

## Conversational Implicature, Humour Theory and the Emergence of Humour: A Pragmatic Analysis of *Udurawana's* Stories in Sri Lanka

Upul Priyantha Gamage<sup>1\*</sup>, Patrick Sadi Makangila<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Sinhala and Modern Languages, The Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka, PhD Candidate at Central China Normal University

<sup>2</sup>School of Foreign Languages at Central China Normal University

**Corresponding Authors:** Upul Priyantha Gamage, E-mail: [gamageup@gmail.com](mailto:gamageup@gmail.com)/[upulpg@bpu.ac.lk](mailto:upulpg@bpu.ac.lk), Patrick Sadi Makangila, E-mail: [3159632708@qq.com](mailto:3159632708@qq.com)

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### ABSTRACT

'Humour' in the stories has been investigated in many ways while the prominence of the studies has been captured by the pragmatic analyses. The emergence of humour through language is an interesting conversational implicature that has attracted the academic interest in the recent past. This phenomenon is closely looked at using randomly selected ten stories of *Udurawana* in this article by applying the Grice's theory of Conversational Implicature (CI) and the Conventional Theory of Humour in order to examine the ways of generating humour in the context of Grice's theory by revealing the types of maxims flouted in the selected sample. The study concludes that the maxim mostly flouted in these joke stories is *quality* and sometimes two or three maxims flouted in a single-story on the surface level but at the deep level *quality* is the only maxim flouted in all stories under consideration while no evidence found to prove any violation of maxims. The previous conclusions made by the researchers in terms of maxim flouting and violation in the jokes are also not so certain in comparing with the findings of the present study. The study has found out that the humour aspect of almost all the stories under consideration is incongruity while all the stories have associated the particularized conversational implicature to produce the humour aspects. The study has further established that the *Udurawana's* humour stories as intended humour stories in which the humour emerges by flouting maxims but not by violating maxims as previous researchers have concluded.

**Key words:** Conversational Implicature, Maxim, Flouting, Humour, *Udurawana*

### INTRODUCTION

"Meaning can be communicated not only by what is said but also by how it is said" (Levinson, 1983, p. 97).

*Udurawana* is a fabricated name for humour stories in the modern folklore of Sri Lanka. Because of the broad spectrum of internet usage among the young generation, almost all the stories have been published very informally on different web and blog sites. It is also said that there had been such an actual person in the area of Kandy in Sri Lanka, but the characteristic features of the fabricated *Udurawana* and the real person is very unfair to be matched as they are not alike. *Udurawana's* joke stories are not common among the general public, but well spread among the educated and matured people as almost all they are in English. The expected humour of the stories cannot be entertained if the person who is reading or listening does not have a fair knowledge of English. He (*Udurawana*) is not like the popular court jester "*Andare*" in Sri Lankan folklore, but *Udurawana's* stories are now being rapidly popularized by the young generation. What unique in

these humour stories is, most probably the humour comes through playing with the language by calculating an additional meaning. This study aims to unpack the humour aspects, types of conversational implicature and the types of maxims violated or flouted in *Udurawana's* joke stories in order to understand how humour is emerging through the language; specially through stories in the context where the stories have become a considerable input in the teaching-learning process of the education all over the world for many aspects. To achieve these objectives, the study is guided by four research questions;

1. What is the way that the humour emerges through the language and what type of conversational implicature that they have produced?
2. Which maxims are violated or flouted in *Udurawana's* joke stories?
3. What are the humour aspects of the stories under consideration?
4. What are the implications of Gricean CP and Conventional Humour Theory with reference to the present sample?

## LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

We integrate the general classification of humour in the present work in collaboration with the *Gricean* Conversational Implicature (CI). Additional meanings beyond the semantic content of the sentences uttered are the conversational implicature (Xiaofang, 2012, p. 49) in simple pragmatic terms. According to *Griffiths*, implicature is “what is hinted by an utterance” (2006, p. 7) According to *Cruse*, “Conversational Implicature is the name given by some to non-truth-conditional aspects of meaning which are conversationally attached to particular linguistic forms” (2000, p. 350) and for *Jacob Mey*, it is something which is implied in conversation (2001, p. 45). We know that there is a gap between what one literally says and what one contextually conveys. Simply, what is conveyed in the context is conversational implicature. It is advisable to cite the full explanation made by *Grice* here to have a strong foundation for the present work. As the Conversational Implicature occurs in the mechanism of the Cooperative Principle which has been symbolized as CP, we first need to understand this background. Our talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did. They are characteristically, to some degree at least, cooperative efforts; and each participant recognizes in them, to a certain extent a common purpose, or at least a mutually accepted direction. This purpose or direction may be fixed from the start (e.g., by an initial proposal of a question for discussion) or it may evolve during the exchange; it may be fairly definite, or it may be so indefinite as to leave very considerable latitude to the participants (as in a casual conversation). But, at each stage, some possible conversational moves would be excluded as conversationally unsuitable. We might then formulate a rough general principle in which participants will be expected (*ceteris paribus*) to observe, namely: 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. One might label this the cooperative principle (*Grice*, 1975). In this general principle, there are maxims and sub-maxims. The main four categories are Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. The category of Quantity relates to the quantity of information to be provided, and under it fall the following maxims:

1. Make your contribution as informative as required (for the current purpose of the exchange).
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

Under the category of Quality, falls a super maxim – ‘try to make your contribution one that is true’ – and two more specific maxims:

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

Under the category of Relation, there is only a single maxim, namely, ‘Be relevant.’ Finally, under the category of Manner which we understand as relating not (like the previous categories) to what is said but, rather, to HOW what is said is to be said, it is included the super maxim – ‘Be perspicuous’ – and various maxims such as:

1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
4. Be orderly.

It is obvious that the observance of some of these maxims is a matter of less urgency than is the observance of others; a man who has expressed himself with undue prolixity would, in general, be open to milder comment than would a man who has said something he believes to be false. Indeed, it might be felt that the importance of at least the first maxim of Quality is such that it should not be included in a scheme of the kind that is constructing; other maxims come into operation only on the assumption that this maxim of Quality is satisfied. While this may be correct, so far as the generation of implicature is concerned it seems to play a role not totally different from the other maxims, and it will be convenient, for the present at least, to treat it as a member of the list of maxims.

There are, of course, all sorts of other maxims (aesthetic, social or moral in character) such as ‘Be polite’ that are also normally observed by participants in talk exchanges, and these may also generate nonconventional implicature. The conversational maxims, however, and the conversational implicature (CI) connected with them, are specially connected.

Now, it is time to show the connection between the CP and maxims, on the one hand, and conversational implicature on the other. A participant in a talk exchange may fail to fulfil a maxim in various ways, which include the following:

1. He may quietly and unostentatiously VIOLATE a maxim; if so, in some cases he will be liable to mislead.
2. He may OPT OUT from the operation both of the maxim and of the CP; he may say, indicate, or allow it to become plain that he is unwilling to cooperate in the way the maxim requires. He may say, for example, *I cannot say more, my lips are sealed*.
3. He may be faced by a CLASH: he may be unable, for example, to fulfil the first maxim of Quantity (Be as informative as required) without violating the second maxim of Quality (Have adequate evidence for what you say).
4. He may FLOUT a maxim; that is, he may BLATANTLY fail to fulfil it. On the assumption that the speaker is able to fulfil the maxim and to do so without violating another maxim (because of a clash), is not opting out, and is not, in view of the blatancy of his performance, trying to mislead, the hearer is faced with a minor problem: how can his saying what he did say be reconciled with the supposition that he is observing the overall CP? This situation is one that characteristically gives rise to a conversational implicature; and when a conversational implicature is generated in this way, I shall say that a maxim is being EXPLOITED.

To work out that a particular conversational implicature is present, the hearer will reply on the following data: (1) the conventional meaning of the words used, together with the identity of any references that may be involved; (2) the CP and its maxims; (3) the context, linguistic or otherwise, of the utterance; (4) other items of background knowledge; and

(5) the fact (or supposed fact) that all relevant items falling under the previous headings are available to both participants and both participants know or assume this to be the case (Grice, 1975). There are three types of conversational implicature: standard conversational implicature via observing maxims, particularized conversational implicature via flouting maxims and generalized conversational implicature. The rationale of using Conversational Implicature as a theory for this research is very obvious; the conversational implicature has been used to account for humour and in particular the genres of jokes (as quoted in Tabersky, 1998). Although the participants of a conversation expected to follow the cooperative principle and maxims, Grice has also given four options which do not go hand-in-hand with this expectation: he may violate a maxim, he may opt-out the conversation, he may be faced with a clash with other maxims or he may flout or blatantly fail to fulfil a maxim. In his popular article; *Logic and Conversation*, Grice has explained how the maxims could be flouted and the production of irony, metaphor, meiosis, and hyperbole occurs. Grice has not mentioned about the emergence of humour in this work. Although Grice never elaborated on how humour might be produced through violations of the maxims, it may be done (Tabersky, 1998). The place where unsaid communication takes place is the point in the joke where its funniness resides. In other words, humour includes a pragmatic component that utilizes implicature as its means (Tabersky, 1998), but the literature proves that this is not the only way of understanding the occurrence of humour. For instance, Dolitsky observes that the members of a society have internalized a set of rules governing their behaviour, both verbal and physical and that humour may also come from the breaking of these rules. Other scholars have observed that humour does indeed break Grice's maxims (Tabersky, 1998). In particularized conversational implicature, Grice has used the term flouting, when a speaker flouts a maxim, he does not observe it but he won't be accused of violating it. This is introduced by him as the maxim is *exploited*. Then, it is clear that the humour is a somewhat uncooperative act in terms of Grice's CP. We approach Udurawana's humour stories with this pragmatic background.

As the present study intends to use two theoretical concerns viz, Conversational Implicature with the Conventional Humour Theory, the basics of this humour theory must also be explored at least to a certain extent before starting our analysis. The humour has been divided into three main types namely:

1. Superiority
2. Incongruity
3. Relief

*Superiority* theories of humour have a long tradition and can be traced back to ideas of Plato and Thomas Hobbes (see Martin, 2007 for an overview, see Dynel in this volume). The basic claim of superiority theories is that events that are perceived as funny usually involve another subject at whom the humour is targeted. In other words, laughing about something implies laughing about somebody, giving one a sense of superiority. Scorn, derision, mockery,

and even aggression, therefore, are essential elements of humour. The theory has been adapted to include aggression as a playful form. This means that within humour, *superiority* can be established on a playful level, reducing the seriousness of the aggressive behaviour (as quoted in Dynel, 2013). Feeling of delight at others' expense is studied in detail by Hartmann *et al* where it is proposed that the *superiority* over someone else's misfortune is a type of humour that interacts with other factors, such as envy, resentment or status in order for Schadenfreude to appear. In humour, this phenomenon might serve the following purposes: ascertaining a positive image, dealing with fellow competition and finally either distancing group members from one another or allowing for social common grounds and understanding, with the latter one being most often the humour tactics (as quoted in Hood, 2015).

Following Koestler's (1964) early formalization, *Incongruity* has been defined in several ways and according to different approaches, some of which are more rooted in linguistics, others in psychology and others still in between the two fields. As a result of this, the technical definitions of *incongruity* that have been put forward thus far differ slightly or sometimes quite significantly from one another (Koestler, 1964). The cause of laughter in every case is simply the sudden perception of the incongruity between a concept and the real objects which have been thought through in some relation, and laughter itself is just the expression of this incongruity (as quoted in Hood, 2015, p. 110). Incongruity and other humour aspects have differently been discussed by Attardo (2000) in his studies in a deep manner in contrast to the present analysis.

*Relief* theory is also called psychoanalytical theory, originates with Sigmund Freud (1993/1905). Freud studied the various techniques of jokes and concluded that, for many types, the pleasure experienced was the same as for children at play. However, as people grow older, the intellect or reason places restrictions on this pleasure principle so that the convoluted forms of jokes become a way of "sneaking" past the censor of reason. Slips of the tongue (also called "Freudian slips") and double entendres are examples of this kind of self-subterfuge. Similarly, there exist to Freud a group of jokes called tendency jokes, which do not have so innocuous a source of pleasure. These jokes typically are of a sexual or malicious nature. By joking about these things, repressed impulses can be aired. Laughter is evoked by the relief that comes from the removal, albeit momentary, of a restraint (Taberski, 1998).

Now let us look at these three humour theories in a very simple way to make more comprehensible the present work: *superiority* is we gain the pleasure laughing at people based on failing or defect that they possess or based on some sort of a misfortune that they are suffering from. *Incongruity* means the humour comes from a paradox, verbal or social inappropriateness. Simply in accordance with the *relief* theory, humour generates through the efforts of mental relief. The *Gricean* CI and the Conventional Humour Theory discussed above will guide as the theoretical foundation to do the present analysis in order to understand how humour occurs in the language with special reference to joke stories.

## METHOD AND OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study is to analyse the joke stories of *Udurawana* by using the theory of Humour and the theory of Conversational Implicature (CI) in order to examine the ways and means of generating humour and to examine the types of maxims flouted. *Gricean* theory of Conversational Implicature is used as the main theoretical concern for this analysis. The approach of the research is descriptive qualitative and the analytical technique is descriptive analysis. We have not used any interactive instruments in this work as we have collected all stories from different blogs and websites in a random manner. Out of hundreds of stories, we selected only ten joke stories randomly based on only one rationale: that was to make sure that the stories contain at least a dialog or interacting more than one character each other. In other words, the researcher wanted to make sure that there are at least one or more interactants other than the key figure (*Udurawana*) in all stories. Otherwise, we are not able to consider it as a conversation to apply the *Gricean* theory. Ten joke stories of *Udurawana* were used as primary data in this research.

## DISCUSSION

In this analysis, we will examine three aspects of the stories in our selected sample while giving the prominence to *Gricean* theory of conversational implicature; the type of conversational implicature that implicated in the utterance and the maxim flouted or violated and the humour aspect that these pieces of utterances have produced.

### Flouting the Maxim of Quality and Generating the Humour

The first story is a very small conversation. Therefore, the full story is quoted here:

01) *Udurawana gets ready, wears a tie, coat, goes out, climbs a tree, and sits on the branch regularly.*

*A man: why do you do this?*

*Udurawana replies, "I've been promoted as branch manager."*

In this joke, the main person who is under discussion (*Udurawana*) is not uttering a deliberate lie or not opting out to reply to the man who asks why he does so. As it seems no clash between maxims to observe one to violate the other. But, obviously, he flouts the maxims of the conversation purposely in order to generate humour. The literal meaning of the term 'branch manager' is an executive who oversees a division or office of a large business or organization, operating locally or with a particular function (Kenton, 2019). Therefore, no relation can be seen between the behaviour of this person and the answer given to the question at all. This appears as flouting the maxim of *relation*. The *relation* maxim says that it must be relevant. But, it is not true; he has flouted the maxim of *quality* by stating a blatant lie. How can we understand this? He says he has been "promoted to a branch manager". The answer is relevant because it has provided a missing variable as the question demands. Whereas, it is not stating the truth that he has been PROMOTED to a BRANCH MANAGER. *Udurawana*

clearly knows that climbing a tree does not warrant one to get a promotion. Nobody will get a promotion by simply climbing a tree. But also nobody will become a branch manager by simply sitting on the branch of a tree. Therefore, looking at these two aspects, it is very clear that *Udurawana* is lying. He does so deliberately to create humour. The humour is created as the audience compares the homonyms of the branch in branch manager (as a position someone occupies in a company) and in a tree branch. The conversational implicature of this utterance conveys in a specific context and it is generated overtly not observing the maxim of *quality*. Hence, this can be regarded as the particularized conversational implicature. The humour comes through the flouting of *quality* maxim and the speaker created an incongruity of the utterance, which enunciates the funny aspect as the incongruity.

### Presupposition and Humour

02) *Udurawana: Do you have colour TVs?*

*Shop owner: "Sure"*

*Udurawana: Give me a green one, please.*

First, we can take into account the special context of these pieces of utterances. *Udurawana* wanted to buy a television and he goes to the shop where televisions are sold. The shop owner has a presupposition that this customer is aware of the colour TVs, and *Udurawana* has a presupposition that the meaning of colour TV is different physical colours. Thus, the answer received from the shop owner is still relevant to the question raised by *Udurawana*, the buying request made by him is also certainly relevant to the context, but at once it also appears as irrelevant. So that someone may think that this is flouting of the *relevant* maxim. Now, is *Udurawana* irrelevant in asking for a green TV? If this is scrutinized, the answer is 'No', he is relevant, because the topic at hand is of colour TVs, and *Udurawana* is asking for a green one; green is a type of colour. The two are trading on the same topic (Colour TV). But, *Udurawana* is not truthful. He is not being honest in asking for a green TV. That is where the flouting maxim of *quality* comes in. It is clear that here too it is the maxim of *quality* that has been flouted. As this is being a special context, the implicature is particularized and the maxim flouted is obviously *quality*. Incongruity appears as the funny aspect of this story. We could recall the four options that had been mentioned as an exception to the cooperative principle by *Grice* in presenting his theory; he may flout or blatantly fail to fulfil a maxim, his audience must realize that it is not for any of the above three<sup>1</sup> reasons and that speaker is still flouting the cooperative principle. Such a situation gives rise to a conversational implicature whereby a speaker induces a special meaning to his utterance that is different from the literal meaning of the word stated (Taberski, 1998: 3). This is very clear in the above joke story. This flouting gives the rise to humour in this small story.

### Being Specific among Quantity, Quality and Relation Maxims

03) *Udurawana: How long does it take to fly to Amritsar?*

*Airport customer care officer: just a second.*

*'Thank you' says Udurawana and cuts the line.*

Udurawana wanted to find out the flying duration from Sri Lanka to Amritsar and he made this telephone call to find out this piece of information from the Sri Lankan Airport. The officer who picked the phone does not know the flying duration and she wanted to find it from somebody else while keeping Udurawana online until she gets back. She was co-operative and even polite to say *just a second*. The primary meaning of this utterance is not its literal meaning. If we assume that the caller being unaware of the telephone etiquette, he derived the literal meaning of this utterance which does not make sense in this context and it leads to humour which flouted the maxim of *quantity*. But, actually, Udurawana is not truthful even in this story as he needs to generate humour through this. To follow the principle of CP, we should be informative. According to Grice, in a conversation, we should make our contributions as informative as is required for the current purpose of the exchange (Xiaofang, 2012, p. 53). If we take just the literal meaning, the above realization is not informative; if the airport officer could have provided some more information, there is no room to generate such a humorous additional meaning and this gap is used by the storyteller to generate humour through this joke. But, this does not mean that this is not informative. The reflected implicature is obvious as particularized conversational implicature and the flouted maxim is fundamentally *quality*, but some may argue that the maxim of *relation* also flouted to a certain extent and even the *quantity*. The funny aspect or the humour theory that appeared in this situation is incongruity and our attention to violating or flouting maxims to generate humour is taken into another direction through this kind of stories because of the degree of the surprising effect is highest when all maxims are flouted (Chadafi, 2014).

04) *The homeowner was delighted with the way Udurawana had done all the paintwork on his house.*

*"You did a great job," he said as he handed Udurawana his fees.*

*"Also, in order to thank you, here's an extra 500 bucks to take the wife out to dinner and a movie."*

*Udurawana declined, saying, "No, I can't accept that."*

*"I insist," said the man. "It would make me very happy if you do it."*

*"Well," said Udurawana reluctantly, but with appreciation, "If you really don't mind it, I'll do it."*

*Later that night, the doorbell rang and it was Udurawana, standing there in clean clothes, holding a bouquet of flowers. Thinking that Udurawana had forgotten something he asked, "What's the matter, did you leave something behind?"*

*"Nope," replied Udurawana. "I'm just here to take the wife out to dinner and a movie like you asked."*

This conversation is truly informative, but not as is required. Hence, it produces a particularized conversational implicature which created surprising humour. The only missing information is the possessive pronoun/determiner 'your'. This joke proves that an ordinary story can be transformed into a hilarious one by employing pragmatic components. In other words, components of pragmatics are employed to turn an ordinary story into a hilarious one (Nguyen, 2018, p. 45) Udurawana has misunderstood that he was asked to take the house owners' wife for a dinner and movie. The piece of

utterance that generated this implicature is "to take the wife out to dinner and a movie". This conversation has flouted the maxim of *quantity* as it seems at once, but the underlying matter speaks to us that showing Udurawana is not truthful here, hence, it is again the flouting of *quality* maxim appears in the story. And, the aspect of the humour is incongruity. In our analysis, we have not come across other aspects of humour such as superiority and relief so far. It is said that incongruity is the easiest way used to create humour (Nguyen, 2018, p. 15). In this story, the joke is worked out by the hearer. A pragmatic account of humour falls into the category of incongruity theory as the violation of Grice's conversational maxims is an act of incongruous with the behaviour expected of interlocutors. Grice's CP expresses the condition that interlocutors observe sub-maxims, and if they do not, then it is to convey some non-literal meaning by their utterances and not because they have opted out of the conversation. Grice shares this common point with the other incongruity theories that being that the joke must be 'worked out' by the hearer (Taberski, 1998, p. 29) as it appeared in this conversation between the house owner and Udurawana.

05) *Udurawana: "I would like to buy a pair of pink curtains." The salesman assured him that they had a large selection of pink curtains. Finally, he selects a lovely pink floral print.*

*The salesman: what size curtains you needed?*

*Udurawana replies, "Fifteen inches."*

*"Fifteen inches?" asked the salesman. "That sounds very small, what room are they for?"*

*Udurawana tells him that they aren't for a room; they are for his computer monitor.*

*The surprised salesman replies, "But, sir, computers do not have curtains!"*

*Udurawana says, "Hellllloooooooo...I've got Windows!"*

The funny aspect, incongruity is obvious in this and the implicature comes through the utterance of "I've got Windows". In a way this is an irony; if it is an irony, the maxim flouted should be the *quality*. But, someone may think that the *relation* maxim is directly flouted as the windows in a house that require curtains have no relation with the operating system of a computer. However, the maxim flouted is *quality* as he is not truthful in this joke too. The core of the funny aspect lies in the lexical item of *windows* in this context. As we already have pointed out in the introductory part of this paper, the stories of Udurawana are entertained by a specific social stratum in Sri Lanka as the language is confined to such jargon in these stories. What is generally known is the humour can be either intentional or unintentional. Udurawana is obviously intentional in creating humour in his jokes. The obvious case of intentional humour is, of course, the formal telling of jokes while unintentional humour may result from anything from a slip of the tongue to a case of mistaken identity (Taberski, 1998, p. 10). Such unintentional humour probably comes under the theory of relief and the humour stories that we have taken into scrutiny are intentional and, therefore, fall into incongruity by and large. As the ultimate reply by Udurawana is socially inappropriate, the funny aspect of this joke also has realized in the category of incongruity. As usually this story also implicates the particularized conversational implicature.

### Humour Emerges through Analogy by Flouting the Maxim of Quality

The next story which is under discussion is unique in terms of its nature as it derives the humour through analogy.

06) *Udurawana: What is this?*

*Udurawana's son: Powdered orange juice*

*Udurawana: Powdered orange juice?"*

*Son: Yeah, Dad. You just add a little water, and you have fresh orange juice.*

*A few minutes later, in a different aisle Udurawana asked again, "And what is this?"*

*Son: Powdered milk*

*Udurawana: Powdered milk??"*

*Son: Yeah, Dad. You just add a little water, and you have fresh milk!*

*A few minutes later, in a different aisle.*

*Udurawana: And have a look here!! **Baby Powder!!** What a country, what a country!"*

The context of this conversation between *Udurawana* and his educated son is in a USA supermarket. Powdered orange and powdered milk are analogized with baby powder and the particularized implicature derives from the piece of the utterance of *Baby powder*. The literal meaning of this noun phrase is the powder used for babies. But *Udurawana* intentionally analogized it into an implicated meaning and the humorous expression of this additional meaning is, *adding a little water into it, you can have a baby*. The expression also brings out that another implicated meaning; the USA is an amazing country that can produce babies through baby powder. The surface outlook of the story shows that the maxim flouted is *relation* as there is no relation between the answers provided by the son for his father's questions and the analogized deliberate conclusion by father. The explanatory evidence provided by his son is misused to produce the humour by *Udurawana* and this is the argument that this conversation flouts the maxim of *quality* since he consciously avoids the truth in order to produce the incongruence humour.

08) *Udurawana got the 4<sup>th</sup> child. He fills data in the birth certificate*

*Mother: Sri Lankan.*

*Father: Sri Lankan.*

*Baby: Chinese.*

*Officer: "How come you write "Chinese" when both parents are Sri Lankans?"*

*Udurawana: "Ahhh. I read in the newspaper, that every 4<sup>th</sup> person born on the Earth now is a Chinese."*

This is another analogy made by *Udurawana* based on a presupposition. The news report uses a sort of hyperbole to highlight the highest population of China in the world taking a grammatical metaphor and it indicates that the one-fourth of the current world population is in China and it does not mean that whoever born in wherever is a Chinese if it is the fourth one in the family. But, the implicated meaning to *Udurawana* comes through the statement of "every 4<sup>th</sup> person born on the Earth now is a Chinese". If this is not a hyperbole, the flouted maxim is *relation* as there is no relation between the news report highlight and the *Udurawana's* response. But, this is being a hyperbole, the maxim flouted is

*quality*. As this is being a grammatical metaphor, the primary meaning is not the literal meaning. The literal meaning is the additional meaning derived by *Udurawana* in contrast to other situations where particularized conversational implicature was encountered. The funny aspect is as usual incongruity as *Udurawana's* response is inappropriate to the situation.

### Differentiating the Maxims of Relation and Quality

07) *The doctor told Udurawana to run eight kilometres a day for 300 days TO LOSE WEIGHT.*

*After 300 days, Udurawana called the doctor to report he had lost the weight, but he had a problem; "I'm 2400 KMs away from home."*

It is a challenge to decide what the maxim flouted in this story is. The information provided by the doctor is very good enough in order to keep on the CP and also it is truthful, so they do not flout or violate *quantity* and *quality* maxims. Some may argue that the manner of expression is ambiguous but it is common sense that each day after running eight kilometres he needs to get back home and he was not asked to run towards a single direction without coming back. The implicature comes from the utterance of "I am 2400 KMs away from home". This statement implicates that he has been running every day without coming back home and he has misunderstood the doctors' advice. Hence, we may conclude that this is a flouting of *relation* maxim as the action made by the patient is not related to the piece of medical advice given by his doctor. This implicature is also falling into particularized conversational implicature as it happens in a specific context and flouts a maxim. But, here again, our attention must be paid on the truthfulness of *Udurawana's* reply. In that sense, again this is flouting of the *quality* maxim.

### Humour Comes through either Violating the Maxims or Flouting Maxims

09) *Getting off finally, the plane arrives at Heathrow. Udurawana was excited and anxious to get off. So he went to the door before anyone and prepared to jump down.*

*"Wait sir, wait" cried an air hostess.*

*"75 Kilograms" replied Udurawana and jumped off the plane!*

According to *Chadafi* (2014, p. 2) Cooperative Principle is flouted for various reasons like for joking or achieving politeness. As it appears, people may think that the flouting of maxims is not different from the violation. At once, we may feel that this humour story (09) violates the maxim of *relation*. The flouting of the maxim is different from violation of the maxims because it occurs when the hearer really does not understand with the violated utterances, while the flouting of maxims occurs when the speaker intentionally stops to use maxims to flatter the hearer to deduce the meaning named implicature (*Khosravizadeh & Sadehvandi*, 2011, p. 123). In the above story, *Udurawana* is intentional to stop the use of *relation* maxim to flatter the air hostess. Hence, it is not a violation, but a flouting of *relation* maxim. But, he does this

without being truthful and ultimately it leads to flouting of the *quality* maxim. The particularized implicated meaning is not derived based on the phonemic realization but on a phonetic realization. The theory of humour that this story falls into is also incongruity.

The last story that is taken into account in this study is significant in contrasting flouting and violating maxims further.

10) *Udurawana: I haven't slept all night in the train.*

*Friend: why?*

*Udurawana: Got upper berth.*

*Friend: Why didn't you exchange?*

*Udurawana: Oye, there was nobody to exchange within the lower berth.*

*Udurawana's* friend violates the maxim of *manner* while *Udurawana* flouting the maxim of *relation* if this joke was not intentional. Before asking the question, "*Why didn't you exchange*", he should have raised another question to ask whether there was anybody in the lower berth, but intentionally avoiding this information, he has violated the *quality* maxim. In answer to the question, *Udurawana* flouts the maxim of *relation* as it seems. But, one can argue that these are intentional humour stories so that both participants of the conversation are aware of the stopping of maxim and therefore both are flouting, but not violating maxims. We will come to this point at the conclusion with a new theoretical contribution to justify this ambiguity in humour stories. The very clear fact is in the jokes where the intentional humour contains, the maxim flouted is *quality* at the deep level though there are some surface-level sudden perceptions that are not correct.

## FINDINGS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The typical maxim flouted is the *quality* as a percentage in *Udurawana's* stories, and in some stories, two or three maxims are flouted on the surface structure of the story, but in the deep structure, the flouted maxim is merely *quality* as all these are intentional jokes. Flouting of *quality* maxim remains in almost 100% if it is presented quantitatively, but the flouting of other maxims is almost zero in our analysis when taking all the stories as intentional jokes. We would like to raise serious several issues with reference to *Grice's* theory based on intentional humour stories. They are also relevant to humour theories. All the ten stories of our sample fall into the incongruity category in terms of their humour aspects when we look at the surface level. But, taking into consideration the theory of superiority, we could jump into an interim conclusion that almost all these stories, people laugh at *Udurawana* in a way by considering his uncommon linguistic responses and behaviours. In that sense, incongruity cannot account for the funny aspects of these stories. The other very significant issue is working with fabricated characters to analyse violations or flouting of maxims; in this case, *Yamaguchi's* hypothesis is very valid. He takes the position that the narrator of the joke is guiltless of such transgressions instead; he proposes the "*Character-did-it*" hypothesis in which it is the characters within the joke who violate the maxims (Taberski, 1998, p. 9).

In order to analyse such genres, *Taberski* proposes another addition to established principles by *Grice*; it is the *humour principle* as a new maxim. The *Gricean* theory can largely be employed to analyse joke stories that bring out humour. Humour must seriously be studied as it is not at all frivolous (as quoted in Verschueren, 2017, p. 315). Although *Dynel* (2013, p. 105) has concluded that the incongruity theory of humour gives the best insight into the workings of humorous impoliteness from a linguistic perspective, we realized that it is also contradictory based on the present analysis. Some extreme conclusions quoted by *Chadafi* (2014) in his study are also not absolute truths in terms of *Gricean* theory when as appeared in the data of this study. To cite some such conclusions, "only scalar implicature is used in the jokes" (Chadafi, 2014), "multiple flouts of maxims produce a strong surprising effect of the word meaning to create a good joke" (Chadafi, 2014), "the highest percentage of the violation of *Grice's* maxims is *quality* maxim and the lowest percentage of the violation of *Grice's* maxims is on *quantity* maxim" (Chadafi, 2014). This last one still cannot be compared with the present work as it speaks about the violation of maxims while the current study finds only flouting of maxims. Thus, this study concludes that the implications of the *Gricean* CI and the Conventional Humour Theory are not such positive with reference to the present sample as there are many limitations in these theories to understand the present sample with the aim of how humour emerges through the language. Finally, the particularized implicature is the prominent implicature type that accounts for jokes and the *quality* maxim is the most flouted maxim in intended humour stories such as *Udurawana's* jokes. Also, we may need even further improvements of the *Gricean* Conversational Implicature to understand such genres in a better way while further proving humour as an uncooperative act in the language use. According to *Chadafi*, the degree of the surprising effect is highest when all maxims are flouted, but we have been able to prove that flouting merely the maxim of *quality* can produce a higher degree of suppressing effect while producing a higher level of humour. We also hereby further conclude that *Udurawana's* joke stories as intentional humour stories. Thus, integrating *humour principle* that was proposed by *Taberski* into *Grice's* theory and using the "*Character-did-it*" hypothesis to analyse this kind of genres have better implications to understand intentional humour stories such as *Udurawana's* jokes that are under consideration in this study in the world context where the 'humour' has been a serious phenomenon in Formal teaching and learning contexts.

## END NOTE

1. 'Above three' means the other three choices that *Grice* has given in his theory.

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## APPENDIX

### APPENDIX-1-DATA SOURCES

[https://www.google.com/search?q=A+CLOSE+LOOK+AT+JOKES+IN+PRAGMATIC+ASPECT+by+Ho+Dang+Tuong+Nguyen1&rlz=1C1AVFC\\_en\\_762\\_762&oq=A+CLOSE+LOOK+AT+JOKES+IN+PRAGMATIC+ASPECT+by+Ho+Dang+Tuong+Nguyen1&aqs=chrome.69i57j69i64l2.1031j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=A+CLOSE+LOOK+AT+JOKES+IN+PRAGMATIC+ASPECT+by+Ho+Dang+Tuong+Nguyen1&rlz=1C1AVFC_en_762_762&oq=A+CLOSE+LOOK+AT+JOKES+IN+PRAGMATIC+ASPECT+by+Ho+Dang+Tuong+Nguyen1&aqs=chrome.69i57j69i64l2.1031j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)

<http://vihilulanka.blogspot.com/2008/12/udurawana-jokes.html>

<https://jokeslanka.blogspot.com/2008/07/udurawana-jokes-collection.html>

<http://www.lankalibrary.com/phpBB/viewtopic.php?f=6&t=255>

<http://www.geocities.ws/piyalpy/UDURAWANA.htm>

### APPENDIX-2 (FULL TEN STORIES USED IN THE ANALYSIS)

#### Story-1

*Udurawana* gets ready, wears a tie, coat, goes out, climbs tree, and sits on the branch regularly.  
A man asks why he does this.  
*Udurawana* replies, "I've been promoted as branch manager."

#### Story-2

*Udurawana* wanted to buy a Television and went to the shop.  
*Udurawana*: "Do you have colour TVs?"  
Shop owner: "Sure."  
*Udurawana*: "Give me a **green one**, please."

#### Story-3

*Udurawana* calls Air Lanka to find out the flying time from Sri Lanka to Amritsar.  
*Udurawana*: "How long does it take to fly to Amritsar?"  
Customer care officer: "**Just a second**,"....  
"Thank you." says *Udurawana* and cuts the line.

#### Story-4

The homeowner was delighted with the way *Udurawana* had done all the paintwork on his house.  
"You did a great job," he said as he handed *Udurawana* his fees.  
"Also, in order to thank you, here's an extra 500 bucks **to take the wife out to dinner and a movie**."  
*Udurawana* declined, saying, "No, I can't accept that."  
"I insist," said the man. "It would make me very happy if you do it."  
"Well," said *Udurawana* reluctantly, but with appreciation, "If you really don't mind it, I'll do it."  
Later that night, the doorbell rang and it was *Udurawana*, standing there in clean clothes, holding a bouquet of flowers.  
Thinking that *Udurawana* had forgotten something he asked, "What's the matter, did you leave something behind?"  
"Nope," replied *Udurawana*. "I'm just here **to take the wife out to dinner and a movie** like you asked."

#### Story-5

*Udurawana* enters a store that sells curtains.  
He tells the salesman, "I would like to buy a pair of pink curtains."

The salesman assured him that they had a large selection of pink curtains. He showed him several patterns, but Udurawana seemed to be having a hard time choosing.

Finally, he selects a lovely pink floral print.

The salesman asked what size curtains he needed.

*Udurawana* replies, "Fifteen inches."

"Fifteen inches?" asked the salesman. "That sounds very small, what room are they for?"

*Udurawana* tells him that they aren't for a room, they are for his computer monitor.

The surprised salesman replies, "But, sir, computers do not have curtains!"

*Udurawana* says, "Hellllloooooo...I've got Windows!"

### Story-6

Udurawana was visiting his son who was in America for the very first time.

He was at a local food store going up and down the aisles with his son.

*Udurawana* asked, "What is this?"

*Udurawana's* son, "Powdered orange juice"

*Udurawana* a bit confused, "Powdered orange juice?"

Son: "Yeah, Dad. You just add a little water, and you have fresh orange juice."

A few minutes later, in a different aisle *Udurawana* asked again, "And what is this?"

Son, "Powdered milk"

*Udurawana*, "Powdered milk??"

Son: "Yeah, Dad. You just add a little water, and you have fresh milk!"

A few minutes later, in a different aisle.

*Udurawana*, "And have a look here!! Baby Powder!! What a country, what a country!"

### Story-7

The doctor told *Udurawana* to run eight kilometers a day for 300 days TO LOSE WEIGHT.

After 300 days, *Udurawana* called the doctor to report he had lost the weight, but he had a problem; "I'm 2400 kms away from home."

### Story-8

*Udurawana* got the 4<sup>th</sup> child. He fills data in the birth certificate  
Mother: Sri Lankan.

Father: Sri Lankan.

Kid: Chinese.

Officer: "How come you write "Chinese" when both parents are Sri Lankans?"

*Udurawana*: "Ahhh... I read in the newspaper, that the every 4<sup>th</sup> person born on the Earth now is a Chinese."

### Story-9

Getting off finally, the plane arrives at Heathrow. *Udurawana* was excited and anxious to get off. So he went to the door before anyone and prepared to jump down.

"Wait sir, Wait" cried an air hostess.

"75 Kilograms" replied *Udurawana* and jumped off the plane!

### Story-10

*Udurawana*: I haven't slept all night in the train.

Friend: why?

*Udurawana*: Got upper berth.

Friend: Why didn't you exchange?

*Udurawana*: Oye, there was nobody to exchange within the lower berth.