Web source: 1).

In the example above, the husband presupposes that his wife is about to defend him once she said "never talk to my husband in front of my son like that again and he is not a bad father" this implicates that the wife is defending her husband but she called him stupid! Stupid! in front of Mrs.Bowden, i.e. she rebukes him what causes the audience to laugh because the wife's implicature is not compatible with the husband's presupposition. The husband said "honey, are you defending me cause it sounds like it could go either way", i.e. his wife said something that can be considered as a defending and as a rebuking in the same time that is why the audience laughed once again.

4.1 Types of Presupposition

George Yule (1996: 27-30) classifies presuppositions into six categories, they are as follows:

1. **Existential Presupposition:** According to this kind of presupposition, the speaker is committed to the existence of the entities named, i.e. any definite noun phrase. For instance: The king, The cat, The girl etc.
2. **Factive Presupposition:** According to this kind of presupposition, certain verb/ construction indicate that something is a fact. For instance: the verb 'realize' as in: 'She didn't realize he was ill', i.e. it presupposes that 'He was ill'.
3. **Lexical Presupposition:** According to this kind of presupposition, the use of a form is asserted by the meaning which is conventionally interpreted with the presupposition of another non-asserted meaning. For instance: 'He managed to repair the clock' presupposes that 'He tried to repair the clock'. And its asserted meaning is that 'He succeeded'.
4. **Structural Presupposition:** According to this kind of presupposition, certain sentence structures conventionally and regularly presuppose that part of the structure is already assumed to be true. For instance: Wh-questions such as 'When did he leave?' presupposes that 'He left'.
5. **Non-Factive Presupposition:** According to this kind of presupposition, certain verbs/constructions indicate something is not a fact / not true. For instance: 'I dreamed that I was rich' presupposes that 'I was not rich'.
6. **Counterfactual Presupposition:** According to this kind of presupposition, certain structures mean that what is presupposed is not only not true, but is the opposite of what is true, i.e. contrary to facts. For instance: 'If you were my friend, you would have helped me' presupposes that 'you are not my friend'.

4.2 Theories of Presupposition

The most developed two theories of presupposition that deal with the projection problem assume that presuppositions are part of the conventional meaning of expressions, even though they are not semantic inferences. This should serve to distinguish presuppositions from conversational implicatures, which otherwise share many of the same properties of defeasibility, for conversational implicatures are non-detachable, i.e. it is not possible to find another way of conveying the same truth conditions that will lack the implicatures in question. On the other hand, with presupposition, there appears to be no problem in finding a way of expressing the same truth-conditional content as in: 'It was not a book that John gave to Bill' and 'It was not John who gave Bill a book'. The two theories are going to be explained in the next two sub-sections.

4.2.1 The Theory of Conventional Implicature

The meaning expressions that capture presuppositions are called as 'implicature expressions or conventional implicatures'. And this terminology overtly identifies presuppositions with those pragmatic inferences that Grice (1975) isolated as being conventional, non-cancellable and yet not part of the truth conditions (Levinson, 1983:207).

Presuppositions are claimed to be non-cancellable. The idea is that in addition to implicature expressions which capture the presupposition content of each presupposition-triggering item, there will be associated with each constituent a heritage expression whose sole function will be to govern the projection of the presuppositions expressed in the implicature expressions (Ibid:208).

In this theory, presuppositions are not actually cancelled, they are blocked during the derivation of the sentence and simply do not arise from the whole. In many ways, this is a highly sophisticated and carefully constructed model that can be fully formalized with what is perhaps the most rigorous of contemporary linguistic theories (Ibid: 209).

4.2.2 The Theory of Contextual Defeasibility

According to this theory, presuppositions are assumed to be non-truth-conditional aspects of the meaning of linguistic expressions. They have to be arbitrarily associated with linguistic expressions, principally in the lexicon. Moreover, there are two kinds of presuppositions, i.e. potential presupposition and actual presupposition. The former is concerned with sentences. However, the latter is concerned with utterances. All the potential presuppositions of a sentence are generated as a complete set. So at this stage, the presuppositions of any complex sentence will consist of

all the presuppositions of each of its parts. Then a cancelling mechanism is brought into play for choosing out of this total set of potential presuppositions all those that will survive to become actual presuppositions of a sentence uttered in a particular context (Levinson, 1983: 212).

Furthermore, some presuppositions have the property of non-detachability which is similar to the property of conversational implicatures, i.e. the different forms of the same content do not change the implicature and also do not change the presupposition. For example:

(4) "Jane didn't stop laughing" (Simons, 2001: 435).

In the example above, the presupposition of the sentence remains the same if the verb 'stop' is replaced with 'quit', 'cease', or 'discontinue'. And the same is true concerning synonymous sentences such as 'Jane did not leave the house' and 'Jane did not quit the house' etc. these observations suggest that the presupposition of change of state predicates and the presuppositions of factives are non-detachable and they are attached to the content that is expressed and not to any lexical item (Ibid.).

5. Data Analysis

This section is intended to examine selected extracts derived from the American Sitcom of 'Still Standing' of the first two episodes of season one (Web source: 1, 2). The analysis is going to be based on specific steps; first, identifying the non-observance of Grice's maxims by speaker2; second, investigating how the non-observances generate conversational implicatures; third, identifying the type of presupposition used by speaker1 ; and the last step is exposing how humour is generated from the contradiction between the conversational implicature of speaker2 and the presuppositional trigger of speaker1.

5.1 Scene One

Judy: are you out of your mind, you completely ruined book club.

Bell: what?

Judy: you were loud, you were obnoxious, you interrupted, everybody had a terrible time.

Bell: you sure? It is so because it was a book club (audience laughed).

In the conversation above between Judy and Bell, the latter has flouted Grice's maxim of quality because he said what is believed to be false and that for which he lacks adequate evidence. Thus, the maxim of quality is non-observed in this comic scene. It seems that Bell has a deliberate intention of generating an implicature through his flouting of Grice's maxim of quality that he hates reading. The conversational implicature that is resulted is a particularized implicature as it requires a specific context.

Bell generates a factive presupposition in his reply to Judy's blaming that he was loud, obnoxious, interrupter, and because of him everybody had a terrible time. Bell said: 'you sure, it is so because it was a book club'. In other words, Bell presupposes that everybody had a terrible time not because of him but because of the book club. Thus, the presupposition trigger of Bell's utterance contradicts with Judy's implicature that Bell was bothering and this causes opposing scripts which lead to humour.

5.2 Scene Two

Judy: smells like Pizza in here, did you eat Pizza on the bed?

Bell: Oh yeah but I put something down.

Judy: Did you put my pillow down?

Bell: Oh (with silence) (audience laughed).

In the conversation above between Judy and Bell, the latter has flouted Grice's maxim of quantity because his reaction by saying 'oh' with silence is not as informative as is required. It seems that Bell has a deliberate intention of generating an implicature through his flouting of Grice's maxim of quantity that he has put the pillow down. The conversational implicature that is resulted is a particularized as it requires a specific context.

Judy uses a lexical presupposition once she said: 'did you put my pillow down?' presupposing that Bell has put her pillow down. Thus the presupposition trigger of Judy's question about the pillow and this does not contradicts with Bells reply 'oh' but nevertheless humour is generated because Judy's conjecturing was right.

5.3 Scene Three

Terrance: you really didn't have to host book club again.

Judy: No no, I'm glad to do it, I like that.

Terrance: yeah, it's nice.

Judy: Bell is not gonna be here.

Terrence: Oh wonderful (audience laughed)

In the conversation above between Terrence and Judy, the former has observed all of Grice's maxims of the cooperative principal by saying: 'oh wonderful' in his final reply to Judy's statement 'Bell is not gonna be here'. It is clear that Terrance has generated a particularized implicature, without flouting any of Grice's maxims, which requires a specific context that he is happy because Bell is not gonna be there.

Terrance uses lexical presupposition once he said 'oh wonderful', the use of Terrance's expression 'oh wonderful' presupposes that Terrance is happy about that news. This lexical presupposition is asserted by the laughter of the audience. The presupposition trigger of Terrance's reply 'oh wonderful' contradicts with Judy's implicature that she can host the book club. In other words, Terrance is happy not because of the hosting that Judy can make for the book club but because of the absence of Bell from the house, i.e. he is not going to be there what arouses the laughter of the audience.

5.4 Scene Four

Judy: (astonishingly) you told Brian to smoke?

Bell: I was just trying to help him get a girl, the way I got you.

Judy: you didn't get me by smoking.

Bell: well you know by acting like a jerk.

Judy: you didn't get me by acting like a jerk either, I dated you because you were sensitive, you big idiot (audience laughed).

In the conversation above between Judy and Bell, the former has flouted Grice's maxim of quantity because her final statement is more informative than is required. Thus, the maxim of quantity is non-observed in this comic scene. It seems that Judy has a deliberate intention of generating an implicature through her flouting of Grice's maxim of quantity. She implicates that her husband is a stupid guy. The conversational implicature that is resulted is a particularized implicature as it requires a specific context.

Judy generates lexical presupposition by saying: 'you big idiot' in her reply to Bell's claiming that he was acting like a jerk, i.e. Bell implicates that he was smart and this contradicts with the presupposition trigger of Judy's final reply that Bell was big idiot what makes it to be humorous. Judy's presupposition is asserted by the laughter of the audience. Thus, the presupposition trigger of Judy's utterance 'you big idiot'

5.5 Scene Five

Bell: actually the first time I noticed you, you were standing right over there wearing a tight red T-shirt, blue jeans with a back right pocket ripped off, some guy made you laugh and I thought if I could make her laugh like that, life wouldn't be so bad.

Judy: Wow just when I think you are idiot you something so sweet (audience laughed).

In the conversation above between Bell and Judy, the latter has flouted Grice's maxim of quality because she said what is believed to be false and that for which she lacks adequate evidence. Thus, the maxim of quality is non-observed in this comic scene. It seems that Judy has a deliberate intention of generating an implicature through her flouting of Grice's maxim of quality that she believes her husband does not worth respect. The conversational implicature that is resulted is a particularized implicature as it requires a specific context.

Judy generates non-factive presupposition by saying: 'wow just when I think you are idiot you say something so sweet'. Judy's statement indicates something that is not a fact\ not true. Bell implicate that he is a romantic guy and not idiot once he said: 'some guy made you laugh and I thought if I could make her laugh like that, life wouldn't be so bad' and this contradicts with the presuppositional trigger of Judy's statement that Bell says sweet words only when she thinks that he is idiot what makes it to be humorous. Judy's presupposition is asserted by the laughter of the audience. Thus, the presuppositional trigger of Judy's utterance: 'when I think you are idiot, you say something sweet' contradicts with Bell's implicature that he is a romantic and not idiot. This contradiction causes opposing scripts which lead to humour.

5.6 Scene Six

Judy: oooh, so we are back to lying to each other.

Bell: oh I bet this whole truth things killing us, I think if we really care about each other we can build up a nice wall of lies that will carry us to our fiftieth anniversary (audience laughed).

In the conversation above between Judy and Bell, the latter has flouted Grice's maxim of quantity because his final statement is more informative than is required. Thus, the maxim of quantity is non-observed in this comic scene. It seems that Bell has a deliberate intention of generating an implicature through his flouting of Grice's maxim of quantity. He implicates that telling lies between husband and wife is better than telling truths. The conversational that is resulted is a particularized implicature as it requires a specific context.

Bell generates lexical presupposition by saying: 'oh I bet this whole truth things killing us, I think if we really care about each other we can build up a nice wall of lies that will carry us to our fiftieth anniversary', presupposing that lying is good for their romantic relationship to last longer. However, Judy implicates that lying is not good by saying: 'oooh, so we are back to lying to each other'. Thus, the presupposition trigger of Bell's statement that lying is good for relationships contradicts with Judy's implicature that lying is bad for their relationship and this causes opposing scripts which lead to humour.

5.7 Scene Seven

Judy: (talking to her children Brian and Lauren) I suggest you to wipe those smirks off your faces, coming in a 2:00 in the morning isn't funny, drinking is not funny and waking up the neighbors by lighting firecrackers on their front lawn certainly is not funny, that's why your father and I want to apologize for everything that happen last night.

Bell: your Mom's birthday only comes once a year (audience laughed).

In the conversation above between Judy and Bell, the latter has flouted the maxim of quantity because he is not as informative as is required for the purposes of the exchange. Thus, the maxim of quantity is non-observed in this comic scene. It seems that Bell has a deliberate intention of generating an implicature through his flouting of Grice's maxim of quantity. He implicates that celebrating with Judy's birthday in that crazy way is acceptable because it is only once a year. The conversational implicature that is resulted is a particularized implicature as it requires a specific context.

Bell generates lexical presupposition by saying: ' your Mom's birthday only comes once a year' presupposing that it is not every day and its meaning is asserted by the laughter of the audience. In other words, Bell presupposes that they should celebrate in the way they like as long as it is once a year. However, Judy implicates that they should apologize

about what they did in that day because it is not proper to celebrate in that way. Thus, the presupposition trigger of Bell's statement that they should celebrate in the way they like contradicts with Judy's implicature that they do not have to celebrate in the way they like and this causes opposing scripts which lead to humour.

5.8 Scene Eight

Judy: did you get the milk?

Bell: I will go later.

Tina: don't worry got it dad, I will just put beer on my cereal.

Bell: just make sure you use that dietary your mom drinks (audience laughed)

In the conversation above between Judy, Bell, and their child Tina; Bell has flouted the maxim of quality because he said what is believed to be false. Thus, the maxim of quality is non-observed in this comic scene. It seems that Bell has a deliberate intention of generating an implicature through his flouting of Grice's maxim of quality that he said what is believed to be false, i.e. beer is not good for young children and they don't have to put it on the cereal. The conversational implicature that is resulted is a particularized implicature as it requires a specific context.

Bell generates lexical presupposition by saying: 'just make sure you use that dietary your Mom drinks' presupposing that dietary beer is better than the ordinary beer. However, Tina implicates that she wants to induce her father to buy her milk by saying: 'don't worry got it Dad, I will just put beer on my cereal'. Thus, the presupposition trigger of Bell's statement that dietary beer is better than ordinary beer contradicts with Tina's implicature that he should buy her milk and this causes opposing scripts which lead to humour.

5.9 Scene Nine

Tina: Mom can you read this story to me?

Judy: Tina Mommy is busy but if you cover it and be lonely I bet daddy will read it to you.

Tina: No, daddy skips pages (audience laughed).

In the conversation above between Judy and her little daughter Tina, the former has flouted the maxim of quantity because she is not as informative as is required for the purposes of the exchange. Thus, the maxim of quantity is non-observed in this comic scene. It seems that Judy has a deliberate intention of generating an implicature through her flouting of Grice's maxim of quantity. She implicates that she is terribly busy and cannot read the story for her little daughter so that Bell can do that for Tina. The conversational implicature that is resulted is a particularized implicature as it requires a specific context.

Tina generates lexical presupposition by saying: 'No, Daddy skips pages' presupposing that he is not going to do her what she wants. However, her mother implicates that if she is lonely and covers the story her father will read it for her. Thus, the presupposition trigger of Tina's statement contradicts with Judy's implicature and this causes opposing scripts which lead to humour.

5.10 Scene Ten

Linda: you know I don't think Terrance even knows that I'm interested maybe I should just be bold and ask him out but I want to blow this because I really like this guy is that too forward?

Judy: look at Bell over there all stupid and talking (audience laughed).

In the conversation above between Linda and Judy, the latter has flouted the maxim of relation, i.e. she was not relevant once she said: 'look at Bell over there all stupid and talking'. Thus, the maxim of relation is non-observed in this comic scene. It seems that Judy has a deliberate intention of generating an implicature through her flouting of Grice's maxim of relation that she is not fully convinced with the behaviours of her husband and her mind was not with her sister Linda. Thus, she was irrelevant. The conversational implicature that is resulted is a particularized implicature as it requires a specific context.

Judy generates lexical presupposition by saying: 'look at Bell over there all stupid and talking' presupposing that her husband is stupid and her presupposition is asserted by the laughter of the audience. However, Linda was talking about something which is totally different from the thing Judy talks about. In other words, Linda's implicature contradicts with Judy's presupposition and this causes opposing scripts which lead to humour.

6. Conclusion

The aspect of incongruity cannot be excluded from the humorous occurrences of the American sitcom of 'Still Standing'. The non-observance of one of Grice's maxims generates a particularized conversational implicature that is harmonized with its context. Quantity and quality are the most non-observed maxims in the American sitcom of 'Still Standing'. In each one of the selected comic scenes there are at least two interlocutors, i.e. speaker1 and speaker2. The former flouts one of Grice's maxims of the cooperative principle generating an implicature. However, the latter presupposes something that contradicts with the implicature of speaker1 and thus humour is generated. Lexical presupposition is the most common type of presuppositions used in the American comic episode of 'Still Standing'.

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الفكاهة في المسلسل الأمريكي الكوميدي "لازال قائما" ما بين تناقضات التضمين والافتراض

سيف عبدالكريم، احمد مبارك*

ملخص

هذا البحث درس الفكاهة في مشاهد مختارة مستخرجة من المسرحية الهزلية الأمريكية "لازال قائما"، وتمت الإجابة عن الأسئلة : أي نوع من تضمين المحادثة يتم استخدامه في هذا المسلسل، واي نوع من الإفتراض المسبق يستخدم فيه ،وكيف يحدث التناقض ما بين تضمين المحادثة لأحد المتحاورين والإفتراض المسبق للمتحاور الآخر، حيث ان الباحث استكشف عن الآلية التي تتولد فيها الفكاهة نتيجة لهذا التناقض.ومن الجدير بالذكر إن هذا البحث يجمع بين نظريات الفكاهة ونظريات تضمين المحادثة والافتراض المسبق. تعتبر الفكاهة في هذه البحث ناتجة عن خلفية معرفة متناقضة ما بين المتحاورين.حاول الباحث معرفة آلية توليد الفكاهة في مشاهد مختارة. وقدمت نتائج البحث الخطوط العريضة لوظائف الفكاهة في المسرحية الهزلية الأمريكية لـ"لازال قائما".

الكلمات الدالة: الفكاهة ،تضمين المحادثة، الافتراض المسبق، مبادئ غريس،عدم السياقية.

* كلية التربية الانسانية، جامعة بابل، العراق. تاريخ استلام البحث 2019/1/13، وتاريخ قبوله 2019/4/28.