

# A Pragmatic Study of Humor

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## Abstract

Linguistically speaking, the concept of humor, which seems to be vast for people, has specific dimensions by which it is generated including: puns, irony, sarcasm, wittiness, and contrastive utterances in relation to the speakers of those utterances. It is about how the extra linguistic elements dominate the situation and the delivery of humor. The researchers of the present paper intend to show how the selected literary extract can be subjected to a linguistic pragmatic analysis and then be explained by applying the incongruity theory of humor by Kant (1790) in order to show the ways or the mechanisms that lead to the flouting, infringing and the violation of Gricean maxims can consequently lead to the creation of humor. Despite the fact that the present paper is qualitative in nature, some tables are provided by the researchers in order to reach into a better, deeper and more understandable analysis. Investigating the ways Gricean maxims are flouted, infringed and violated to create humor, and showing how the imperfect use of language sometimes create unintentional humor are the researchers' aims of this paper.

**Keywords:** pragmatics, humor, implicature, Gricean maxims, *Measure for Measure*

## 1. Introduction

During the sixteenth century, the idea of humor led to its use to refer to any behavior that may contain any kind of deviation from the social norms. Then, the word 'humor' was used to refer to an odd and weird person because such people were often viewed as objects of laughter, or ridicule. Calling people objects of laughter and ridicule is considered the first step to associate the word 'humor' with funniness and laughter and by this the word humor entered the field of comedy (Martin, 2007, p.21). Many theories are suggested to analyze and explain the nature of humor like: the incongruity theory, the superiority theory, psycholinguistic theory and the cognitive or semiotic theory. The present paper involves a pragmatic analysis of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (1604).

The reason behind selecting this play is attributed to two main points: first, the language of this play is very stylish, highly specific and difficult to understand which represents a challenge to the researcher of this study. Second, this play is argued to be a problematic play in which critics neither categorize it as a tragedy nor as a comedy. As such, they prefer to consider it as a tragi-comedy (Hyland, 2011, p.69). Besides, this paper will be different from other studies since humor has not been pragmatically studied to analyze *Measure for Measure* by Shakespeare using Gricean maxims and one of the most dominant theories of humor which is that of Kant's incongruity theory.

Accordingly, the researchers have the interest to show how humor can be created in its most tragic scenes and how these scenes transform from tragedy to comedy due to the ironic and sarcastic remarks the characters make. While, the researchers of this paper intend to explain the mechanisms of making certain sentences ironic or sarcastic by applying the incongruity theory of humor they choose and examining the flouting, infringing and the violation of Gricean maxims to see what implicature the speaker intends to deliver, as an attempt to answer the research question which state; how do Gricean maxims flouted, infringed and violated to create humor? And how does the imperfect use of language sometimes create unintentional humor.

On the whole, his paper is different from other studies, i.e. Conversational Implicature Analysis of Humor in American Situation Comedy Friends by Xiaosu (2008), Pragmatic Analysis of Ironic Humour in Black Books by Savkanicova (2013) and Verbal Humor in TV-Sitcom Blackadder: A Pragmatic and Rhetorical Analysis by Kalliomaki (2005), since, first, humor has not been pragmatically studied to analyze *Measure for Measure* by Shakespeare using Gricean maxims. Second, all of these studies neither apply the most dominant theory of humor which is that of Kant's incongruity theory nor the other two; relief and superiority theories in their analyses.

## 2. An overview of pragmatics

Chapman & Clark define pragmatics as "an aspect of the study of language in use. It is concerned with how language users interact, communicate and interpret linguistic behavior" (2014, p.1). In the 1970s, pragmatics was developed as a

subfield of linguistics. Besides, it encompasses speech act theory, turn taking, presupposition, politeness, implicature, talk in interaction and many other approaches to language behavior in philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and linguistics (Blackwell, 2003, p.12). In 1940s and 1950s, H. P. Grice, (a British philosopher) provided and outlined for the first time his famous theory of implicature that is still dominant (a shorter version of which was published in 1975 in a paper entitled 'Logic and Conversation'). In this theory, Grice intended to explain how hearers arrive at the implied meaning, from what is said to what is meant (Davis, 1998, p.1). Implicature has its own field in pragmatics and now it is used in linguistics as part of the study of conversational structure. Grice (1975) used the term "implicature" for the first time to account for what a speaker can suggest, mean, or imply as separate from what a speaker literally says. Two notions of implicature are distinguished by Grice and they both received different treatments; conventional implicature and conversational implicature. Conventional implicature, according to Grice, is determined by the conventional meaning of the words used in a particular context in which the same implicature is always conveyed, regardless of context. Conversational implicature, on the other hand, is defined as "a set of principles that govern cooperative verbal exchange of information" (Brooks & Kempe, 2012, p.147). In (1975), Grice sets four maxims he called the "conversational maxims." Those maxims can be used to describe how implicature can be derived from participants. For Grice, those maxims are only valid for language use that is meant to be informative; for instance, categories such as small talk and snap chat (Renkema, 2004, p.20). Grice summarizes these maxims as follows:

1. Maxim of quantity: make your contribution as informative as required (for the current purpose of the exchange). Do not make your contribution more informative than required.
2. Maxim of quality: do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
3. Maxim of relation: be relevant.
4. Maxim of manner: avoid obscurity of expression, avoid ambiguity, be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity), and be orderly (Grice, 1975, pp.45-46).

When Grice first listed the four famous maxims in 1975, he was aware that there are many occasions when people fail to observe them. Therefore, he also listed five ways in which maxims are not observed (Thomas, 1995, p.64).

- Flouting a maxim.
- Violating a maxim.
- Opting out of a maxim.
- Infringing a maxim.
- Suspending a maxim.

According to these five ways, people may fail to observe a maxim because they chose to cheat others or they chose to lie intentionally or unintentionally. Or maybe they are unable to speak clearly and honestly, or simply they do not want to seem ignorant and try to give false information.

### 3. What is humor?

Humor is defined as "the ability to smile and laugh, and to make others do so...humor takes many forms ranging from the casual level of the joke told to friends to the sophistication of a Shakespearean comedy" (Walker, 1998, p. 3).

Humor began as a Latin word "humorem" which means liquid or fluid. In physiology, the word humor is used to refer to the fluids or the liquid of the body for, instance, aquatic and vitreous humors of the eye. Hippocrates, the Greek physician, who said to be the father of medicine, mentioned the four basic fluids, i.e. 'humors' of the body; blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile (Martin, 2007, p.20). Later on, the idea that these four basic fluids 'humors' owned specific psychological qualities and the access of each one of them created a specific kind of temper or mood. The dominations of blood caused a person to have cheerful temperament (Ibid. p.21).

The fluctuations of these bodily fluids have been viewed as the cause of more temporary mood states (joyful mood). Besides, the meaning of humor as a temporary mood still exists nowadays when we speak of others by being "in a bad humor", or "a good-humored person."

Ultimately, the word 'humorist' and 'the man of humor' were used to refer to whoever was the object of laughter. Until the mid-nineteenth century, the word humor came to be seen as a talent involving the ability to create humorous situations to make others laugh. Humor also has many other functions besides being a form of playful fun and entertainment. These interpersonal functions can be contradictory and paradoxical. It can be used as a way of improving social cohesion within a group or community, or it can also be a way of excluding a member or members from a group or community. It can be a mean to reduce or reinforce status differences among people, expressing agreement and disagreement. Humor has developed as a universal means of communication and a social influence with various functions (Martin, 2007, p.20).

The production of humor varies according to individuals and their interaction with others. Most people value individuals who are especially good at making them laugh because they enjoy so much the positive emotion of fun. This kind of people, who appreciate humor and humorist, we describe them as having 'a good sense of humor'; the capacity to respond to humorous situations either by laughing or smiling (Morrison, 2012, p. 25).

Humor can be divided into three broad categories; jokes, "something said or done to provoke laughter" (Snyder, 2011, p.51), spontaneous conversational humor (intentionally created by individuals during the social interaction of course),

and the last category is accidental or unintentional humor (utterances or actions which raise laughter but they are not meant to be funny (Morrison, 2012, p. 25).

Many definitions are provided to define humor throughout history such as the definition of Montgomery which says "Humor is a perceptual and a cognitive process involving an ability to recognize and appreciate the absurd and incongruous aspects of a situation" (1997, p.170). It was also defined by Langston Hughes as "laughing at what you haven't got when you ought to have it" (As cited in Walker, 1988, p.101).

During social interaction, Wayer and Collins (1992) argue that despite the fact that people say and do things to amuse others, yet so much laughter and mirth also may arise from actions or utterances that are not meant to be funny. Nilsen and Nilsen (2000), English literature professors, refer to these utterances and actions as "accidental humor" or "unintentional humor."

Nilsen and Nilsen divide accidental humor into physical and linguistic forms. On the one hand, accidental physical humor involves minor incidents and pratfalls, for instance, a slipping person on a banana peel or spilling juice on someone's shirt. These types of incidents are considered to be funny only if they occur in surprising and incongruous manner and the person who experiences these events is not seriously hurt or awkwardly embarrassed.

On the other hand, accidental linguistic humor originates either from errors in logic or mispronunciation or misspelling. The main difference between the intentional and unintentional humor lies in the fact that in the case of unintentional humor, the humorous effect is achieved without the intent or the knowledge of the speaker. As for the intentional humor, the speaker intends to say or do things to create hilarious situations (As cited in, Martin, 2007, p.14).

#### 4. Methodology

The incongruity theory of humor will be followed by the researcher of this paper. The incongruity theory was first introduced by Aristotle, but because it did not fit with the superiority theory, he did not develop it. In Aristotle's recognition of the incongruity as a source of laughter, he mentions that one way of making people or listeners laugh is to leave them make specific expectations and then say or show them something they do not expect (Moreall, 1983, p.16).

Then, the incongruity theory remained as it was first introduced by Aristotle. In the eighteenth and the nineteenth century, Kant with Schopenhauer, it's most famous German proponents, began to work on it and they developed it in their own way separately. In (1790), Kant believed that laughter always arises from "the sudden transformation of strained expectations into nothing", and focused in his discussion on jokes, emphasizing the physical pleasure we enjoy when the incongruity is perceived (McDonald, 2012, p.51). He also said that humor is composed of a clash of two divergent elements and a resolution in which the surprise is considered as an essential component (Rishal, 2002, p.279).

Kant's theory was extended by William Hazlitt, an English writer, who wrote about the disjunction between what is said and what ought to be, and says "the essence of the laughable [then] is the incongruous, the disconnecting of one idea from another, or the jostling of one feeling against another" (Hazlitt, 1841, p.7). Much like Kant, Schopenhauer proposed an incongruity theory of humor. According to Kant, humor essence is located in the evaporation of an expectation. While according to Schopenhauer, the essence is located in the incompatibility between one's sensory knowledge and one's abstract knowledge of things.

Schopenhauer's version of the incongruity theory suggests that when one is stuck by some kind of clash between a concept and a perception, that are "supposed" to be of the same thing, humor arises. It may be mentioned that Schopenhauer's theory of humor is considered as a sudden contrast theory of laughter (Roedelein, 2006, p.540).

Philosophers who support the incongruity theory believed that humor and laughter are derived from a surprise, or a sudden shock. They argued that when two incompatible things clash, and the points where we mix the two incongruous planes and the 'jokes' spark, we laugh. Whereas some theorists argue that for humor to be present, we only need an incongruity; while others argue that for humor to be present we need an incongruity and a resolution of that incongruity. This second argument is called "configuration theory." But several theorists suggest that another element should be added for humor to be present, the "intelligent perception", because humor is said to be based on intellect and one has to understand and comprehend the differences between the inconsistencies before he/she can appreciate the humor. It's worth to mention that all the incongruity theorists argued that we laugh because our line of thoughts has been surprisingly switched from one context to another (Rishal, 2002, p. 279).

Kant's incongruity theory of humor is best explained and understood in relation to Gricean maxims to see how their violation, infringing and flouting create humor and humorous situations. Both the violation and the flouting with the three other ways of the non-observance of Gricean maxims create two levels of meaning; the speaker meaning and the utterance interpretation meaning. The focus in the first level is on the producer or the initiator of the message. While in the second level, the focus is on the hearer or the receiver of the message.

Also, we should not ignore the fact that the process of interpreting any message, in the case of humor, should involve moving between meaning levels: from the first one, the abstract meaning (also called the decontextual meaning) to the second one, the utterance meaning (also called the contextual meaning). The abstract meaning, on the one hand, concerns what a word, a phrase or a sentence could mean. Or simply we can say the dictionary meaning of the words. The contextual meaning, on the other hand, could generate alternative interpretations that may never come across our minds. They are not obvious but they are context depending (Thomas, 1995, pp.2, 3).

These levels of meanings are explained pragmatically by applying Kant's incongruity theory of humor to humorous contexts. But, first of all, we should know what "incongruity" means as a term. Drucker (2015) defines the term "incongruity" as "a discrepancy, a dissonance, between what is and what 'ought' to be, or between what is and what everybody assumes it to be."

Consider the following conversation, between a lady and a sales clerk, given by Oaks (1994);

A lady went into the clothing store and asked:

-“May I try on that dress in the window? ”

-“Well” replied the sales clerk doubtfully

-“Don't you think it would be better to use the dressing room? ”(As cited in Chiaro, 2010, p.39).

This conversation can be analyzed by applying the incongruity theory of Kant in which the lady intends something by saying “in the window”, but the sales clerk surprises her with his hilarious answer. Since he violates the quantity maxim, which states “don't make your contribution more informative than required”, and gives much more information which confuses the lady, he provokes laughter by his unexpected ironic and sarcastic answer.

## 5. Data analysis

This section is intended to examine an extract from Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. This examination is based on specific steps; first, identifying the utterances which include the flouting and violation; second; second, investigating how these utterances are flouted and violated by identifying what maxim is flouted, infringed or violated and showing how each maxim generates its own implicature produced by the characters; third, applying the incongruity theory of humor on the flouted and the violated utterances; and the last step is to differentiate between the creation of intentional and unintentional humor produced by the characters.

### 5.1 Lucio's conversation with the two gentlemen (I, ii, 1-34)

(1) *First Gentleman.* *Well, there went but a pair of shears between*

(2) *us.*

(3) *Lucio.* *I grant; as there may between the lists and the*

(4) *velvet. Thou art the list.*

(5) *First Gentleman.* *And thou the velvet; thou are good velvet; thour't*

(6) *A three-piled piece, I warrant thee. I had as life*

(7) *life be a list of an English kersey, as be piled,*

(8) *as thou art piled, for a French velvet. Do I*

(9) *speak feelingly now?*

(10) *Lucio.* *I think thou dost; and, indeed, with most paimfull*

(11) *feeling of thy speech. I will, out of thine own*

(12) *confession, learn to begin thy health; but,*

(13) *whilst I live, forget to drink after thee.*

(14) *First Gentleman.* *I think I have done myself wrong, have I not?*

(15) *Second Gentleman.* *Yes, that thou hast, whether thou are*

(16) *tainted or free.*

*Enter bawd [Mistress Overdone]*

(17) *Lucio.* *Behold, behold, where Madam Mitigation*

(18) *comes! I have purchased as many diseases*

(19) *under her roof as come to\_\_*

(20) *Second Gentleman.* *To what, I pray?*

(21) *Lucio.* *Judge.*

(22) *Second Gentleman.* *To three thousand dolors a year.*

(23) *First Gentleman.* *Ay, and more.*

(24) *Lucio.* *A French crown more.*

(25) *First Gentleman.* *Thou art always figuring diseases in me, but*

(26) *thou art full of error. I am sound.*

(27) *Lucio.* *Nay, not as one would say, healthy, but so*

(28) *sound as Things that are hollow. thy bones*

(29) *are hollow; impiety has made a feast of thee.*

- (30) *First Gentleman.* How now! Which of your hips has the most  
 (31) profound sciatica?  
 (32) *Mistress Overdone.* Well, well; there's one yonder arrested and  
 (33) carried to prison, was worth five thousand of  
 (34) you all.

(Shakespeare 1964, pp, 39-40).

### 5.2 Contextualizing the selected extract

Lucio, in this extract, is in conversation with two of his friends, the two gentlemen. Lucio's friends come to Vienna to discuss political and religion business in a public place. Lucio and the gentlemen joke on one another. When the first gentleman is accused by Lucio, by being a "wicked villain", he says that they are both made from the same fabric (cloth), and they are as bad as one another. While Lucio and the gentlemen continue to joke about diseases that they have acquired by visiting brothels, in specific, Mistress Overdone's brothel, Mistress Overdone enters to tell them that Claudio has been arrested and sentenced to death, (Llnes, 2004, pp.6, 7).

### 5.3 Analyzing the selected extract

This extract contains six utterances that reflect the non-observance of Gricean maxims. The first utterance is said by the first gentleman to Lucio in line (6), which says "A three-piled piece," The second utterance is said by the second gentleman to Lucio in line (22), which says "dolors." The third utterance is said by Lucio to the first gentleman in line (24), which says "A French crown more." The fourth utterance is said by Lucio to the first gentleman in line (27-29), which says "Nay, not, as one would say, healthy: but so sound as things that are hollow; thy bones are hollow; impiety has made a feast of thee." The fifth utterance is said by the first gentleman to Mistress Overdone in line (30-31), which says, "How now, which of your hips has the most profound sciatica?" The last utterance is said by Mistress Overdone to the first gentleman in line (33-34), which says, "Was worth five thousand of you all." Table 1 clarifies the utterances and their producers:

Table 1. Utterances and their producers

No.	producer	Utterance	form
1.	The first gentleman	A three-piled piece	phrase
2.	the second gentleman	Dolors	word
3.	Lucio	A French crown more.	sentence
4.	Lucio	Nay, not, as one would say, healthy: but so sound as things that are hollow; thy bones are hollow; impiety has made a feast of thee.	sentence
5.	the first gentleman	How now, which of your hips has the most profound sciatica?	sentence
6.	Mistress Overdone	Was worth five thousand of you all.	sentence

### 5.4 Examining Flouting, Infringing and the Violation of Gricean maxims in the selected extract

The first gentleman, in the first utterance, violates the maxim of relation, which states "be relevant." This violation occurs when the first gentleman says an irrelevant word, "piled", that has nothing to do with the subject they are talking about, where he should say "pilled"; the subject is about a comparison of the velvet fabric while the first gentleman mentions the French disease of baldness. Whereas in the second utterance, the second gentleman flouts the maxim of manner, which states "avoid obscurity of expression, avoid ambiguity, be brief and be orderly", as well as the maxim of relation, which states "be relevant." This flouting occurs when the second gentleman says an ambiguous word, "dolors", which either means coin (dolor), or sorrow (Nagarajan, 1964, p.40).

The violation of the relation maxim occurs when Lucio mentions an irrelevant issue, i.e. Money, when he says "A French crown more", in the third utterance, while the conversation is about diseases. Whereas, in the fourth utterance, he violates the maxim of quality, which states "do not say what you believe to be false." This violation occurs when Lucio says absolutely false thing that the first gentlemen's bones are hollow. Scientifically, bones cannot be hollow as Lucio says when he describes the bones of the first gentleman.

Once again, the first gentleman violates the maxim of relation in the fifth utterance. This violation occurs when the first gentlemen asks Mistress Overdone an irrelevant question where he should answer Lucio directly. The relation maxim is

violated by Mistress Overdone, in the last utterance. This violation occurs when Mistress Overdone gives an irrelevant answer to the first gentleman; the first gentleman asks her about her health while she tells him about Claudio's arrest.

### 5.5 The different meanings caused by implicature in the selected extract

A comparison is made by the first gentleman in which he compares Lucio and himself to the velvet fabric, in the first utterance. He said that they are both made from the same fabric. Lucio does not agree with him and said that he, Lucio, is the velvet while the first gentleman is the border of the velvet. Thus, as a response to Lucio's disrespected attitude, he reacts in a very witty way and says that he would rather be the border of the velvet and be a plain healthy English man than a fine gentleman suffering from the French disease of baldness. Here, Shakespeare through the first gentleman shows how a single word can be manipulated in a way to change the meaning upside down. Normally, it seems that the first gentleman agrees with Lucio, but in fact, he mocks Lucio when he says "*A three-piled piece*", which means having no hair on the head (bald), instead of saying "*A three-pilled piece*", which means a fabric that consists of three layers. This manipulation is represented by the pun technique that the first gentleman uses to mock Lucio. This technique shows the talent of Shakespeare and the way he deals with language to create such an amusing and humorous situation.

The second gentleman's reply when Lucio asks him to guess how many diseases he has caught in Mistress Overdone's brothel, in the second utterance when he says "*dolors*", is very vague and irrelevant. The second gentleman says "*dolors*" which means 'sorrow' or 'grief'. Basically, intends to say dollars (which refer to coins) (Nagarajan, 1964, p.40). Yet, in both cases; what he says and what he means, are considered irrelevant and vague because the subject is about diseases. This ambiguity is created due to the pun he uses unintentionally.

It seems that Lucio agrees with the first gentleman when the later says "*Ay, and more*", in the third utterance, when he hears the second gentleman says "*To three thousand dolors a year.*" But, in fact, Lucio intends to say "*A French crown more*", as a response to the first gentleman when the later calls him bald! This witty answer is meant by Lucio as if he wants to say that the trick that the first gentleman has earlier when he has called him bald, does not fool him and he will reply soon. The first gentleman thinks that Lucio is joking as usual, in the fourth utterance. But in fact, this utterance represents a reaction by Lucio to the first gentleman. Obviously, Lucio insists to respond to the first gentleman's mocking towards him. In this utterance, Lucio is belittling from the first gentleman by his sarcastic remarks when he says that the first gentleman's bones are hollow and describes his way of living as "sinful" and this sinful manner of living has eaten you up.

The question introduced by the first gentleman to Mistress Overdone, in the fifth utterance, asking her about her health, is considered as a normal question. But in fact, this utterance is meant by the first gentleman to respond to Lucio's disrespect manner towards him. The first gentleman, in this utterance is asking Mistress Overdone which one of her hips is affected with the acutest form of sciatica, but in fact this utterance is actually meant and intended by the first gentleman to Lucio. By doing so, the first gentleman is actually asking Lucio this question. This disease, in the Latin comedy, is known and related only to a woman with bad reputation. But the first gentleman uses it as a response to Lucio's scathing but in an indirect way to tell Lucio that he is as bad as Mistress Overdone and both of them might be affected with this kind of diseases.

In the last utterance, Mistress Overdone feels that she is belittled by both, the first gentleman and Lucio. Thus, despite the fact that Mistress Overdone's utterance sounds normal, while, actually this utterance is meant to belittle from Lucio and the first gentleman when she says that though Claudio is sentenced to death, but he was worth five thousand men like you! She said this because she thinks that the previous question is meant to mock her not Lucio. The following table (2) clarifies humor types used by the characters, and the non-observance mechanisms:

Table 2. Humor types and the non-observance mechanisms

No.	producer		Non-observance mechanism	Non-observed maxim	Humor type
1.	The first gentleman		Violation	Relation	wit
2.	The second gentleman		Infringing	manner, relation	pun
3.	Lucio		Violation	Relation	wit
4.	Lucio		Violation	Quality	sarcasm
5.	The first gentleman		Violation	Relation	wit
6.	Mistress Overdone		Violation	Relation	wit

### 5.6 Applying the incongruity theory of humor in the selected extract

In accordance with the incongruity theory of humor, humor is created when one expects something and gets a totally different thing but in a funny way. In particular, this creation is basically a conflict between what is expected and what actually occurs where this conflict should defiantly be humorous and involves humor types. Thus, in the first utterance, humor provokes when Lucio expects that the first gentleman agrees with his saying that he is the velvet and the first gentleman is the border of the velvet. But this expectation is actually faded when Lucio realizes that his friend, the first gentleman, is mocking him by his witty answer, but in an indirect way. While, in the second utterance, Lucio expects that the second gentleman approves with him in that brothels bring many diseases, but this expectation is also vanished when he realizes that the second gentleman actually utters a very confusing and irrelevant word in his reply. Therefore, this confusing reply evokes humor due to the pun the second gentleman uses unintentionally.

The first gentleman expects that he fools Lucio when he calls him bald indirectly in the third utterance. Consequently, humor arouses when the first gentleman realizes that Lucio has got the trick he makes and this utterance is meant for him by Lucio as a warning that he is going to be belittled by Lucio sooner or later. While In the fourth utterance, humor provokes when the first gentleman expects that Lucio is joking as usual. However, his expectation is faded when he realizes that Lucio intends to scorn him by his sarcastic remarks.

Humor arouses, once again in the fifth utterance, when Lucio expects that his friend, the first gentleman, is satisfied with the fact that he is better, smarter and wittier than him. While in fact, this expectation is vanished when he realizes that the witty question, which is said to Mistress Overdone, is actually meant for him. Whereas In the last utterance, Lucio and the first gentleman expect that Mistress Overdone does not have the audacity to respond to the first gentleman's scorn to her. While in fact, humor evokes when hearers realize that the last part of this utterance, said by Mistress Overdone, is actually a response to Lucio and the first gentleman. Mistress Overdone responds in a very nice and witty way and the funniest thing is that they, Lucio and the first gentleman, do not even notice that they have been belittled and mocked by her!

### 6. Conclusion

This paper provides a pragmatic and a linguistic analysis of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. The analysis is based on the non-observance of the Gricean maxims in relation to the most dominant theory, *Kant's* incongruity theory of humor. The researchers of this paper have come up with the following findings: the flouting, infringing and the violation of Gricean maxims have the possibility of creating humorous situations in certain contexts. The analysis has shown that, interestingly, sometimes two maxims can be non-observed at the same time. According to the selected extract, the most violated maxim is the maxim of relation. Consequently, the most frequent humor type used to violate Gricean maxims is that of wit. Besides, the researchers found that shrewd characters, such as Lucio and the first gentleman, always violate Gricean maxims and create intentional humor. While the naïve characters, such as the second gentleman due to his imperfect use of language represented by the pun he uses, tend to flout and infringe the Gricean maxims unintentionally, and creates unintentional humor.

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