



People's Democratic Republic of Algeria Ministry of Higher  
Education and Scientific Research  
Echahid Cheikh Larbi Tebessi University-Tebeſsa  
Faculty of Letters and Languages  
Department of Letters and English Language



**Unveiling Humor: A Pragmatic Analysis of Non-observance of Gricean Maxims in  
Puns in the Tunisian Sitcom Choufli Hal**

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language Sciences

**Candidates:**

Nora HAMDI  
Radhia FISSAH

**Supervisor:**

Ms. Asma DOUAIBIA

**Board of Examiners**

**President :** Dr. Aïssa HAMZAOUÏ (MCB, Larbi Tebessi University- Tebeſsa)

**Supervisor:** Ms. Asma DOUAIBIA (MAA, Larbi Tebessi University – Tebeſsa)

**Examiner:** Ms. Chaïma BRAHAM (MAA, Larbi Tebessi University- Tebeſsa)

2023/2024

## **Acknowledgement**

First and foremost, we thank God who guided us on the right path throughout the work and inspired us to take the right steps and the right reactions. Without his help this work would not have ended.

Our thanks go in particular and with an enormous happiness and extreme respect to our supervisor Ms. Asma Douaibia. We would like to express our deep gratitude to her for her availability, patience, understanding and interest in our subject of work.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the faculty members at Laarbi Tebessi University, Department of English, for their dedication and mentorship. Their wisdom, encouragement, and commitment to our academic development have been truly inspiring.

To the members of the jury, we express our sincere gratitude for their time and expertise in evaluating our work. Their constructive criticism and feedback have been invaluable in shaping the final outcome of this dissertation.

We also want to acknowledge the assistance and cooperation of all those who contributed to this research project, whether through providing resources, participating in discussions, or offering assistance in any form.

Lastly, we extend our deepest gratitude to our parents for their unconditional love, encouragement, and sacrifices. Their unwavering support and belief in us have been the driving force behind our academic journey.

## **Dedication**

### **In The Name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful**

As I reach the culmination of this significant journey, the strangest and most extraordinary experience I have ever lived, filled with unexpected challenges and moments of growth, I would like to dedicate this research paper to those who have been instrumental in its completion.

To God, whose blessings have provided me with the time, energy, and perseverance to complete this work. His guidance and grace have been the cornerstone of every success I have achieved, and for that, I am eternally grateful.

To myself, for the resilience and determination to face the challenges that came my way. The countless hours spent and the difficult sacrifices I had to make. And yet, I found the strength from within to fulfill.

To my loving husband and dear children Ghaith and Zaid, who have been incredibly patient and understanding throughout this journey. Your support has been unwavering, even when my time and attention were diverted away from you. I appreciate your sacrifices and your belief in me.

To my dear parents, sisters and brothers, whose constant faith in my capacities has driven me to strive for excellence and to never give up, even when times were tough.

Lastly, to my partner, Radhia. This journey would not be fulfilled without your sincere assistance.

**NORA Hamdi**

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to:

My very dear parents who sacrificed for me to succeed,

my brothers: Mohammed and Nabil,

my sisters: Sihem, Soraya, Lamia and Chaima,

my partner in this work, Nora and her family,

my best friends: Nourhane and Marwa,

all my colleagues and friends whom I have met throughout my academic journey.

**RADHIA Fissah**

## Table of content

Acknowledgement.....	i
Dedication.....	ii
Dedication.....	iii
Table of content.....	iv
List of Figures .....	ix
List of Tables .....	x
List of abbreviations .....	xi
Abstract.....	1
General Introduction.....	2
Background of the Study.....	2
Statement of the Problem .....	4
Aim of the Study.....	5
Research Questions .....	5
Significance of the Study .....	4
Methodology.....	5
Structure of the Dissertation.....	6
Chapter One: Literature Review .....	8
Section One: Pragmatics and Cooperative Principle.....	8
Definition of Pragmatics .....	8
The Emergence of Pragmatics as a separate Field.....	11
Context .....	13

<i>Utterances Vs Sentences</i> .....	13
<i>Definition of Context</i> .....	15
<i>Types of Contexts</i> .....	17
Cooperative Principle.....	19
Grice’s Conversational Maxims .....	20
<i>Observable Maxims</i> .....	20
Maxim of Quantity.....	20
Maxim of Quality .....	21
Maxim of Relation.....	21
Maxim of Manner .....	21
<i>Non-observable maxims</i> .....	21
Flouting: .....	22
Violation:.....	22
Infringing:.....	23
Opting out:.....	23
Suspending: .....	24
Implicature.....	25
<i>Conversational implicature</i> .....	26
<i>Conventional implicature</i> .....	26
Section Two: Humor and Puns .....	27
The Nature of Humor .....	27
Unattainable the Concept Humor .....	28

Different Attempt to Define humor .....	31
Major Theories of Humor .....	32
<i>The Semantic Script Theory of Humor</i> .....	32
<i>The General Theory of Verbal Humor</i> .....	34
<i>The Superiority Theory</i> .....	35
<i>The Release Theory</i> .....	35
<i>Incongruity- Resolution Theory</i> .....	36
Humor and Sitcoms.....	37
Definition of Puns .....	38
Types of Puns .....	40
<i>Homophonic Puns</i> .....	40
<i>Homographic Puns</i> .....	40
<i>Paronymic Puns</i> .....	40
<i>Polysemic Puns</i> .....	41
<i>Antonymic Puns</i> .....	41
<i>Contaminated puns</i> .....	41
Humor in Puns .....	41
Puns in Arabic .....	42
Translation of Puns .....	43
Chapter Two: Methodology, Data Analysis and Discussion .....	44
Sectio One: Methodology .....	44
Research Design: .....	44

Profile of the Tunisian Sitcom Choufli Hal.....	45
Background and Characters of the Tunisian Sitcom “Choufli Hal” .....	46
Population and sampling Technique:.....	48
Data collection.....	50
Method of Data Analysis.....	51
<i>Content Analysis</i> .....	51
The New Subcategory of Non-observance: Defying Maxim.....	54
Procedures of Data Analysis .....	55
Figure 1: Data Analysis Process .....	55
Data Analysis and Interpretation.....	57
The Non-observance Maxims in Choufli Hal .....	57
Maxim of Quality.....	58
<i>Violation of Quality</i> .....	59
Maxim of Quantity.....	63
<i>Flouting Quantity</i> :.....	64
Maxim of Manner .....	66
<i>Flouting Manner</i> .....	67
<i>Infringing Manner</i> .....	71
<i>Violation of Manner</i> .....	73
<i>Defying Manner</i> .....	75
Relation Maxim .....	76
<i>Flouting Relation</i> .....	77



<i>Infringing Relation</i> .....	79
<i>Opting out Relation</i> .....	82
Non-observance of More than One maxim .....	83
<i>Flouting Manner and Quality</i> .....	83
<i>Flouting Manner and Relation</i> .....	84
<i>Infringing Quantity and Relation</i> .....	85
<i>Infringing Manner and Relation</i> .....	86
<i>Defying Manner Flouting Quantity</i> .....	87
<i>Flouting Quality, Manner and relation Maxims</i> .....	89
Section Three: Summary of the Results, Limitations, Implications and Recommendations ...	92
Limitations of the Study .....	97
Implications of the Study .....	97
Recommendation for Future Researches .....	98
General Conclusion .....	99
References .....	101
Appendices .....	106
Résumé .....	123
الملخص .....	124

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1</b> Data Analysis Process.....	55
--	----

## List of Tables

<b>Table 1</b> Maxim Non-observance in Choufli Hal.....	57
<b>Table 2</b> Quality Maxim Non-observance.....	58
<b>Table 3</b> Quantity Maxim Non-observance.....	63
<b>Table 4</b> Manner Maxim Non-observance.....	66
<b>Table 5</b> Relation Maxim Non-observance.....	77

**List of abbreviations**

**CP:** Cooperative Principle

**GTVH:** General Theory of Verbal Humor

### **Abstract**

Humor plays a significant role in the Tunisian sitcom *Choufli Hal*, often stemming from language tricks like breaking some communication rules called Gricean maxims, especially in puns. This study dived into the realm of humor within this show, focusing on the passages where characters bend these rules of communication in their use of puns to create humor. To achieve this aim, a descriptive research design was adopted, using content analysis as the primary methodological instrument. The study employed purposive sampling in which 41 selected conversations were carefully examined from all the 135 episodes of the sitcom. The objective was shedding light on the extent to which the main characters in the sitcom disregard Gricean maxims and the specific types of non-observance maxim commonly associated with puns for humor creation. The findings highlighted that the most common type of rule breaking is “infringing relation” followed by “flouting manner”. Notably, each type of rule breaking is associated with a specific character. These findings not only contribute to the broader body of knowledge in humor research but also offer valuable implications for understanding the intricacies of the Grice’s Cooperative Principle. This can be observed in comic contexts, particularly in sitcoms where the CP’s maxims can be broken differently to create humor depending on many factors like context and the character’s personality.

***Keywords:*** humor, non-observance, Gricean maxims, puns, sitcom

## General Introduction

### Background of the Study

Humor is a universal and complex phenomenon that permeates various forms in human interactions. It is encountered in everyday interactions, workplaces, television programs, theaters, print media such as newspapers and magazines, advertisements, and more prominently, in comedy performances (Berger, 1993). However, for humor to be comprehensible it must be built upon a foundation that is familiar for all people engaging in or viewing the interaction.

It has been a long time since linguists started to delve in the subject of humor and try to understand its nature; the pioneer figures who did so were Plato and Aristotle. They were the first who claimed that humor is derived from a hierarchical position by creating the butt of a joke. Ultimately, they introduced the word “superiority” when referring to humor creation (Attardo, 1994). Many theories on humor creation and perception were based on this background. However, providing a universal definition to humor has been tremendously hard to be achieved which made Attardo (1994) claim that the concept of humor is impossible to be defined. Despite this, scholars in the field of linguistics, succeeded to explain forms that humor can take like verbal and non-verbal where the former relies, mostly, on linguistic elements whereas the latter relies, mostly, on non-linguistic elements. Attardo (1994) stated that Cicero divided verbal humor (the focus of this study) into anecdotes, puns, caricature, ambiguity, false etymologies, proverbs, allegory, metaphors, and irony (Attardo, 1994). Puns, in particular, serve as a linguistic manifestation of verbal humor, often eliciting laughter through wordplay and semantic ambiguity. In 1973, the philosopher Paul Grice proposed four conversational maxims (quality, quantity, manner, relation) that underpin an effective communication to avoid ambiguity or misunderstanding; however, according to Attardo (1994), these maxims are often broken deliberately in order to create semantic ambiguity

which leads to humorous effect. The defiance of the four maxims can happen through five different types which are referred to as non-observance maxims (flouting, violation, infringing, opting out, suspending).

Humor may differ from one culture to another and each culture and society have their unique form of humor (Raskin, 1985). In the realm of televised entertainment, sitcoms are considered a fertile soil for exploring linguistic humor which can be studied in the context of cultural nuances. The strategic violation of the conversational principle is considered a key ingredient in the humor that sitcoms thrive on. Characters in sitcoms often break the conversational maxims of Grice intentionally or unintentionally to create humorous effects which may arise from incongruity, misunderstanding or misinterpretation. Puns may be a cornerstone of humor creation in sitcoms as they are a delightful way to break the maxims by using wordplay and double meaning.

Many studies have been conducted to analyze how humor can be created by violating, flouting, infringing, opting out or suspending one or more of the four Grice's conversational maxims in sitcoms. However, many researches, that were conducted by the researchers, were restricted to analyze the most famous American, British or Chinese sitcoms with modest attempts to study the Arab well-known sitcoms. Moreover, a small attention was given to the context in which the utterances took place and many of them did not tackle the personality of the characters which may have a great influence on their utterances. Additionally, some of these researches have taken laugh trucks as a criterion of whether the utterance is humorous or not. Some of them are; Zhao Xue (2017) who conducted research on the Chinese sitcom "Home with Kids", where he found that flouting and violating appear to be used most frequently, with the Maxim of Quality. In the same ground, Markéta Dančová (2019) conducted a study on "Big Bang Theory" where she came to the conclusion that the most used type of non-observance maxims is flouting, especially Quality flouting. In 2020, Boumara and

Boumara conducted a study on the American sitcom “Mind your Language” and the results showed that whenever there is a flout/violation of maxim(s) in any of the conversations, there is a funny effect. Another research is the one conducted by Bara Yamalita Oksinia et.al (2021) in their analysis of the British sitcom “Mirenda”. They found that 82,5% of the humorous utterances appear in the form of flouting.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Sitcoms or situational comedies is a genre of TV shows that have been a fundamental and enduring part of television programming for a long time. Their main role is to offer a light-hearted entertainment for the audience by presenting societal norms, values or personal experiences in a humorous way.

Our study seeks to investigate the non-observance maxims responsible for humor creation in an Arabic setting, analyzing utterances that contain puns, as a way of humor creation and the effect of context and characters’ personality on humor creation in the Tunisian sitcom “*Choufli Hal*” which has been repeatedly aired since 2005. This sitcom offers a diverse tapestry of characters who create situations of incongruity, misunderstanding or misinterpretation when not observing the four conversational maxims of Grice in their utterances.

### **Significance of the Study**

The importance of this research and its findings lies in their role in enhancing our understanding of humor and how it is created in a different context, culture and language apart from English, British and Chinese. Taking the previous theories and researches as a foundation to build on, we will add insights to comprehend how humor is created in Arabic sitcoms. Additionally, the study can deepen our understanding of pragmatic principles in humorous utterances by focusing on non-observance of Gricean Maxims in puns. It elucidates how the maxims of the cooperative principle are being strategically defied mainly in the use



of puns to create humor, and this can enrich the pragmatic theory. Moreover, it provides a case study for cross-cultural analysis highlighting the ways in which humor can be culturally specific. Furthermore, it contributes to the field of media and entertainment studies by providing a detailed analysis of humor within sitcoms shedding the light on some aspects that enable a sitcom to reach a fundamental success. Also, a comparison with the results of the previously mentioned researches, which concluded that flouting maxims is the most frequently occurring with humorous utterances, can be of a great significance.

### **Aims of the Study**

The aim of this study is to unravel the intricacies of humor creation in the Tunisian sitcom “*Choufli Hal*”. To meet this aim, the following objectives were stated: ascertaining the most prevalent type of non-observance maxims contributing to humor creation, particularly when using puns, identifying the conversational maxims that are not observed when creating humor in a form of puns and lastly, identifying the reasons that make the main characters deviate from observing the four Gricean maxims when using puns.

### **Research Questions**

To achieve the aim of this study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What nonobservance maxims (flouting, violation, infringing, opting out, suspending) contribute to creating semantic ambiguity in the sitcom?
2. Which conversational maxim (quality, quantity, manner, relation) is frequently not observed when using puns in the process of humor generation?
3. Is it equated with both main characters “Slimane and Sbouai”?

### **Methodology**

This study employs a descriptive research design that integrates qualitative with quantitative approach using content analysis as a primary tool for analyzing the collected data. A directed content analysis was the best choice as it helps to analyze pun as a way to create

humor within the context of the Tunisian sitcom and their relationship with the non-observance of Gricean maxims based on previous theories. Moreover, our study is supported by numerical data in a form of percentages to detect the frequencies of occurrence of each non-observance maxims with conversational maxims in utterances that contain puns.

The sampling method we adapted in this research is non-probability sampling. Since random sampling techniques would not allow reaching the objectives of the study, we opted at a purposeful sampling where we selected from the 135 episodes of the Tunisian sitcom “*Choufli Hal*” only utterances that were made by the two main characters “Sbouai and Slimane”. These utterances must contain puns as a way to create humor that would be analyzed through the non-observance maxims.

### **Structure of the Dissertation**

This research includes two main chapters. Chapter one consists of the review of the literature concerning the research variables and it is divided into two sections. The first section provides a theoretical background of the variable “Grice’s Cooperative Principle and Non-observance Maxims”. It highlights the study of Grice’s maxims and the way they can be broken (non-observance maxims) within the field of Pragmatics. The second section deals with humor and its types. It also provides the most five prominent theories which aimed at explaining how humor is created and can be interpreted and understood. Additionally, a theoretical review of “puns” is included in this section highlighting its strong relation with humor.

Chapter two, on the other hand, is devoted for the practical part of this dissertation and it consists of three sections. The first section provides the methodological framework that was followed which includes the research design, profile and background of the Tunisian sitcom *Choufli Hal*, the profile of its characters, population and sampling techniques, data collection and the method of data analysis. The second section is concerned with the analysis of the

collected data and the third section contains a thorough discussion of the results of the analysis providing answers to the research questions followed by some recommendations for future studies.

## **Chapter One: Literature Review**

Humor is a means of entertainment that can occur in our daily life in many forms. It is considered a very subjective field of study because of its intricate nature mainly because it is interpreted differently from one individual to another. Whether they speak the same language, live in the same country, belong to the same generation or from different generations, understanding and interpreting humorous utterances can differ significantly as it is subjected to many factors, the most fundamental one is the context which is the main aspect of pragmatic studies. This Pragmatic account in particular explores humor, how it may be created and how it can be interpreted based on using puns and nonobservance of the Grice's Maxims in sitcoms.

### **Section One: Pragmatics and Cooperative Principle**

In this section a thorough overview on pragmatics, as a branch of linguistics, is presented. It provides a clear-cut distinction between its different concepts mainly; context, sentence and utterance. This section also focuses on the Cooperative Principle as a key element in the field of pragmatic, highlighting its importance in a successful communication.

#### **Definition of Pragmatics**

“What did they mean by that?” is a commonly asked question among interlocutors and it represents the core inquiry of Pragmatics. Pragmatics labored from the womb of semantics where the latter focuses on studying the intrinsic meaning of an utterance whereas the former is concerned with studying the meaning that is not intrinsic and which results from the interaction of the linguistic expression with the context in which it is used. Trask (1999) explained that an utterance like; “Susie is a heavy smoker” can be understood in many different ways. Understanding what someone meant by such a statement requires not just knowing the literal meanings of the words used; i.e. semantics, and how they are arranged in the sentence i.e. syntax, but also involves considering who said the statement, the context in

which it was said, and making inferences about their motives and intended message. This statement carries the intrinsic meaning that Sussie smokes a large quantity of tobacco every day, however, this meaning changes radically when this sentence is spoken in response to three distinct remarks made by Jessica in various situations. First, when Jessica is advocating for a smoking ban in offices and asks, "Can you ask Susie to sign this petition?" Second, when she's attempting to set up a blind date between Susie and Dave, a non-smoker who dislikes cigarette smoke, and inquires, "Would Susie like to go out with Dave?" Third, when Jessica, a medical researcher, seeks smokers to participate in medical tests and asks, "Do you know of anybody I could ask?". In the first case, Susie probably will not sign the petition, so there's no reason to ask her. In the second case, Dave and Susie will not get along, so it is pointless to set them up. In the third case, Susie would be a good fit for the study. We cannot say that the same sentence means all these things. Instead, each meaning comes from how the sentence is used in different situations. This is what pragmatics is all about: how words change meaning depending on the context (Trask, 1999).

With the development of linguistic studies, pragmatics became a very interesting field to be studied and examined. It hooked the interest of many scholars who provided numerous definitions for this field. Levinson (2001) defined pragmatics as: "the study of the relation between the structure of a semiotic system (notably language) and its usage in context, and, along with semantics, forms part of the general theory of the meaning." (p. 1). He added that within the theory of meaning, pragmatics focuses primarily on implicit meanings, inference, and unspoken implications, examining how language structure relies on this context of assumptions and inferred information (Levinson, 2001). It is then, a discipline that investigates the fundamental connections between language and context which is essential for understanding the meaning of the language. It explores how language users match sentences with suitable contexts. Mey (1993) could not agree more when she suggested that

"pragmatics" examines the way language is influenced by societal factors in human interactions. Therefore, it can be concluded that pragmatics can be considered a highly significant field in the process of studying language. In this regard, Yule (1996), in his book "Pragmatics", stated some pros of studying language via pragmatics which are; the ability to talk about the intended meaning of people, their assumptions, purpose or goals and the action they perform while speaking. He identified four key areas within the realm of pragmatics:

1. Pragmatics is concerned with deciphering speaker meaning.
2. Pragmatic analysis encompasses the study of contextual meaning.
3. It explores how more meaning is conveyed beyond explicit words—a study of implicit or invisible meaning.
4. It investigates how relative distance impacts the expression of meaning, exploring the dynamics between what is explicitly stated and what remains implicit.

All the key areas Yule identified in the area of pragmatics share one keyword which is "meaning". For Birner (2013), Pragmatics deals with the kind of meaning that is tricky to pin down and is not defined in dictionaries. According to her, this meaning can change depending on the situation it is used in. The same words can carry different meanings in different contexts or to different people. Even a simple phrase like "a nightmare" can refer to different things depending on the sentence in which it is used in. All of these aspects fall within the scope of pragmatics. Generally, pragmatics involves meanings that are not straightforward, rely on context, involve making inferences, and may not depend on strict truth conditions. (Birner, 2013).

From these definitions it is agreed upon that pragmatics is a very deep discipline to investigate. It is all about inferring the unsaid and understanding what people mean when they talk or write. It looks at how the situation, context or society affect their utterances.

Essentially, it is about finding the hidden meanings behind what someone says or writes.

## **The Emergence of Pragmatics as a separate Field**

Scholars and students started showing interest in studying Pragmatics since 1980's. The historical roots of this discipline go back to ancient Greek and Roman academic discussions. The emergence of the term "pragmatics" within linguistic philosophy was in the 1930s, with scholars such as Charles Morris, Rudolf Carnap, and Charles Peirce who contributed to the development of semiotics. Morris, influenced by Peirce, categorized the study of signs into three main areas: syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. He classified syntax as the most abstract, pragmatics as the least abstract and placed semantics in between (Huang, 2014). Moreover, the broad definition Morris gave to pragmatics influenced its application in various disciplines, like sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, communication studies, and analytic philosophy (Igiri et al., 2020). Carnap, another scholar, who was also a philosopher and logician, further contributed to pragmatics in 1938. His work was valuable because of his attempt to narrow down the focus of pragmatics by proposing a trichotomy within semiotics, outlining the scope of pragmatics, semantics, and syntax as follows: a) pragmatics: studies that directly concern the speaker or language user. b) Semantics: studies that do not take into consideration the language user rather they focus only on expressions and their referents. c) Logical Syntax: the analysis involves only the relationships between expressions, excluding referents (Levinson, 1989, p. 2-3).

In the 1950s, ideal language philosophy and ordinary language philosophy emerged within the linguistic philosophy as two distinct schools. Ideal language philosophers focused on studying the logical structures of artificial languages, while ordinary language philosophy emphasized on everyday language usage. Key figures within ordinary language philosophy included J.L. Austin, H.P. Grice, Peter Strawson, John Searle, and Ludwig Wittgenstein, whose theories on Speech Acts and conversational implicature became pivotal in understanding language use (Erlinda, 2019). In this regard, it is worth to mention the point of

view proposed by Mey (2001) when she said that the troubled relationship of language with logic led to the emergence of Pragmatics as a linguistic discipline. She discussed the well-known example of Chomsky (1957), an ideal language philosopher, which says: "Colorless green ideas sleep furiously" to illustrate her point of view. Chomsky highlighted that although the sentence is grammatically correct, its meaning is nonsensical because the contradictory terms "colorless/ green" cancel each other out. Chomsky argued that since syntax concerns itself solely with structure and not meaning, considerations regarding meaning should be left to semanticists. His perspective led scholars to ridiculously refer to semantics as the "waste-basket" of syntax. However, over time, semantic concerns grew too numerous to be ignored, prompting the emergence of another waste-basket which established "*pragmatics*" as a separate field. Linguists began depositing their unresolved questions regarding meaning into this new basket, giving rise to the discipline of pragmatics which has experienced rapid and substantial growth since the 1980's (Mey, 2001).

Notable accomplishments in pragmatics' development included key publications mainly the work of Mey and Haberman, *Journal of Pragmatics* in 1977, *Pragmatics* and *Principles of Pragmatics* by Levinson and Leech in 1983 and the establishment of the International Pragmatic Association (IPrA) in 1987. Furthermore, Austin, Searle and Grice made a great contribution to the subject field when Austin and Searl introduced a highly significant topic in Pragmatics which is the *Speech Act Theory* and Paul Grice, gained fame for his work on conversational implicature and *Cooperative Theory*. All of these contributions signified the discipline's emergence as an independent field within linguistics (Unubi, 2016)



## **Context**

Pragmatics is defined as a field that examines language in its context to identify the hidden meaning of written and spoken “utterances”. The latter is a key word that is used in the field of pragmatics. Hence there is an urgent need to differentiate between the two terms.

### ***Utterances Vs Sentences***

Levinson (1983) claimed that it is very important to differentiate between sentences and utterances in both Semantics and Pragmatics as the former deals with sentence- meaning whereas the latter deals with utterance meaning. He differentiated sentence and utterance saying that: “A sentence is an abstract theoretical entity defined within the theory of grammar, while an utterance is the issuance of a sentence in an actual context.” (Levinson, 1983, p.18). Similarly, Birner (2013) defined a sentence as an abstract linguistic object comprised of words arranged in a particular order. While an utterance for her can be an oral, written, or signed sentence that occurs in an actual context. In highlighting differences between an utterance and a sentence, she added that there are some sentences that have never been uttered and never will be, despite being perfectly understandable giving the example: “My chihuahua’s favorite lampshade is submerged in the lemonade” which is absurd on its face, as it describes a scenario that is highly unlikely or impossible. She used the term “proposition” to refer to the meaning that is conveyed by a sentence, so a sentence like "I read the assignment today" can convey different propositions depending on the speaker and situation. Likewise, different sentences can communicate the same proposition, as illustrated by "Mary spoke to Jane" and "Jane was spoken to by Mary" (Birner,2013). From this context it can be concluded that the act of uttering a proposition by a particular person in a particular context represents the utterance.

From another perspective, a sentence is different from an utterance in a way that it must adhere to fundamental grammatical rules, such as having a subject-verb-complement

structure. Conversely, an utterance can vary widely—it may not even be a complete sentence, ranging from single words like "settle," phrases like "area boy," contracted forms like "what's up," to exclamations like "hei" or "oah!" The meaning we attribute to these utterances is determined by their functions or the speaker's intention in expressing them. While the meaning of a sentence depends on the words used and the overall sense conveyed, the meaning of an utterance relies heavily on the speaker's intention within the context (Igiri et al, 2020).

Paul Grice (1975) suggested that in some cases the conventional meaning of the words plays a significant role in influencing what is actually being communicated when the sentence is uttered, particularly in terms of its literal truth conditions (Grice, 1975, p. 44). Taking the example proposed by Recanati (1989), the sentence "I haven't eaten my breakfast", implies that the speaker hasn't eaten that day, however, the utterance carries the speaker's intended meaning that can be understood within the situation which may be a speech act like a request, a threat, a begging or a challenge. From this point it can be confirmed that pragmatics explores utterances in real life situations. It focuses on important factors like context, the intended message, demonstrative words, speech acts, and implied meanings in grasping language usage.

To summarize, although the terms sentence and utterance are related concepts; their meanings and usage are totally distinct. Sentences are grammatical units of language that convey straightforward information adhering to the conventional meaning of the words and expressing complete thoughts whereas utterances are any meaningful expressions that require interpretation and are influenced by the surrounding context (referential meaning). Utterances may consist of one or more sentences or fragments reflecting the dynamic nature of language use.

### ***Definition of Context***

As it was explained previously, Pragmatics analyses utterances in relation to their context. This prompts a precise definition of the term "context" which has been extensively explored by scholars across disciplines like linguists, philosophers, and anthropologists. Senft (2007) expounded that Bronislaw Malinowski's introduction of situational context in 1930 highlighted the significance of understanding the circumstances surrounding language use. He added that, after conducting research on the language of the Trobriand islanders, Malinowski realized that when people from a particular group write something in their own language, referring to as magical words, outsiders would not be able to understand it, even if it was translated because it may carry hidden contextual meanings necessitating an understanding of the situation in which they are produced. He emphasized on the fact that the situational context helps individuals to 'disambiguate' sentences that are semantically ambiguous.

On the basis of Malinowski's situational context theory, J. Firth introduced a complete framework in which he categorized the context of situations to enhance the understanding of how the surrounding circumstances influence the language events. These categories are; the verbal actions of the participants which include speaking, listening and responding, non-verbal actions of the participants which refer to gestures, actions or body language, objects which refer to anything that can be used in the communication process and effects of the verbal actions which is the impact of the verbal action that was taken by the participants (Firth, 1950, p. 83). To illustrate this, Firth gave the example of language manuals and textbooks which are used to teach learners different aspect of the target languages and their usage. For instance, providing the learner with a picture of a railway station and the operative words for travelling by train can be a situational context that contains the verbal action of the participant, which means the act of reading or listening to the operative words and phrases related to traveling by train, the non-verbal action of the participant that refers to the learner's

physical interactions with the language manual, the relevant object that denotes the language manuals themselves and the effect of the verbal action which correspond to the acquisition of language skills related to traveling by train. (Firth, 1950). Since these contextual factors help linguists to better understand how language is used and interpreted in real-life situations, Firth's framework provided a more multifunctional modal that is applicable to various texts and situations.

Building upon Firth's groundwork, Widdowson (1984) further defined context as a psychological entity or a schema that includes patterns defining what can be considered normal or typical for the participants who must recognize and use their knowledge of patterns to understand the significance of language within a situation. Widdowson (1984) did not consider context as just an obscure concept but rather a structured one that contains patterns of experience. People use these patterns of experience while interacting and the meaning of their words is influenced by the context in which they are used. For example, if someone tells a joke in a family gathering and all family members laugh, in this case, the context for Widdowson is not just the physical setting but also the shared understanding and expectations within the group that help to interpret the joke and producing laughter as a normal response.

Cutting (2002) expanded the notion of context when he examined the influence of physical, social, and sociopsychological factors on communication. He emphasized on the importance of awareness regarding when and where communication occurs. To explain this, he proposed Queen Victoria's famous words: "We are not amused". When analyzing this utterance, a linguist in the field of pragmatics must acknowledge and be aware of the time and circumstances that made Victoria uses "we" instead of "I". The fact that she was passing through tough times because of the death of her husband made her respond by these words to a joke her courtiers had just made. Inference must be taken from the queen's statement that she wanted the courtiers to stop trying to amuse her and take her out of depression. Moreover,

her use of “we” instead of “I” is a clear reminder for them that she is the queen (Cutting, 2002).

In a more contemporary context, Dijk (2008) introduced the concept of "context models" which highlighted some dimensions of language use that were neglected. His theory illustrated how language adapts to the social and cultural milieu of language users within communities, enhancing our understanding of context's role in communication.

These various definitions and perspectives on context complement each other by providing a comprehensive understanding of how context influences communication, from the circumstances surrounding language use to the broader socio-cultural and contexts in which communication occurs.

### ***Types of Contexts***

Yule (2010, p. 129-130) identified two main kinds of contexts; linguistic (co-text) and physical context. Linguistic context includes the words surrounding a particular word and it helps to understand the meaning of ambiguous words. The word “bank”, for example, is a homonym that can be understood in many ways. By considering the words used alongside the word “bank” in a sentence helps to determine which kind of bank is meant. If someone mentions needing to go to the bank to withdraw cash, we understand from the linguistic context that “bank” here means the place where money can be retrieved. Similarly, if the word "bank" is used alongside words like "steep" or "overgrown" in a sentence, it's easy to discern which type of bank is being referred to. Physical context, on the other hand, refers to the time and place where the word is encountered like seeing the word "BANK" on a building, where it is located helps to understand that it is a place to deal with money. Yule emphasized that much of people’s comprehension of what they read and hear is connected to how they process aspects of the physical context, particularly the time and place, in which linguistic expressions

are encountered (Yule, 2010). Overall, context, whether linguistic or physical, greatly influences our understanding of language.

In the same vein, Cutting (2002) divided context into two main types which he named; contexts outside of text (contexts) and context inside of text (co-texts). He further divided the former, which he termed extralinguistic context, into situational context and background knowledge. Situational context, as defined by Cutting, pertains to the speaker's awareness of their immediate surroundings. It encompasses the immediate physical environment and the current situation in which the interaction occurs. Background knowledge for him comprises of cultural contexts which encompass the collective knowledge that individuals typically possess regarding various aspects of life, and interpersonal contexts which entail particular and potentially confidential information concerning the personal backgrounds of the speakers (Cutting, 2002). For context inside of text (co-texts), Cutting said that it includes grammatical cohesion which involves the connection between one referring expression and another within the surrounding text. It can be categorized into reference, substitution, and ellipsis and lexical cohesion which pertains to linguistic tools that serve to connect words in a text, facilitating a cohesive discourse. He differentiated four types of lexical cohesion: repetition, synonymy, subordination, and general words. (Cutting, 2002)

Huang (2014) expanded the work of Cutting when he further divided context into three types; linguistic, physical and adding the general knowledge contexts. General knowledge context refers to a collection of underlying assumptions, which include real-world knowledge, shared between the speaker and the listener. This is often referred to as common ground, which can be either communal or personal. The former consists of the assumptions shared by members of a community, while the latter refers to the background knowledge that two individuals share from their past experiences with each other. (Huang, 2014, p. 16)

All in all, Context with its different types; linguistic, physical or general knowledge is indispensable in shaping a good understanding of language and making communication and analysis more effective.

### **Cooperative Principle**

According to Grice (1975) the success of conversation relies on how the speaker and the listener interact with each other. The Cooperative Principle (CP) can be identified as the way in which the speaker and the hearer attempt to make their dialogues effective and meaningful. Both the sender and the receiver aim to convey and comprehend messages clearly throughout the conversation. Speakers aim to deliver their messages understanding while listeners strive to understand them. Also, studying language in context involves grasping the cooperation between speakers and listeners.

Grice (1975) argued that conversation is not just a sequence of isolated comments but rather a naturally guided interaction between participants. He summarized this cooperation in conversations as follows: "make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (p. 45). In this regard, Grice (1975) focused on three important aspects required for making a successful communication. Firstly, relevance, which refers to the extent in which the information is related to the topic or the context in one hand and staying focused on the content of discussion in the other hand. Relevance aims to build a relationship between what is said and the context of conversation. Secondly, purpose refers to the aims and the underlying goals behind communication. It is correlated to the reasons that make people interact with each other and the comprehension of purpose contributes to the direction guidance of the communication and it serves its intended functions. Finally, direction refers to the movement and the flow of the conversation. It is about how information moves between speaker and listener and how the information developed over time. Moreover, Grice's CP

provides a fundamental framework for comprehending how conversations are effectively managed between speakers and listeners. It helps individuals to understand meaning, build relationships, and participate in meaningful discourse. Additionally, Grice identifies four conversational maxims: quantity, quality, relation, and manner, which further elucidate the CP's application in guiding effective communication exchanges (Grice, 1975).

### **Grice's Conversational Maxims**

In his CP, Grice (1975) proposed a set of maxims that speakers and listeners follow to ensure mutual understanding and cooperation in conversation which he called the conversational maxims.

Grice's theory of conversational maxims, introduced in the mid-20th century, outlines principles governing effective communication (Asher, 1994, p. 754). These maxims—quality, quantity, relation, and manner—aim to explain how listeners derive implied meanings from expressed ones. Over time, scholars have applied Grice's framework to analyze various communication dynamics. For instance, Raskin (1985) observed how people's reactions to teasing exemplify the interplay of these maxims: some find it humorous while others perceive it as offensive. This demonstrates the ongoing relevance and application of Grice's theories in understanding human interaction. In the evolution of communication theory, scholars have delineated two categories of maxims—observable and non-observable. Observable maxims refer to principles of conversation that are clearly articulated or directly communicated and easily identifiable. However, the concept of non-observable maxims, which are implied but not directly mentioned, emerged as scholars delved deeper into the complexities of communication dynamics.

#### ***Observable Maxims***

**Maxim of Quantity:** suggests that the speaker should be as informative as necessary, providing the required amount of information and no more. This maxim includes two rules;



the first is that the speaker has to make his/her contribution as informative as necessary whereas the second forbids the speaker from making his/ her contribution more informative than necessary (Grice, 1975, p. 45).

**Maxim of Quality:** dictates that the speaker must adhere to truthfulness, refraining from presenting false information or unsupported assertions. Two rules contribute to the success of the quality maxim: 1) Do not say what you believe to be false. 2) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence (Grice, 1975, p. 46).

**Maxim of Relation:** encourages speakers to stay focused on the topic at hand and share only information directly relevant to the ongoing discussion (Grice, 1975).

**Maxim of Manner:** proposes that speaker expresses himself clearly, concisely, and in an organized manner, avoiding ambiguity and obscurity. Four rules contribute to fulfilling the manner maxim: (1) Avoid obscurity of expression: for example, instead of saying “I am not feeling quite myself today,” one could say, “I’m feeling unwell.” (2) Avoid ambiguity: for example, instead of saying, “I need a break,” which could mean a physical pause or a vacation, one could specify, “I need a short break from work.” (3) Be brief: for instance, instead of saying, “I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their contributions and express my gratitude for the hard work that has been done,” one could simply say, “Thank you all for your hard work.” (4) Being Orderly: for example, instead of discussing random topics without a clear structure, one could organize their speech by starting with an introduction, discussing each point sequentially, and concluding with a summary or call to action (Grice, 1975, p. 46).

### ***Non-observable maxims***

In the realm of communication theory, Grice (1975) outlined four ways by which the conversational maxims can be broken when he introduced the concept of non-observable maxims “flouting, violating, infringing, opting out”. Thomas (1995), expanded on Grice’s

work and added the fifth way by which individuals deviate from Grice's Maxims which he called, suspending.

**Flouting:** The concept of flouting conversational maxims reveals how speakers intentionally break communication norms to convey hidden meanings. According to Thomas (1995), flouting conversational maxims occurs when a speaker blatantly fails to observe a maxim at the level of what is said, with the deliberate intention of generating an implicature. This notion is further elaborated by Grundy (2000), who discussed how flouting a maxim represents a particularly silent way of conveying implicit meaning. Leech (1983) illustrated how telling a lie in English breaks Grice's maxim of quality, emphasizing that such actions do not imply a failure to speak the English language. Therefore, intentional flouting of conversational maxims can occur in specific situations or contexts for particular reasons and it highlights the delicate balance between direct communication and implicit messages in various contexts. Furthermore, according to Cutting (2005), "Flouting" the maxims occurs when a speaker ignores the conversational rules, counting on the listener to catch the implied meaning. Conversely, "breaching" the maxims happens when the speaker assumes the listener will recognize the weight of their words and can deduce suggested meanings, much like understanding implied meanings in indirect speech acts.

**Violation:** violating conversational maxims reveals how speakers intentionally manipulate communication to create misleading implicatures. When a speakers violate a maxim, they intentionally create a misleading implicature, aware that the listeners will only grasp the literal meaning of the words (Thomas, 1995, p. 73). This deceitful act involves quietly misleading the audience by deliberately offering insufficient information, insincere statements, irrelevant content, or ambiguous expressions, causing the listener to incorrectly perceive cooperation (Cutting, 2002, p. 40). Such violations of maxims can manifest within any of the four types of maxims. Therefore, recognizing the deliberate violation of

conversational maxims illuminates the intricate dynamics of language use and the challenges inherent in interpreting implicit messages during communication. Also, a speaker “violates” a maxim when they are aware that the listener lacks knowledge of the truth and will only grasp the literal meaning of the words (Cutting, 2005).

**Infringing:** infringing conversational maxims unveils instances where speakers unintentionally fail to adhere to these norms due to various factors affecting their linguistic performance. According to Grice (1989) a speaker infringing a maxim fails to observe it due to imperfect linguistic performance, particularly if the speaker has an imperfect command of the language (p.56). Similarly, Thomas (1995) supported Grice's view stating that infringing maxims occur when speakers exhibit imperfect linguistic skills. This can stem from several factors, including limited language proficiency as seen in young children or foreign learners, impaired performance due to factors like nervousness, intoxication, or excitement, and inherent difficulties in articulating thoughts clearly and effectively, and also lack of knowledge of the topic. Thus, understanding the factors contributing to the infringement of conversational maxims sheds light on the complexities of language use and the challenges individuals face in articulating their thoughts effectively in communication.

**Opting out:** When individuals opt out of conversational maxims, they navigate a delicate balance between compliance and ethical considerations, often refraining from providing expected information due to various constraints. According to Thomas (1995), opting out of a maxim signifies a reluctance to comply, even if the speaker aims to avoid appearing uncooperative. This typically occurs when the speaker is unable to respond as expected due to legal or ethical constraints, or when revealing the requested information would jeopardize a third party. For instance, a police officer might withhold the name of an accident victim until their family has been notified (Thomas, 1995). Therefore, understanding the instances and motivations behind opting out of conversational maxims provides insight

into the nuanced nature of communication and the ethical dilemmas that can arise in navigating social interactions.

**Suspending:** According to Thomas (1995), suspending a maxim occurs when there is no requirement to abstain from observing maxims because certain circumstances do not entail any anticipation from any participant that they will be fulfilled. In other words, suspending a maxim occurs when participants in a conversation mutually agree to temporarily set aside or relax the usual expectations regarding adherence to conversational norms. This can happen in informal settings or during casual exchanges where precision in communication is not crucial. Essentially, suspending a maxim allows for flexibility in conversation without causing any disruption or misunderstanding among participants. For example, a group of colleagues having a casual conversation during a lunch break. If one colleague shares a personal anecdote or joke that may not directly relate to the ongoing work-related discussion, the other participants may understand that the maxim of relevance is suspended in this context. They may enjoy the interaction for its social aspect rather than expecting every contribution to strictly adhere to the topic at hand.

From what had been mentioned before about observable and non-observable maxims, we can conclude that observable maxims are directly expressed and do not leave any chance for confusion and ambiguity. They define and underline clearly the principles of communication which encompass quantity, quality, relation and manner maxim. Whereas, non-observable maxims are not explicitly stated and they include flouting which entails openly ignoring a maxim for communication purposes. Violating involves directly disobeying a maxim as Grice (1975) suggested that non-observance entails either overtly or covertly ignoring conversational maxims, resembling either “flouting” or “violating” them (Brumark, 2004, p. 13). And the rest of which are infringing, opting out and suspending.

## **Implicature**

Levinson (1983) acknowledged that not all communication strictly adheres to these maxims, he underscored Grice's argument. He suggested that while perfect adherence may seem idealistic—a 'philosopher's paradise'—interlocutors may deliberately deviate from these maxims to convey implied meanings, thus giving rise to implicature (Levinson, 1983, p. 102)."

The term “implicature” is derived from the verb "to imply," which stems from the Latin "plicare" which means "to fold." Therefore, something implied is metaphorically "folded in" and needs to be "unfolded" for comprehension. (Mey, 1993, p. 98). According to Grice's theory, it is essential to recognize the "additional meaning" conveyed in conversations referred to as implicature (Grice, 1975). This suggests a divergence between explicit statements and implied messages, where understanding the latter demands knowledge beyond language proficiency. While linguistic competence suffices for comprehending literal expressions, deciphering implied meanings requires awareness of contextual cues such as timing and situational context (Grice, 1975). Other scholars described this distinction as the contrast between semantic and pragmatic meaning: the former solely conveys through words, while the latter incorporates extralinguistic factors arising from the act of communication itself (Bach, 2006). Implicature is fundamentally a component of the speaker's intended meaning which challenges the notion that implicatures are inherent in the hearer's understanding or the sentence structure (Horn, 2006, p. 3). This emphasizes the recipient's crucial role in correctly interpreting the speaker's message or communicative intention (Bach, 2006, p. 470). Widely regarded as a cornerstone in pragmatics, the theory of implicature asserts the capacity to convey meanings beyond explicit utterances (Levinson, 2008, p. 97). There are two types of Implicature: conversational implicature and conventional implicature:

### ***Conversational implicature***

A conversational implicature refers to something implied in conversation, which remains implicit in language use. Pragmatics finds interest in this phenomenon because it presents a pattern that cannot be fully explained by simple syntactic or semantic rules, necessitating alternative explanations. According to Bilmes (1986) people usually convey implicit propositions in their utterances of everyday talk. She added that these inferences can be drawn only by referring to what has been explicitly said to some conversational principle and in this case it a conversational implicature (Bilmes, 1986, p. 27). Similarly, Mey (1993) confirmed Bilmes's opinion, stating that conversational implicatures refer to something implied from a conversation, which is left implicit in actual language use (p. 99). Also, Cruse (2000) described conversational implicatures as propositions or assumptions that are not fully expressed within the words actually spoken during a conversation. He emphasized the necessity of considering context, speaker intentions, and pragmatic inferences to grasp the complete message conveyed during discourse.

Language goes beyond literal interpretation, requiring listeners to decode implicit cues for comprehensive understanding. Meanwhile, Huang (2007) explained that, based on Grice's theory, conversational implicature involves drawing inferences that are not purely logical but are derived from contextual cues and intentions of the speaker. These inferences carry messages that are implied or hinted at in the conversation but are not explicitly stated in the words spoken.

### ***Conventional implicature***

Conventional implicatures stand apart from conversational implicatures in that they can be comprehended independently of conversation or context, while conversational implicatures rely on the cooperative principle and specific contextual cues for their interpretation. Yule (1996) emphasized that conventional implicatures do not rely on the

cooperative principle or context, as they are not bound to occur within a conversation and do not require special contextual cues for understanding (p. 45). Cruse (2000) defined conventional implicature as non-truth aspects of meaning conventionally attached to particular linguistic forms. Meanwhile, Huang (2007) described conventional implicature as inferences not grounded in the truth conditions of a statement but rather stemming from the conventional features associated with specific lexical items or linguistic structures (p. 54). Additionally, conventional implicatures are associated with specific words, such as conjunctions like "but," "and," "yet," and "even," which convey additional meaning when used. In the example that Yule (1996, p. 45) gave, "Mary suggested black, but I chose white", the conjunction "but" gives meaning of 'contrast' between the information in the first sentence and the information in the second. In that example, the fact that 'Mary suggested black is contrasted, via the conventional implicature of 'but,' with my choosing white. There are words that typically imply additional meanings beyond their literal definitions in English, such as 'actually,' 'also,' 'anyway,' 'barely,' 'besides,' 'however,' 'manage to,' 'on the other hand,' 'only,' 'still,' 'though,' 'too,' and 'yet.' For example; "Dennis isn't here yet." (Yule, 1996, p. 45). The conventional implicature of 'yet' is that the present situation is expected to be different, or perhaps the opposite, at a later time and Dennis is expected to be here maybe later.

### **Section Two: Humor and Puns**

This section is devoted to provide a detailed explanation of the concept of humor and the major theories that made attempts to explain why and how humor works. Additionally, it delves into the intricate relation between humor, sitcoms and puns.

#### **The Nature of Humor**

Humor can be found in our everyday interactions, workplaces, television programs, theaters, print media such as newspapers and magazines, advertisements, and more

prominently, in comedy performances (Berger, 1993). It is a common aspect of human life, with amusing situations, stories, and thoughts occurring regularly for most people.

Raskin (1985) related the term humor with truth, aesthetic values, ethical standard customs and norms which makes culture and society have their unique form humor.

Observing all of these characteristics led scholars to investigate the nature of humor as ridicule, an exhibition of superiority, an attempt to abase, an attempt to denigrate a person or lower a value, and as an incongruent treatment of things (Raskin, 1985, p.326). These observations underlined the significance of humor, warranting its study in academic and research contexts.

### **Unattainable the Concept Humor**

Humor has been a field of investigation from philosophical, psychological, sociological, anthropological and linguistic researches. Each discipline addressed the concept from a different perspective. For instance; social psychology focuses on the social implications and mechanisms of humor while cognitive psychology examines the cognitive processes responsible for humor. Additionally, folklore explores how various cultural groups generate humor, and linguistics delves into the semantic and pragmatic elements of language that give rise to humor (Attardo,2014). However, attempts to provide a theoretical definition for it has been a challenging task for many scholars (Attardo, 1994).

If you pose the question "What is humor?" to different individuals, you will likely receive varied responses, all circling the idea that humor is anything that elicits laughter or smile to one's face or brings amusement to people. According to Milner (2013), recognizing humor is easy enough within an appropriate cultural knowledge, however many scholars found that pinning down a general definition is extremely difficult (Milner, 2013).

Attardo's book "Linguistics Theory of Humor" underscored the challenges in defining humor because of its intricate characteristics, its engagement with both semantics and



pragmatics, and contextual reliance. One of its intricate characteristics is the internal subdivision which has been an obstacle point to be agreed upon. It was hard to divide the category humor “humor Vs ridicule”, “humor Vs Comedy”, “irony Vs sarcasm” and so on. Additionally, from a lexicological perspective, Attardo (2014) proposed the work of Schmidt-Hidding (1963) who said that the words: wit, pun, bon mot, satire, irony, comic, joke, tease, practical joke, and fun belong to the semantics field of humor (Attardo, 2014). Similarly, terms like; humor, comic, funny, laughable, droll, wit, amusing can confusingly refer to the same thing (Attardo, 2020). After a long time of debate, Scholars in the discipline could not universally agree on specific definitions or boundaries for each subcategory, leading to ambiguity in distinguishing them. Although, researchers employ these terms to establish a taxonomy of the concept, there is a lack of consensus among them regarding terminology simply because what one person considers 'humor,' another might define as 'laughter,' and vice versa (Raskin, 1985, p.8).

Taking laughter as a criterion to define humor is also a crucial point in the subject of humor that was proposed by Attardo (2014). He undertook a review of literature on how different scholars treated the concept of humor in relation to laughter. He stated that: “what makes people laugh is humorous, and hence the property is incorrectly seen as symmetrical-what is funny makes you laugh and what makes you laugh is funny.” (Attardo, 1994, p. 10). Similarly, he presented Bergson’s (1901) point of view who clearly claimed that both terms “laughter and humor” can be used interchangeably. He also found that Aubouin (1948) differentiated between laughter stemming from physiological reactions and laughter arising from intellectual understanding. Aubouin argued that laughter represents an outcome without explicitly identifying its source (Attardo, 1994). Moving to another position, Attardo (1994) proposed the opposite claim of Olbrechts-Tyteca (1974) who stated five reasons that make the application of taking laughter as a criterion of humor difficult, if not impossible. Firstly,

Laughter largely exceeds humor. Secondly, Laughter does not always have the same meaning. Thirdly, Laughter is not directly proportionate to the intensity of humor. Fourthly, humor elicits sometimes laughter, sometimes a smile. Finally, Laughter or smiling cannot always be observed directly. It is a nuanced social behavior that goes beyond mere amusement, and its interpretation requires careful consideration of its context and social significance (Attardo, 1994).

This laid to another crucial point that makes humor hard to be defined which is its dependency on individual traits and cultural contexts, making it elusive to be pinpointed precisely. Due to the diversity of individual opinions, values, and beliefs, there is no single, universally applicable definition of humor. Our environment significantly influences how we perceive humor, leading to variations in what we find amusing. Thus, what one individual may find hilarious could potentially offend someone else and the other way round. Additionally, when considering cultural and personal contexts, it is important to delve deeper into the role of language. Even if the listener comprehends the words of a joke proficiently, it might not be sufficient. For instance, an anecdote like: “when the barkeeper said the drinks are on the house, the mathematician brought a ladder to the bar?” cannot be appreciated by an individual if he/ she is not familiar with its context and does not belong to the culture where this anecdote is often used and appreciated. This anecdote plays on the literal meaning of the utterance “the drinks are on the house” which means, in that context “are free”. It humorously targets the mathematicians, known for their logical thinking, who interpret the utterance as if drinks are physically located on the roof.

To summarize, humor is a very complex and subjective phenomenon that can take many forms. Ultimately, what can be considered humorous may differ from one individual to another according to the individual experiences, cultural backgrounds, and personal preferences.

### **Different Attempt to Define humor**

Despite the fact that the attempt to define humor has been a dilemma, various scholars throughout history have provided valuable insights into its nature and mechanisms each one according to their views and adopted theories. Attardo (1994) Thoroughly synthesized definitions proposed by of scholars in a chronological order spanning from the Greeks, Latins, to the Renaissance, In the following lines, some of these definitions that are relevant to the present study will be explored;

Plato, the first humor Greek theorist, defined humor as a mixed feeling of pleasure and pain within the soul. In his work “the Republic”, he criticized excessive laughter, claiming that it stems from "ridiculousness" and the lack of self-awareness. He believed that humor occurs in term of hierarchical situations where another person is usually used as the ‘butt’ of the joke evoking behaviors like mocking and teasing.

In the same vein, Aristotle, another influential Greek thinker, introduced superiority as a key component of humor built completing Plato's ideas. He highlighted the negative nature of humor which he saw that it tied to the ridiculous, critiquing only its extremes and viewing it as a stimulating force on the soul. Additionally, Aristotle explored the practical application of humor in rhetoric and provided early insights into its mechanisms, such as incongruity.

The Tractatus Coislinianus, a manuscript containing notes on comedy and is believed to date back to the 4th century, delved into verbal humor, categorizing it into different linguistic techniques. These include homonyms, synonyms, repetition, paronyms, and paraphrase, illustrating the various ways humor can be expressed through.

In Latin literature, Cicero and other prominent writers like Quintilian and Horace discussed humor, influenced by Greek thought. Cicero distinguished between verbal and referential humor where verbal humor relying on linguistic elements and referential humor does not. His classification system further divided humor into anecdotes, caricature,

ambiguity, puns, false etymologies, proverbs, allegory, metaphors, and irony, highlighting the diverse forms humor can take. When translating humorous texts, Cicero suggested that the humor's dependence on linguistic elements or semantic content can be determined by whether it remains intact after translation or transformation. If the humor survives, it likely relies on meaning, but if it doesn't, it's likely based on linguistic form. (Attardo, 1994)

As all the efforts to define humor have proven their deficiency and challenging, a recent agreement has been made that humor is an umbrella term that encompasses the range of comic phenomenon (Attardo, 2020). The definition that will be adapted throughout this study is the one provided by Anthony. L. Audrieth (1998) who defined humor as “the mental faculty of discovering, expressing or appreciating the ludicrous or absurdly incongruous.” Where ludicrous, means something amusing or laughable due to its obvious absurdity, incongruity, exaggeration, or eccentricity and incongruous refers to something lacking consistency or harmony within itself. So, to put it plainly, humor can be a type of expression meant to evoke amusement. According to Grice, such expressions are created when the interlocutors do not obey the CP and its maxims (Attardo, 1994, pp. 271-276). One of these expressions is “puns” which represents a crucial element in the topic of this study.

### **Major Theories of Humor**

Upon examining the intricate nature of humor, it becomes imperative to elucidate its essence and the various social or functional roles it plays. Numerous endeavors were made to formulate a linguistic theory that focuses on examining and exploring the concept of humor within language. The following is a concise overview of primary theories widely acknowledged and developed within the field of humor.

#### ***The Semantic Script Theory of Humor***

The Semantic-Script Theory of Humor (SSTH) was proposed by Victor Raskin in 1985. In his theory, Raskin suggested that jokes usually involve two different ideas that are opposite

in a special way. It says that the joke's meaning is clear until the punchline. The punchline then switches the meaning of the joke, making the listener realize there could be other ways to understand it from the start. According to Raskin's SSTH, a text can be considered funny when two pithy, necessary and sufficient conditions are satisfied:

- a) The text is compatible, fully or in part, with two different scripts
- b) The two scripts with which the text is compatible are opposite. The two scripts with which some text is compatible are said to fully or in part in this text (Raskin, 1985, p. 99).

Attardo (2017) described Raskin's theory to be properly categorized as a semantic/pragmatic theory although Raskin himself denied the usefulness of the semantics/pragmatics boundary in his theory. Raskin (1985), like many before him, observed that jokes do not follow the Principle of Cooperation as outlined by Grice (1989). However, they follow a different set of maxims. He introduced the concept of Non-Bona-Fide (NBF) communication of a joke which consists of; the maxim of quantity: Give exactly as much information as is necessary for the joke, maxim of quality: say only what is compatible with the world of the joke, maxim of relation: say only what is relevant to the joke and maxim of manner: tell the joke efficiently. Bona-fide, on the other hand, are the ones that do not adhere to the maxims of joke communication (Raskin, 1985, p.103). To understand how the SSBT works, Raskin (1985) provided the following example: "Is the doctor at home?" the patient asked in his bronchial whisper. "No," the doctor's young and pretty wife whispered in reply. "Come right in" (Attardo, 1994, p.206)

The initial stage to analyze this joke is that all the meanings conveyed by the scripts in the text need to be identified. The next step is to categorize grammatically these scripts based on their compatibility. These rules seek out words that evoke similar scripts and adhere to syntactic and subcategorization guidelines. For instance, in the joke's opening sentence, both the words "is" and "at" evoke a spatial script. As they share this script, the combinatorial rules

prioritize this commonality and proceed with the analysis accordingly. Simultaneously, the reader infer that the coming line would be an answer to the previously asked question and expecting the answer to special as well following the principle of combination. Through iterative application of combinatorial rules and inferencing mechanisms, the reader ultimately arrives at an interpretation of the entire text.

A semantic interpretation that can be taken by the reader is that a patient with a bronchial whisper asks if the doctor is home. The doctor's young and attractive wife, whispering in response, informs the patient that the doctor is not present and invites him inside.

However, this scenario may rise the question: why would the doctor's wife respond to the inquiry when the doctor is not there, as medical treatment typically requires the doctor's physical presence? This ambiguity evokes another interpretation; that the wife may be engaging in a secret rendezvous with another man (may be a patient) in the absence of her husband, especially when reconsidering the gender and description of the doctor's wife and the absence of the doctor himself.

This interpretation aligns with two contrasting scripts: the professional relationship between doctor and patient, and the illicit relationship between the doctor's wife and another man. These scripts clash on the basis of sexual fidelity, fulfilling the criteria for humor outlined by Raskin (Attardo, 2014).

### ***The General Theory of Verbal Humor***

In 1991, Attardo and Raskin found two drawbacks of SSTH, firstly, it failed to differentiate between referential and verbal humor and secondly, it couldn't explain why certain jokes are perceived as resembling each other more closely. On that basis, they developed an expansion to SSTH which gave birth to the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) (Attardo, 1997).

The GTVH was supposed to account for any humorous text and thus it postulates six parameters called Knowledge Resources (KR) in order to fulfill the drawbacks of SSTH. These resources are; Language (LA) which refers to the set of linguistic components chosen to form the actual text of the joke. Narrative strategy (NS) in which the joke has to be cast in some forms of narrative organization. Target (TA) which is the butt of a joke. Situation (SI) which refers to the situation of the joke. It can be the object, participants, surroundings, activities, etc. Logical mechanism (LM) which represents the mechanism used to bring two different scripts together in one joke. Script opposition (SO) which is the most abstract of all resources. It deals with the script opposition/overlapping requirement as has been described by the SSTH. These six KR are structured hierarchically so, decisions made at lower levels of knowledge resources are influenced by decisions made at the most conceptual level (Attardo, 2017).

### ***The Superiority Theory***

The roots of this theory can be traced back to the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle then, it was officially introduced by Thomas Hobbes in 1651. It posits that people laugh when they perceive the misfortunes or flaws of others and therefore, feeling a sense of superiority. It underscores humor's role as a social corrective, often reflecting feeling of superiority over others (Attardo, 1994, p. 50). Similarly, Schwarz (2010) saw that superiority theory asserts the fact that humor arises from a perception of being better than others and is directed towards those deemed inferior.

### ***The Release Theory***

It suggests that humor serves as a trigger to release psychological tension and inhibitions imposed by societal norms. Freud (n. d) initially proposed this idea, suggesting that humor helps people break free from societal restrictions by allowing them to laugh. This theory is valuable in linguistics as it explores how humor can sometimes involve aggression

and disregard for linguistic norms, such as puns and wordplay, as well as violations of cooperative communication principles outlined by Grice (Attardo, 1994). Latta (1999) further explained this process in three stages: an initial tense state, followed by a cognitive shift triggered by a stimulus, leading to relaxation through laughter.

### ***Incongruity- Resolution Theory***

The Incongruity-Resolution Theory is among the most significant theories that can be traced back to the 18th century's theories of humor like Aristotle's and it was explored in the 19th century by philosophers such as Kant and Schopenhauer who defined the essence of this theory by explaining that laughter arises when there is a perceived disparity or mismatch between an idea and actual objects connected in some manner (Attardo, 1994, p. 48). The Incongruity theory functions in two key aspects; firstly, it elucidates why individuals respond with laughter across a broad spectrum of circumstances, even those not inherently humorous. Essentially, it offers insight into why humans perceive certain things as amusing. Secondly, it furnishes an understanding of what qualities render a situation inherently comic (Straus, 2014).

It was proposed that humor springs from encountering incongruity which can be defined as the deviation from expected norms. Whether a clever twist in a joke or a quirky observation, these deviations from the ordinary spark amusement and laughter. Morreall (1983) considered this theory as the predominant philosophical explanation of humor, suggesting that the essence of humor lies in incongruity, the mismatch between expectations and reality. Schopenhauer's definition of laughter supported this notion, highlighting the sudden perception of incongruity between concepts and real objects. While incongruity is fundamental to humor, it is the resolution of this incongruity that triggers laughter (Lewis, 2005). Attardo (1994) described this process as involving recognizing incongruity and its subsequent resolution. Moreover, Attardo (2001) outlined essential features for incongruity to



evoke humor, including a non-threatening nature, moderate complexity, recipient's knowledge, unexpectedness, playful framing of the situation, and the co-presence of opposing scripts which are defined by Attardo (1994) as a structured body of word that serve as a mental framework adopted by the speaker offering guidance on procedures and organizational aspects and equipping the speaker with insights into how things are done and organized (Attardo, 1994).

### **Humor and Sitcoms**

Situation comedy (sitcoms) is a genre of comedy which have a great power of entertainment. It emerged on radio before transitioning to television, where it became a cornerstone of prime-time programming (Hamamoto, 1989). It is known for its heartwarming storylines, hilarious set-ups, and relatable characters. One of its characteristics is the features recurring characters in familiar settings facing new comic situations in each episode, typically, half-hour episodes revolve around themes like family, home, or workplace, with humor emerging from character interactions rather than standalone jokes (Creeber, 2001). The best sitcoms have a lasting impact, resonating across different generations. “The Honeymooners”, “Big Bang Theory”, and “Friends”, for instance, have created iconic characters and settings that remain ingrained in popular culture over generations and their significance is undeniable (Sandoval, 2024). An article was published on an online magazine “Casting Frontier” in 2023, under the title; “*The Three Pillars of Comedy: The Tools That Build a Successful Sitcom*”, encounters the core elements of humor in sitcoms which are conflict, desperation, and unpredictability (Casting frontier, 2023). Conflict happens when opposing sides clash, Desperation is the characters' strong wish to reach their goals and Unpredictability involves surprising twists and actions in the storylines and characters' behaviors.

Humor in sitcoms can be conveyed through both verbal and nonverbal means, often relying on everyday conversation dynamics (Xiaosu, 2009). The CP, rooted in four guiding

principles, may also be crucial for creating humor in sitcoms as it is often used to set up expectations and then cleverly subvert them for comic effect. Breaking any of these principles can lead to the creation of new meanings in conversations and linguistic jokes. These jokes can fall under two categories; canned jokes and conversational jokes. According to Attardo (1994), canned jokes are the ones that can be found in joke collections and are easily transferable from one situation to another. Conversely, situational jokes rely heavily on context and cannot be used outside their context.

Sitcoms are known for comedy and generating humor to amuse the audience, yet it is worth to note that humor in sitcoms is oriented to specific audience who can understand the jokes based on many factors like context and shared knowledge. Through humor, sitcoms prompt viewers to reflect critically and engage in discussions about prevailing norms and values.

### **Definition of Puns**

Punning, a central topic in humor studies, encompasses various comic expressions like witty remarks, one-liners, and punchlines, extending to advertising slogans and article titles. The term "pun," also known as "paronomasia" in Latin, can be traced back to John Dryden's work in 1662, though its roots in English stretch further back to Old English, gaining popularity in the 14th century. Throughout history, renowned writers like Shelley and Dickens have utilized puns extensively. Today, puns are integral to both everyday language and literary expression, permeating jokes, advertisements, literature, and entertainment. Defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as the use of words to suggest multiple meanings or create humorous effects, puns have been extensively studied by numerous linguists. Attardo (1994) explained that puns are wordplay devices that exploit the multiple meanings of words or phrases, typically for humorous effect, by manipulating their sound or spelling. Furthermore, Delabastista (1997) described puns as a deliberate communicative strategy exploiting language

structure to create ambiguity and humor, employing similar sounding but different meaning of words or expressions. Audrieth (1998) defined a pun as a witty verbalization with two interpretations due to deliberate word ambiguity, is prevalent in jokes, with a single word or phrase conveying dual meanings. Al-Muraghi (2000) and Parrington (2009) added to the work of Delabastita delving into the nuanced interplay between distant and near meanings in puns, highlighting their phonetic and bisociative nature.

All definitions fall in the same streamlet which represents pun as a multifaceted phenomenon that plays with meaning, sounds and forms of words using multiple linguistic devices and strategies that cause ambiguity, misunderstanding, misinterpreting or even display an aggressive effect in order to create humor.

The focus on this study will be on the pun because it is a linguistic device considered as a common source of humor created by the non-observance of Gricean Maxims. Incongruity has a magnificent role to play here since it can be easily observed in pun. For instance, the following example; “Diplomacy: The noble duty of lying for one's country” (Milner 1972, p. 17, in Attardo, 1994), offers a prime example of incongruity in action. This quote ingeniously twists the conventional notion of diplomacy, implying that it entails deception, thus evoking surprise and humor. Typically, diplomacy invokes images of statesmanship, negotiation, and even sacrifice for one's nation. However, this twist cleverly subverts the expected meaning by suggesting that diplomacy involves not dying for one's country but rather lying for it. The humor arises from the unexpected contrast between the esteemed perception of diplomacy and the surprising implication of deceit. By framing

diplomacy as the "noble duty of lying," the pun playfully exposes the potential for duplicity and strategic manipulation often intertwined with diplomatic practice.

### **Types of Puns**

Attardo (1994) stated a set of taxonomies which scholars, throughout the history, used to study and analyze puns. As we step into the realm of linguistic amusement, we will focus on the taxonomies based on linguistic phenomena in which he clearly acknowledged that "Duchacek's (1970) attempt is the most accomplished in this group of taxonomies" (Attardo, 1994, p. 113). He wrote that Duchacek (1970) classified puns into several main categories which will be explored in the following detailed points:

#### ***Homophonic Puns***

It is further divided by Duchacek into: homophone between different words, two or more words, a simple word with a composed one, one word with a group of two or more words and two groups of words. These puns exploit words that sound alike but have different meanings or spellings (Attardo, 1994). For instance, "A baker stopped making donuts after he got tired of the hole thing" which creates an implied meaning of the word "hole" that refers to the opening in the donut and the word "whole" which means the entire thing.

#### ***Homographic Puns***

These puns use words spelled the same but with different meanings or pronunciations (Attardo, 1994), like in the pun of "a bad shoemaker's assistant was given the boot" in which the word "boot" has an implied meaning of dismissed from work and not the meaning of "shoe".

#### ***Paronymic Puns***

Patronymic puns, also, referred to as rhyme-based puns refer to words which have similar but not identical orthographic and phonemic representations (Attardo, 1994) like "braid" vs. "grade" or "mother" vs. "another". For instance; in the sentence "sweater better

than late”, the pun occurs in the word "sweater" which was used instead of "better," in the original expression, creating a humorous twist. "Sweater" sounds similar to "better," but it is a play on words because it introduces the idea of a garment.

### ***Polysemic Puns***

Incorporate two puns into a single sentence, often with one nested within the other. polysemy is the ability to create a semantic unity using one word to serve different objects of reality. For example, "The bakery burned down last night, so now the business is toast," where "toast" carries both the meaning of burnt bread and being in trouble. Also, in the example of: “I told my wife she was drawing her eyebrows too high. She looked surprised”, The play is on "surprised" meaning shocked and appearing startled because of raised eyebrows.

### ***Antonymic Puns***

They rely on words that have opposite or contrast meanings. For example, when someone visits a patient at the hospital and says; “feel better”, the reply that he should receive is “thank you” but instead the patient says: “feel worse”. In this case, the two phrases are antonymic puns. In many of the Arabic dialects, antonymic puns are very common like; أفعد واقف (sit standing), تقدم للوراء (go ahead backward). etc.

### ***Contaminated puns***

They occur when mixing two different words together to make an entirely new, and usually funny word with another meaning. The example can be given from Attardo (1994), Franglais, from Français and Anglais.

### **Humor in Puns**

The humor of puns is a multifaceted phenomenon, understood through various perspectives that delve into the intricacies of language, shared expectations, and the manipulation of words. Raskin (1985) suggested that the humor in puns and other jokes originates from the fact that human language moves in logical channels, and any deviation

from these channels results in the production of humor. Delabastita (1996) emphasized the importance of shared expectations between the sender and receiver of a message in generating humor through puns (p.138). He highlighted how the surprise element, plunging the addressee into something entirely different from what they were prepared for, contributes to the humor. Parrington (2009) expanded on this notion, claiming that puns not only play with words but also with ideas. He supports this by analyzing British newspaper headlines to illustrate the dual manipulation of words and ideas in puns. Finally, the debate continues regarding the level of ambiguity that leads to either humor or the creation of serious discourse, reflecting ongoing discussions about the nature of humor in language.

### **Puns in Arabic**

The meaning of pun in Arabic is almost similar to its meaning in English with a slight difference. In Arabic “a pun” was derived from the Arabic word “التورية” which means hiding something by showing something else Al-Azhari (2001).

Abd Al-Tawwab (1967) defined Atawriya as a word with two different meanings, a clear and a hidden one. He stated that the speaker uses the clear meaning which goes faster to the hearer's brain to cover the hidden one which is the intended meaning.

Concerning the Arabic language, (Alsafadi,1987) classified puns into many categories, the following were chosen as examples since they share some characteristics with the English ones.

- 1) تمام/ Full: where the words share exactly the same form and shape but with different meanings like the word “ساعة” which encompasses both meanings of Judgment Day and time. The counterpart of this pun in English Language would be homonymy.
- 2) مضارع/ present: refers to similar words with a difference in a single letter in each word and the articulation of both words would be almost the same like خيل and خير. paronymic pun can be equated with this kind of pun.

- 3) محرف / distorted: two similar words with difference in the diacritics like in (جُمَل- جُمَل )
- 4) مصحف: two words that are similar but differentiated by dots above or below the letters  
like: باب/ تاب

### Translation of Puns

As it was discussed previously, understanding humorous utterances (in this case, puns) requires shared knowledge, culture and context between both interlocutors. Therefore, when translating a pun, the translator needs to be creative in using language taking into consideration the aspects of culture and context to bridge cultural gaps without killing the joke. Delabastita (1996) presented seven strategies for a successful translation of puns. These strategies are;

1. Pun to Pun: Translating the original pun into another pun in the target language, with possible differences in structure, meaning, or how it uses words.
2. Pun to non-pun: using a non-pun phrase instead of the original pun however manages to convey some of the wordplay.
3. Pun to related rhetorical device: Instead of the original pun, translator employs different rhetorical devices like repetition, alliteration, or irony to recreate the effect of the original pun.
4. Pun to zero: omitting the part of the text that contains the pun.
5. Pun Source Text = pun Target Text: The translator keeps the original pun intact, without translating it, for example, using the same words in both the original and translated texts.
6. Non-pun to pun: The translator adds a pun where there is no one in the original text, either to compensate for puns lost elsewhere or for other reasons.
7. Editorial techniques: This includes providing comments to explain puns, presenting different solutions to puns in anthologies, or other editorial methods to handle puns.

To preserve the essence of the joke without sacrificing its humor, the fifth method of translation will be employed when tackling puns. Subsequently, an English translation will be provided to ensure the joke's meaning is conveyed effectively.

## **Chapter Two: Methodology, Data Analysis and Discussion**

This chapter delves into the practical implementation of the literature review. It is divided into three sections that cover different aspects of the research. The initial section, methodology, begins with detailing the research design then giving the background of the Tunisian sitcom “Choufli Hal” along with its profile and a brief description of its characters, focusing on Sbouai and Slimane as they represent the main characters. This is followed by an explanation of the population and the sampling method that was used. In addition to this, a thorough explanation is given concerning the data extraction process and the content analysis method that was employed. Subsequently, the second section presents the findings that were obtained from the content analysis, examining the humorous utterances made by the main characters “Sbouai and Slimane” when breaking the four conversational maxims of Gricean Cooperative principle using puns. It also investigates the instances and circumstances where by these utterances were produced. The last section is dedicated to discussing the gathered results in relation to the research inquiries and assumptions. This section illuminates the implications and interpretations of the findings offering a deeper insight into the research subject.

### **Sectio One: Methodology**

#### **Research Design:**

The research design that was adopted in the current study is a descriptive research design that mixes the qualitative with the quantitative methods of data analysis. According to Kumar (2008), the aim of a descriptive research is to obtain information to describe a population, a phenomenon, a situation or an object systematically. It is concerned with



answering the “what, when and where” questions but not the “why”. The information obtained for this study aim to describe the phenomenon of humor and the non-observance maxims integrated in its creation in the Tunisia sitcom “*Choufli Hal*”.

The descriptive research may use a wide variety of research methods in the process of investigating the variables being discussed (Kumar, 2008). Integrating qualitative and quantitative methods allows to leverage the strengths of both of them leading to more accurate conclusions (Creswell, 2009). Ultimately, the mixed method approach seemed to be the most adequate choice to analyze pragmatically the non-observance of Gricean maxims when using puns for humor creation in the Tunisian sitcom *Choufli Hal*. In accordance with Lund (2012), using qualitative methods allows for a more comprehensive understanding and deeper insight of the subject matter and using quantitative methods allows for obtaining objectivity and generalizability. Ultimately, qualitative method helps identifying specific utterances that may create humor through clearly defined indicators. The researchers then seek to negotiate their meanings and interpretations (Creswell, 2009). Quantitative method, on the other hand, possesses strengths of presenting the findings in numerical representations, and percentages to gives a clearer idea about the occurrence of patterns which add objectivity to the results.

### **Profile of the Tunisian Sitcom *Choufli Hal***

The series, which ran for 6 seasons from 2005 to 2009, comprising 135 episodes, is still being broadcast to this day on "Al Wataniya 2" channel without interruption and achieving a high viewership rate, according to the official site of Elwatania channel. This made it appreciated and well known across different generations inside and outside Tunisia, including Algeria. Moreover, many of its episodes in all seasons are rated 9.9 on 10 in the Internet Media Data base (IMDb) unlike many Algerian sitcoms which were not even found in this data base which encourage us to work on *Choufli Hal* rather than the Algerian sitcom. What is noteworthy is that the series continues to attract high viewership ratings across

different age groups, even today, after 19 years since its first airing. On its official website, Jawhara FM (2020), published an article entitled; "*Choufli Hal*" *Breaks Records Over 20 Years: What's the Story?* In this article, they discussed a recently published statistics regarding viewership percentages across various Tunisian and foreign television channels. These statistics showed that The Tunisian National Television (Wataniya 2) topped the rankings with a significantly high level of channel popularity (29.52%) and viewership rate (27.49%), making it a prime advertising platform, surpassing newly aired productions. This remarkable achievement by the public channel is attributed to the series "*Choufli Hal*" (*Find Me a Solution*). People show consistent and continuous interest in watching this social and comic series, well-known for its characters "Sbouï" (Sofiane El Shaari) and "Slimane Labiedh" (Kamel Touati). This intriguing phenomenon in Tunisia elevates this unique television production to potentially become part of the national cultural heritage for the vast majority of Tunisians (Jawhara FM, 2020)

### **Background and Characters of the Tunisian Sitcom “Choufli Hal”**

To understand better the analytical part of this research, providing the background of the sitcom in hand and a description of its characters is vital. The series, which falls under the genre of sitcom, tells the story of a psychotherapist doctor. The story revolves around the continuous conflict between the educated doctor and his illiterate brother. The events of the series take place in a very small space: a floor of a building. On that floor lives the psychotherapist "Slimane Labiedh" with his family which consists of his mother Fadhila, his wife “Zaineb” and his daughters, Amani and Fatma. His brother, Sbouai, the most humorous and popular character, lives in a small apartment in the same floor. He is also works with Slimane in his cabinet as a secretary. The cabinet is in the same floor next to Slimane’s house and he shares its waiting room with Djanet, the fortune teller. She is also his neighbor and the owner the entire building. She lives with her adapted daughter “Azza” who works with her as

an assistant and the fiancée of Sbouai. In the same floor, there is a small workshop of electronics rented by “Baji” who is a friend to Slimane and Sbouai.

The Characters of Choufli Hal are listed below. Each one is accompanied by a brief description of his character.

1. **Sbouai:** the nurse and assistant of Slimane Labiedh’s clinic, and he is his half-brother from the same mother. He is a very fat person whose first interest is food. He is naïve, innocent, stupid, and spoiled by his mother. He thinks strangely and uses a unique logic. He sometimes says things that nobody can think of. He was expelled of school in the sixth grade. Yet, he got the wit to make unexpected things just to make fun of others or tease his brother or other people.
2. **Slimane:** a psychotherapist and a university lecturer, is characterized by a high level of knowledge, education and logical thinking. However, his prime interest is staying at home and watching TV rather than getting out with his wife. A very frank but a hypocrite person who always seeks his own interests and benefits. That is why, sometimes he has to adapt to the situation to get what he needs. Slimane Labiedh (as he calls himself) is the character who fears his wife and always has problems with her demands. He always tries to deal with her meticulously, yet does not provide everything she asks for. He is also in endless conflict with the stupidity of his brother, Sbouai who always excels in finding and making troubles.
3. **Fadhila:** the mother of Slimane and Sbouai. A very strict and serious woman who spoils her son “Sbouai”. She is also a good cook.
4. **Zeineb:** Slimane Labiedh’s wife. Strong, arrogant, jealous woman. She likes spending money unlike her husband. She does not like cooking or house chores and she never enter the kitchen. She always makes troubles for her husband concerning some aspects of their life like celebrating her birthday, their marriage anniversary or taking her out.

5. **Azza:** Jannet's assistant and the wife of Sboui. She is an excellent housewife and cook. However, she is a very controlling wife.
6. **Djanet:** the fortune teller, is the owner of the building and the neighbor of Slimane. She is a very stingy woman.
7. **Baji:** nicknamed "Al-Baji" MATRIX, owns a machine repair shop, a friend of Slimane and Sboui, and he is a very nosy man.
8. **Foushika:** a family friend who used to work for Al-Baji and became the guardian of the building. He is a witty, intelligent and also a nosy person.
9. **Amani:** Sliman's eldest daughter who studies at high school. Then, she became a university student.
10. **Fatima:** Slimane's younger daughter, studying in high school.
11. **Douja:** Zaynab's mother who is an educated, wealthy woman. She likes living like a young girl.
12. **Dalanda:** known as "Daddou", is the secretary of Slimane Labiedh.
13. **Midoo:** a patient of Slimane (later works with Zeineb), acts and talks like females.
14. **Feika:** nicknamed Foufa, she is Zeineb's friend.
15. **Tayeb:** a wealthy businessman who is the husband of Foufa, and became a friend of Slimane Labiedh.

### **Population and sampling Technique:**

In the field of research, understanding the fundamental concepts of population and sample is crucial for establishing the groundwork to draw valid and meaningful conclusions. Garg (2016) defined population in research as the entire assembly of individuals, objects or occurrences characterized by a common attribute, which serves as the main focus of inquiry. The population for this study is the interactions between all characters from the 135 episodes of the Tunisian sitcom 'Choufli Hal' from the five seasons. Concerning the selection of

sampling technique, researchers are free to choose the methods, techniques, and procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes (Cresswell, 2009). Due to the nature of our research, using randomization as a sampling technique to avoid bias will not be feasible. Thus, a non-probability sampling procedure, specifically, purposive sampling seemed to be adequate to this study. According to Daniel (2012), when utilizing purposive sampling procedure, the researcher intentionally chooses elements based on specific inclusion and exclusion criteria for participation. Once an element is confirmed to meet these criteria, it is chosen to be a part of the study. Since the primary focus of this research is the use of puns as a way for humor creation through the non-observance of Gricean maxims in Choufli Hal, the steps that were identified by Daniel (2012), were taken to select the sample. Firstly, stating a clear definition of the target population, "Choufli Hal". Secondly, identifying what to be included and excluded in the sample and creating a plan to select the sample that satisfy the inclusion and exclusion criteria. On that basis, the researchers included all the utterances made by Sbouai and Slimane and excluded the utterances made by other characters. Also, only utterances that contain puns and break conversational maxims were included. Thirdly, determining the size of the sample and the number of sample size. Hence, the sample is all the utterances that contain puns, and produced by the main characters "Sbouai and Slimane", in which they break one or more conversational maxims.

The decision to focus on Sbouai and Slimane is motivated by some reasons. Besides being the main characters in the sitcom, focusing on them, may help to delve deeply into the comic interplay between two specific characters, analyzing their interaction and how they play off each other humorously, and the type of humor that consistently arise from their interactions. Moreover, analyzing humor across all characters can be a vast undertaking and cannot be manageable. Focusing on two main characters allows for a more focused and in-depth analysis. Additionally, these two characters have distinct comic roles within the sitcom,

in the sense that “Slimane” is straight man and “Sbouai” is the goofball. Studying their utterances may help exploring how humor is created by two different characters’ personalities.

### **Data extraction**

The data of the present research was collected from the Tunisian Sitcom 'Choufli Hal'. In our process of data selection, we went through the following steps;

Firstly, all episodes of the five seasons were downloaded from the official YouTube channel of El-Watania. Then, the researchers watched thoroughly, attentively and independently all the 135 episodes to minimize bias and increase the reliability and credibility of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The focus was only on the scenes where Sbouai or Slimane are part of the interaction. A prolonged engagement by both researchers in this process had to be ensured as it is the foundation and the starting point that needs to be solid. Only utterances that contain puns were selected as primary data to be systematically identified for thorough analysis as the focus of our study is on how puns contribute to humor creation by breaking Gricean maxims.

Secondly, once both of the researchers fulfilled the previous task separately, they compared their findings. They went through a deep discussion during which they repeatedly returned to the source of data before making their final decision about the selected utterances. The researchers, after a deep discussion, made a consensus-based selection prioritizing utterances that were chosen by both of them. Among the overall utterances that were selected by both researchers, 42 common utterances and conversations were taken as data for further analysis (see App A for the utterances that were not in common). In this collection, characters must break one or more maxims of the cooperative principle in order to be taken into consideration. Ultimately, all utterances that contain puns, however the main characters observe the four maxims, were automatically excluded throughout the process of coding. Hence, one conversation was omitted. (see Appendix B)

Thirdly, all the collected data were transcribed in the Tunisian dialect, to preserve its sense of humor, and then translated to English using pun to pun and pun to non-pun strategies for translation (Delabastita, 1996).

In the process of data collection, the following codes were used;

1. Season (S): refers to the number of the season
2. Episode (Ep): refers to each episode of the data.
3. Time (T): refers to the time from which the tackled utterance or the conversation starts in the episode.
4. Context: refer to the context and the surrounding in which the utterance took place.
5. Type of pun: refers to the type of pun that was associated with the utterance.
6. Non-observed maxim: refer to violating, infringing, opting out or suspending one of the four maxims of the cooperative principle.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The method that has been utilized by the researchers as an analytical tool of data analysis is described in details below.

#### ***Content Analysis***

The content analysis serves as the fundamental research instrument that helps reaching an answer for the research questions of this study. Content analysis was defined by Hsieh and Shannon (2005) as a research technique involving the subjective interpretation of textual data content by systematically categorizing and identifying themes or patterns through coding. Its objective is to furnish comprehension and insight into the phenomenon being investigated. According to Patton (2002), qualitative content analysis employs inductive reasoning whereby themes and categories arise from thorough examination and continual comparison of data by the researcher and it can also incorporate deductive reasoning in which concepts or variables can be generated from theories or previous studies.

Hsieh and Shannon (2005) proposed three methods of qualitative content analysis based on the degree of involvement of inductive reasoning. The first is the summative content analysis which starts with word counting or the analysis of manifest content then progressing to uncover latent meaning and themes. The second is directed content analysis which begins with initial coding guided by theory or previous research with researchers allowing themes to emerge during data analysis, typically to validate or expand upon existing framework or theories. The last one is conventional qualitative content analysis which involves deriving categories directly from raw data.

Since the focus of our study is specifically on humor in the form of puns within the context of Choufli Hal and their relation to the non-observance of Gricean maxims, a directed approach would be the most appropriate one as it involves starting with a theoretical framework (Gricean nonobservance maxims) and relevant research findings to guide the initial coding process. This method permits researchers to confirm or extend existing theoretical frameworks or concepts within the context of the study.

The procedures that were identified by Hsieh and Shannon (2005) to conduct a directed content analysis were followed in the process of data analysis.

Firstly, the coding process was initiated by developing a clear and a comprehensive coding guideline that contains a list of expected categories that may be observed in the collected data (See Appendix C). This manual was reviewed and discussed by both researchers to ensure mutual understanding and agreement. The categories, which were agreed upon by both researchers, include; the type of puns used and the four Gricean conversational maxims (manner, quantity, quality, relevance) as the main categories. Subsequently, each category of the latter was subcategorized according to the non-observance maxims (flouting, violation, infringing, opting out, suspending) and the types of puns. These



categories and subcategories were defined in detail in the review of the literature and Appendix A.

Secondly, a pilot analysis was conducted on the coding manual in hand on a small sample of data to identify any ambiguities, inconsistencies or areas of improvement. The results of this pilot revealed an instance where the utterance did not respect the maxim of manner, however it did not fit any of the pre-defined non-observance maxims. This new subcategory was clearly defined and explained before the coding process. The definition is provided in details below.

Thirdly, before the coding process, researchers made sure to get familiar with the collected data by watching and pre-analyzing the utterances in their context repeatedly. Then, each researcher independently codes the data according to the coding guideline which helps mitigate bias and subjectivity as each researcher applies his own interpretation and perspective to the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Afterwards, researchers compared their coding results which revealed that differences between their interpretations outweigh the similarities. Consequently, an engagement in a thorough discussion to understand the reasons behind these differences and work for a resolution was vital. The following procedures were taken to resolve the problem:

1. Both researchers revisit the coding guideline to ensure mutual understanding of criteria and definition of all codes and categories (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
2. They conducted a further data exploration and made discussions to consider alternative interpretation and identify blind spots (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
3. They repeated the process of coding as it is considered an iterative process. The second process revealed similar coding with just two differences which were further discussed and agreed upon.

4. Once finalizing the coding process, the researchers then, conducted a peer debriefing to validate the interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### **The New Subcategory of Non-observance: Defying Maxim**

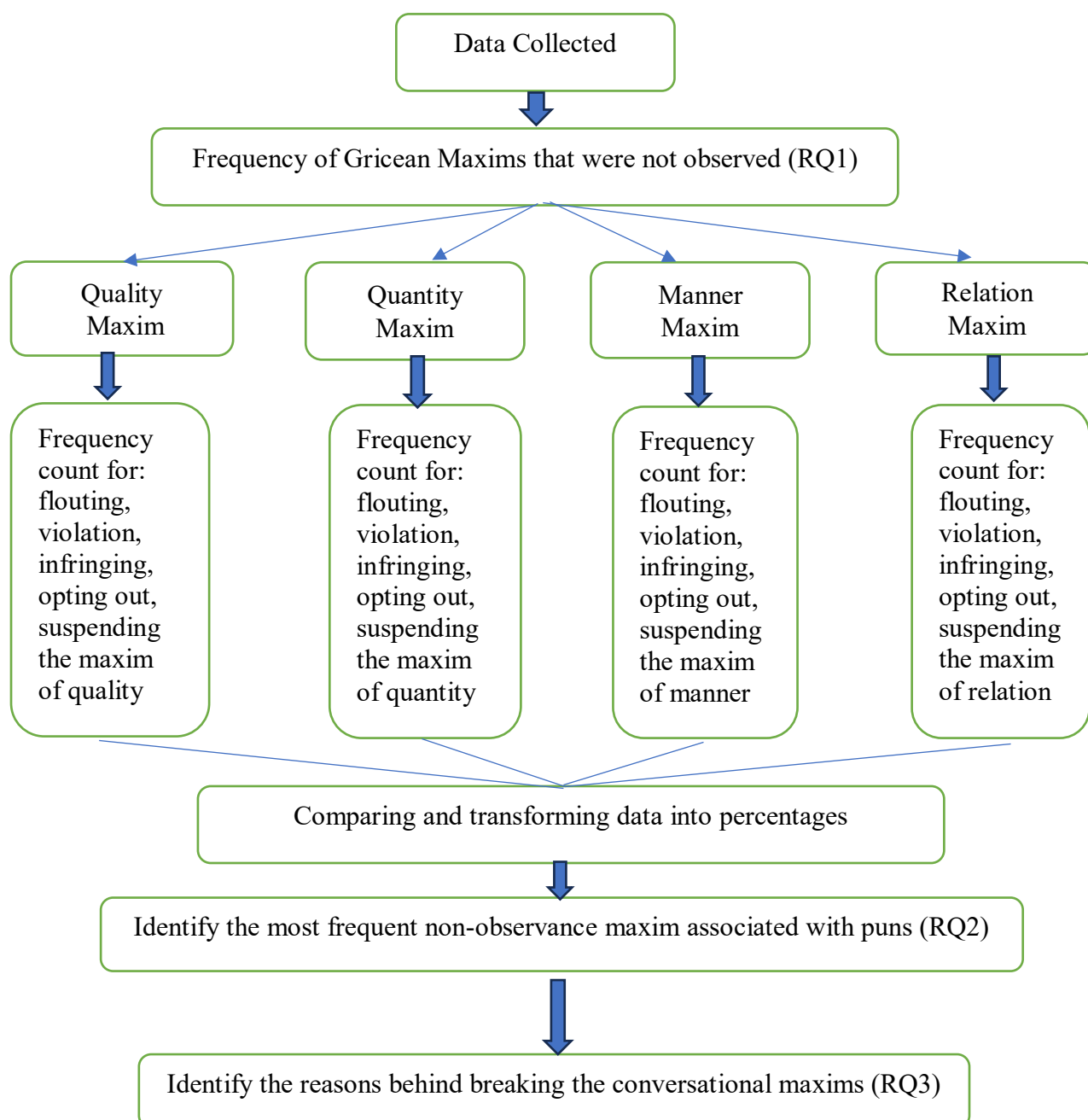
As discussed in the review of the literature, Grice suggested four non-observance maxims and Thomas (1995) added the fifth, “suspending” after finding that the four maxims suggested by Grice are not enough to explain some instances of miscommunication. In our case, this maxim was proposed after finding an utterance that did not respect the maxim of manner, however it did not fit any of the pre-defined non-observance maxims. After a deep analysis of this utterance, the researchers decided to define this non-observance maxim as an unintentional failure of observing a maxim because of the limited, illogical and stupid thinking, without any intention to mislead the hearer or create an implicature. To depreciate this new subcategory, the researchers proposed to name it *defying a maxim*. Defying as a label is chosen because it means going against something or challenging something. In this case, the speaker is going against the logic.

Although defying and infringing maxims share some aspects, but they do not serve the same situations. Both of them are produced unintentionally without creating an implicature. However, Defying the conversational maxim differs from infringing in the sense that speakers, unlike the case of infringing, master and comprehend the language. They do not have any mental or cognitive deficiencies and they are aware of what they are saying. Their utterances are grammatically correct and perfectly understood, however, they defy the logic in their use of the language. Hence this study will categorize the non-observed maxims into six different categories which are “flouting, violation, infringing, opting out, suspending and defying”.

### **Procedures of Data Analysis**

After collecting, interpreting and coding the data, the findings were quantified through counting frequencies and measuring occurrences of the non-observance of Gricean maxims with puns to create humor. During this stage, the primary aim was to establish links and derive significant insights from the recognized patterns and themes aligning with the research goals and the established theoretical model. The following figure shows the procedures that were followed for analyzing the data;

#### **Figure 1: Data Analysis Process**



In order to answer the research questions adequately, the analysis will focus on the cooperative maxims that were not respected and the non-observance maxims that were used in breaking them. The utterances and conversations were categorized into the four maxims that were not respected which are; quality, quantity, manner and relation to find out which maxim is the most frequently broken (RQ1), then identifying and describing the role of the non-observance maxims that contributed in the creation of humor in the form of puns within each

maxim of the Cooperative Principle (RQ2). Finally, an attempt to discover the reasons that make the main characters deviate from observing the maxims will be discussed (RQ3).

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

This section is devoted for analyzing the obtained data qualitatively and quantitatively.

#### **The Non-observance Maxims in Choufli Hal**

Several utterances and conversations were selected from the overall 41 conversations to be analyzed in detail so the reader can identify how data have been dealt with and analyzed before being categorized. Within each utterance or conversation, researchers made sure to provide a thorough description of its context by returning repeatedly to the episode and watch the circumstances in which the underlined occurrences were produced very carefully. Each maxim that was broken (quality, quantity, manner, relation) is analyzed separately in different examples within each subcategory (flouting, violating, infringing, opting out, suspending, defying) in relation to the characters' personalities and the situation. During the analysis, some utterances were found to break more than one maxim using similar non-observance maxim or different one, consequently, another category was created under the name of non-observance of more than one maxim. All the other similar cases are included in the Appendices.

The categories created for the quantitative results were according to the cooperative maxims that the main characters (Sbouai, Slimane) break the most and the specific type of maxim non-observance they utilized to break them. For this quantitative data, the instances where the character breaks more than one maxim in one utterance by either the same non-observance maxim or different ones. Respectively, the counting process was as follows; if the maxim of manner and relation were violated, 0.5 was added to the column of manner violation and 0.5 to relation violation. If more than two conversational maxims were not respected, the figure 0.33 was used. Utterances in which four maxims were broken were not

found. Similarly, when the actor breaks two maxims with two different non-observance maxims, the same procedure of counting was followed (e.g. When observing Infringing quality and Flouting quantity in the same utterance, 0.5 was added to the former and another 0.5 to the latter. The quantitative results are found in Table 1.

**Table1**

***The Maxims Non-observance in Choufli Hal***

Maxims	Flouting	Violation	Infringing	Opting out	Defying	Suspending	Total
Quality	1.9	02	00	00	00	00	03.9
Quantity	03	01	0.5	00	00	00	04.5
Manner	7.4	02	03	00	03	00	15.4
Relation	3.4	00	13.5	01	00	00	17.9
Total	15.7	05	17	01	03	00	41.7

Table 1 shows that in the 41 analyzed utterances there are almost 42 non-observant maxims, the most used type of them is “infringing” with an occurrence of 17 times (41.46%), followed by flouting with occurrence of 15.7 (38.29 %), in the third place comes violation (12.19%), defying (7.31%) and lastly opting out with a single occurrence (2.43 %). On the other hand, the most non-observed type of maxim is Relation with an occurrence of 17.9 times (43.65 %), followed by manner (37.56%), then quantity (10.97%) lastly, quality (9.51%). A deep qualitative explanation of each instance of non-observed cooperative maxim with its subcategories separately, supported by the numerical data are provided below.

**Maxim of Quality**

The quality maxim in Choufli Hal was not observed by both characters, Sbouai and Slimane. The quantitative results are shown in table 2.

**Table2**

***Quality Maxim Non-observance***

<b>Maxim non-observance</b>	<b>Sbouai</b>	<b>Slimane</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Quality Flouting</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.4</b>
<b>Quality Violation</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>Infringing Quality</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>
<b>Defying Quality</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>
<b>Opting out Quality</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>
<b>Suspending Quality</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>5.4</b>

Results summarized in Table2 shows that this maxim was not observed using only flouting and violation and it is the least common type used with puns in Choufli Hal'. However, flouting the maxim of quality was not observed in isolation but in combination with “manner”, in one utterance and with “manner and relation”, in three utterances which will be later discussed in the non-observance of more than one maxim category. Sbouai did not use flouting quality at all and this can be attributed to his, sometimes, honest naïve character. The non-observance maxims: infringing, defying, opting out and suspending were not found when using puns by both main characters. The other similar example concerning flouting quality maxim is included in Appendix D.

It can be noted that quality maxim was not observed by both Sbouai and Slimane differently. Slimane used quality flouting most of the time whereas Sbouai used quality violation most of the time.

### ***Violation of Quality***

Violating quality showed a very modest occurrence with one instance done by Slimane and two instances done by Sbouai. In the following exchanges it can be noticed that humor can be created when using puns that violates quality to deliberately deceive someone without

any intention to create an implicature. Three examples will be analyzed and discussed in details.

### Example 01

In **S01.Ep16 time: 12.58**, Sbouai is preparing for his engagement with Azza and finds himself in need to access funds from his money which are saved in Slimane's bank account. Unfortunately, Slimane had already transferred the entire sum to Zaineb for a business venture with the agreement that she would promptly return it but she did not keep her word on time.

As previously mentioned, (in the characters' profile), Slimane is known for prioritizing his own interest above all. However, when he finds himself in need of Sbouai for his own interests, he adopts a different demeanor. He begins to show affection toward Sbouai, addressing him with warmth and speaking in a smoother, more pleasant tone than usual just to prevent him from proclaiming his money. Eventually, he gave him a check with a very small amount of money for the hair dresser and the costume of the engagement; pretending that the larger amount of money is safer in the bank and it is not the appropriate time to retrieve them.

The script is as follows:

سيدي خويا، نجم نمشي للبنانكة نجبد الفلوس؟:سبوعي

Brother, can I go to the bank to retrieve the money?

لا، يعيش خويا. توا وقت خدمة:سليمان

No, please brother. This is time of work.

اش باش نعمل انا. وقتنا ووقت البنك كيفكيف. وقتناش باش نجبد فلوسي؟:سبوعي

What can I do then. The banks and our working time are the same. When can I retrieve my money?

( يشير بيده الى اللقاء ) أنى قتناك فلوسك في الكونت متاعي في الحفظ وفي لمان:سليمان

I told you; your money is safe and (waving good bye with his hand)



When being untruthful about the safety of the money in his bank account, and intentionally deceiving Sbouai for not getting his money back, Slimane violated the maxim of quality. In doing so, he used the homographic pun with the word safe (lamane) to indicate the safety of the money in his bank account (fi-lhifdh) and to say goodbye when he waved with his hands. Slimane here did not want Sbouai to deduce an implied meaning that is why there is no conversational implicature in this joke. The audience cannot understand the humor in the underlined pun since the act of waving with his hand while uttering the pun “Lamane” may not seem humorous at first glance unless they recognize the GTVH’s six Knowledge Resources of this joke; the language (L) Slimane used when he employed the word (في لمان) with two different meanings simultaneously. Uttering the word (في الحفظ/فيلحفظ) followed by the word (filamane/ في لمان) indicates that Sbouai’s money is safe. However, when Slimane waved with his hand, he added another meaning which is “get out”. The narrative (N) which refers to the sequence of events that led Slimane to use this pun eventually. The Target (T), Slimane does not want Sbouai to understand that he trying to get rid of him that is why he seems friendly with him makes Sbouai the butt of this joke. Also, the knowledge of the situation (S) that refers to the usual and current behavior of Slimane when being under pressure. The Logical Mechanism (LM), it is influenced by all the previous points in which the audience have to know the character of Slimane to see how the two different scripts were put together. Despite the fact that the Slimane always belittles and diminishes Sbouai, in this case he is being so nice just to fool Sbouai by convincing him that his money is safe, preventing him from proclaiming his money and sending him out of his office in a very witty way by using one pun. The script opposition. If the audience understand the logical mechanism, they would infer the reason behind why Slimane is being so nice and why he waved with his hand to Sbouai when saying (في لمان). Eventually; they may find the humor in his action.

## Example 02

Another example of violating this maxim occurred in **S03.Ep04. T36 :53**. Mr. Tayeb and his wife Foufa are invited in Slimane's house for dinner. The following conversation is between Zaineb, Mrs. Tayeb, Fadhida and Sbouai. After dinner, Mr. Tayeb gave Slimane and Sbouai two cigars and recommended smoking these kind of cigarettes as they help to digest food. Slimane told Tayeb that he does not smoke but Sbouai was excited and he likes how the cigarette smells. His mother "Fadhila" stared at him angrily and warned him to put a cigarette in his mouth as long as he is alive. Mr. Tayeb was surprised by her reaction telling her that Sbouai is mature enough to do whatever he wants. Fadhila replied that they can never do something she is not happy with and Zaineb replied on the reaction of her mother-in-law. The utterances are as follows:

زينب « Une vrais mère poule ». سي الطيب. أمي فضيلة راهي :زينب

Zaineb: Mrs Tayeb, mother Fadhila is a real mother hen.

ياوووووه أمي. قاتلك الي انتي دجاجة :سبوعي

Sbouai: Mom; she is calling you a chicken.

أنا دجاجة؟ فضيلة

Fadhila: I am a chicken?

لا يامي فضيلة والله ما نقصد. العبارة معناها باهي. تعني الام المثالية :زينب

Zaineb: No, I didn't mean that, I swear. The expression has a positive meaning.

Similar to the previous example, understanding the incongruity in this joke requires recognizing the six knowledge resources. When Sbouai broke the maxim quality, it seems like he used the infringement non-observance maxim. This can be attributed to the limited knowledge of Sbouai by not being familiar with this French idiomatic expression. However, recognizing the situation, by watching the facial expression of Sbouai, implies that he knows what Zaineb meant and he said that intentionally to mislead his mother and creating a problem

for Zaineb with Fadhila. Sbouai violated the maxim of quality by proving his mother with information that he knows it is wrong. The humor in this case is triggered with the resolution the homographic pun of (دجاجة) used by Sbouai most of the time. The nature of his character suggest that Sbouai is a naïve and a stupid person, however, in this case he showed some tricky thinking and wit that brings about the opposition script when he violated the maxim of quality.

### Maxim of Quantity

Table 2 provides a quantitative result on the frequencies of not observing the maxim of quantity by both characters.

**Table 03**

#### *The Quantity Maxim Non-observance*

Maxim non-observance	Slimane	Sbouai	Total
Quantity flouting	01	02.5	03.5
Quantity infringing	00	0.5	0.5
Quantity violation	00	00	00
Quantity suspending	00	00	00
Quantity Defying	00	00	00
Quantity opting out	00	00	00
Total	01	03	04

The maxim of quantity is the third maxim that was not observed when using puns (table 1). It is broken when one party contributes to the conversation with more or less information than the required, which may lead to humor. It was flouted in four spots, two of them in combination with defying manner. It was also infringed in one spot in combination with relation which is discussed in the non-observance of more than one maxim category.

Table 3 illustrates the number of times this maxim was not observed and highlights the most utilized non-observance maxims to break the quality of the conversation. It shows that quantity maxim was broken only by flouting and infringing. This indicates that when contributing to the conversation with more or less than the required, characters opted at creating implicature or they did so because of limited linguistic knowledge. Surprisingly, Sbouai is the one who created implicatures when not observing this maxim more than Slimane did. On the other hand, infringing quantity was executed by Sbouai only. Violation, opting out, suspending Quantity Maxims were not found in the utterances of both main characters.

### ***Flouting Quantity:***

The maxim of quantity is flouted when the speaker intentionally contributes to the conversation with more or less information than required in order to create a conversational implicature. The followings are two examples of how flouting quantity maxim may generate humor.

### **Example 03**

The first case of flouting quantity appeared in **S01.Ep16. T33:48**, when Azza, Sbouai's fiancée, issued a condition that her partner must bring gold with him on the day of their engagement; otherwise, the engagement would be postponed. This demand incited anger in Sbouai, prompting him to seek help from his brother, who happened to be in his office at the time.

نحب نقلك حاجة و ماتقصش عليا. نحب نشري حنش. :سبوعي

Sbouai: I want to tell you something but do not interrupt me. I want to buy a snake.

حنش؟ واش تعمل بيه. كانش تربيه في الاستوديو متاعك. :سليمان

Slimane: A snake? What are you going to do with it? Unless you want to raise it in your studio!!!

In this dialogue, Sbouai's statement about wanting to buy a snake employs a clever use of polysemic pun with the word "حنش" (hnash), which can mean both "a snake" and "a type of jewelry" in this context. By intentionally omitting clarification, Sboui flouts the quantity maxim, providing Slimane with insufficient information and leading to his surprise and confusion. By choosing the word "حنش" instead of (jewelry/ صياغة), Sbouai made the situation funny leading Slimane to initially perceives it as a genuine desire to purchase a real snake. Furthermore, Slimane's playful suggestion about raising a snake in the studio adds comic value to the exchange and further emphasizes the miscommunication caused by Sbouai's statement. However, Sbouai did not want to be unclear instead, there is an implicature in his statement. He intentionally gave less information to Slimane as he was so angry because of the delay of his engagement and his desperate need for his money. He was expecting Slimane to understand the implied meaning that he wants his money to buy jewelry for Azza especially after his continuous proclaim of his money.

#### Example 04

Another case where the maxim of quality was flouted is in **S01.Ep06. T13 :35**. Against the backdrop of a crisis marked by chaotic and illegal sales, Fouchika finds himself compelled to sell his mobile shop and posts some signs that indicate his attention. One of these signs catches the attention of Slimane when going to his office and he could not prevent himself from commenting on it.

.....؟.سليمان: شنوة فوشيكة؟ حتى انتي باش تبيع اصلك

Slimane: what's the matter fouchika?

Are you selling your origin?

فوشيكة: شنوه؟

Fouchika: sorry?

... ..سليمان: التجاري

Slimane: the commercial ...

In this dialogue, Slimane employs a clever use of a polysemic pun with the word *اصلك* which means “your origin” when asking Fouchika about whether he is going to sell his origin. This word can be interpreted as “origin, source” or “commercial assets” as meant in Slimane’s utterance. By intentionally offering insufficient information to convey a hidden meaning to Fouchika, Slimane flouted the maxim of quantity. He created confusion, prompting Fouchika to seek clarification. Due to his intellectual nature, the audience can read between the lines of Slimane’s utterance if they share the cultural contexts which encompass the collective knowledge that individuals typically possess regarding various aspects of life. In this case Slimane is implying to Fouchika (and the audience) that everybody is willing to sell his origin for money nowadays. Slimane’s witty remark to Fouchika generated a funny effect despite the fact that it carries a very deep message to the audience.

### Maxim of Manner

The frequencies of breaking the maxim of manner are stated in table 04.

**Table 04**

#### *The Manner Maxim Non-observance*

Maxim non-observance	Sbouai	Slimane	Total
Manner Flouting	3.3	4.1	7.4
Manner infringing	03	00	03
Manner Violation	02	00	02
Manner Defying	02	00	02
Manner Opting out	00	00	00
Manner suspending	00	00	00
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>13.4</b>

Breaking the maxim of manner comes in the second place after the maxim of relation (table 1 above). The maxim of manner was not adhered to in different spots in order to create humor when using puns as table 4 shows. Creating humor when not observing this maxim relies on how the character may seem funny while providing ambiguous, confusing or vague contributions. Table 4 indicates that Sbouai is the most manner non-observant using different non-observance maxims with 10.3 occurrences by flouting, violation, infringing and defying. Whereas Slimane holds the second place with 4.1 occurrences, by flouting manner. Opting out and suspending were not used.

### ***Flouting Manner***

If one of the main characters was noticed to provide ambiguous, not clear and vague information or speak in unclear and unordered manner in order to send a conversational implicature, he was considered flouting the maxim of manner. Table 4 provides a detailed account about how Sbouai and Slimane broke this maxim. It shows that both of them failed to observe the maxim of manner almost equally (3.1 Vs 3.3) mostly by flouting when they used puns in their utterances, in order to create an implicature. Although he seems stupid, Sbouai sometimes shows his wit to make Slimane the butt of the joke which indicates that Sbouai, the illiterate person also can be ambiguous to send hidden messages just like Slimane, the literate one. This is the unique thing about this sitcom as it does not focus on one character to be the butt of the joke in all the funny utterances. The following exchanges discuss different instances of flouting the maxim of manner and analyze the intricate dynamics that might have led to the creation of humor. Another example is provided in Appendix E.

### **Example 05**

In **S01.Ep27. T20:30**, Fatouma told her father that she wants to be a teacher of the Spanish Dance Salsa. Commenting on her, Sbouai made the cheering sound they produce to support Flamingo dancers which is “Olé”. Slimane, is not happy with the job Fatma has

chosen even after she said that she is joking and apologized. Furiously, he wanted to go to his office forgetting about the coffee that he asked for. When his mother reminded him to drink coffee, Sbouai replied in a provocative and sarcastic way if he wants his coffee alone or with milk using the pun that occurs in the French word “au lait” with the Spanish word “Olé”.

سليمان: وانت فطومة. اش ناوية تطلع

Slimane: And you Fatouma, what are you intending to be in the future?

انا ناوية نطلع أستاذة متاع صالصة: فطومة

Fatma: I want to become a teacher of Salsa in the future.

سبو عي: يا سلام (in a sarcastic way)

Sbouai: Olé

*After seeing her father got angry, Fatma apologized but he refused her apology and prepared himself to go to his office even though he wanted to drink coffee after lunch. His mother reminded him that asked for coffee but Sbouai commented on her words in a sarcastic way:*

سبو عي: café au lait سيدي خويا تحبها قهوة حليب ولا

Sbouai: Brother! do you want it coffee alone or with milk? (sarcastic reply)

The homophonic pun, Sbouai used in this context “au lait and Olé” may trigger humor when recognizing the incongruity between the stupid, limited knowledge version of Sbouai and his witty and tricky version. Sbouai flouted the maxim of manner when he commented on Slimane’s desire for coffee in a sarcastic manner. It was not clear whether he is seriously asking Slimane about the type of drink he prefers or he is just playing on words between the French word "au lait" and the Spanish one "olé" with the implication of teasing Slimane. Recognizing the humor in this utterance requires being familiar with the situational context and understand that Sbouai is enjoying teasing his brother, Slimane by using clever pun that reflects his witty thinking sometime.



### Example 06

Flouting manner appeared also in **S02.Ep25. T35:39** when Sbouai went to Al-Birka (a place where jewelry sold) with his mother, Jannet and Azza to buy the jewelry for the engagement ceremony. When they returned, they found Slimane with Baji and Fouchika having a discussion next to Baji's store so Sbouai joined them.

سليمان: اه بابا قداش كحيت؟

Slimane: So! How much money you pay?

ما كحيتش. ماعجبها شي في البركة. سبوعي

Sbouai: I didn't pay any. She didn't like anything in Albirka.

معناها ماتماش صياغة؟ باجي

Baji: this means that there is no jewelry?

لالا غدوة باش نرجع انا وعزة: سبوعي

سليمان اه؟ وحدكم؟

Slimane: (in an angry voice) are you going with he alone?

لالا معانا امي زادا: سبوعي

Sbouai: No, my mother will be with us too.

رد بالك ترجع وحدك مكاتش تطراسيلك تكح من الفيترينة الأولى. وهاو نبه عليك ما تسانسش مرتك بالمصروف: سليمان الزايد. اعمل كيفي انا مع زينب. النفس لا وكلمة لا ما تجيب بلاء

Slimane: Be careful and don't go back alone with Azza or you will start paying money from the first jewelry shop. Take my piece of advice and don't let your wife take the habit of spending money. Do what I do with Zayneb, I don't let her spend money anywhere this way I avoid many problems.

*Meanwhile, Zayneb and her friend Foufa entered and she asked Slimane to give Foufa 500*

*DT, the cost of a dress she bought to attend Tuhur of her friend's son. She also asked him 100*

*DT to give to the boy. This makes Slimane cough as he was smoking shisha which makes*

*Sbouai comment:*

سيدي خويا هاك ظهرت تكح مليح. ز عمه من الشيشة؟:سبو عي

Sbouai: Brother! You are coughing so hard. Is it caused by shisha?

Like the previous example, Sbouai showed his witty thinking when he used the pun with the word *يكح*. This homographic pun which means “to cough” in the conventional meaning but in the Tunisian dialect it can be used for “paying money”. Slimane wanted to mock Sbouai when asking him (*قداش كحيت* / how much money did you pay), then he started showing off (as usual) by giving pieces of advice on how to deal with wives financially. Eventually, his wife disclosed his truth when asking for a huge amount of money for unnecessary things and he could not refuse her request. The humor lies in Sbouai’s reply when he used Slimane’s mocking against him. Sbouai’s question (*هاك ظهرت تكح مليح. ز عمه*) (مالشيشة؟), by which he flouted the maxim of relevance, make a conversational implicature. This implicature means that Slimane is the most extravagant spender on his wife even if he claimed the opposite a little while ago. For the audience to understand this implicature and its incongruity to find the humor, it is important to have a background linguistic knowledge of the term *يكح* and the butt of the joke (Slimane)

After these cases, it can be deduced that flouting the maxim of manner does not necessarily hinder the communication but it creates a humorous effect when delivering hidden messages.

### **Example 07**

In **S02.Ep 23. T15:31**, Sbouai is upset because Slimane woke him up early in the morning of Ramadan, out of his official working hours, just to deliver a paper for Slimane. He started complaining because even in the afternoon, he won’t have time to take a nap as he is obliged to stand in the queue of the bakery to bring the hot bread for the majesty of Slimane.

الي سيادتي هي لي تصرف على الشهواني متاعك. أيا نقصاك على الشهواني متاعك man- نعلمك يا طحش: سليمان يساعدي. ونعوضلك السوايع الضايعة متاعك؟ نطلع رابح في النازلة راهو

Slimane: let me inform you belly-man that majesty is spending money on your cravings. What about stopping them and reimbursing your lost hours? I will be benefit in all cases. It suits me

The humor in this utterance appears in the pun that Slimane used to show his superiority (as usually do) over Sbouai in which he flouted the maxim of manner. The contaminated pun (طحش-man) where Slimane linked the word (man), usually linked to heroes like super-man spider-man, with the word (طحش) which refers to the fat person with big belly, in the Tunisian dialect, made Slimane's contribution not clear. He linked these two words in particular deliberately to create a conversational implicature to Sbouai. When sharing the general knowledge context of the sitcom, it becomes easy to infer what is the implied meaning that Slimane wanted Sbouai to understand, which leads to recognizing the incongruity and triggers the humor. Since Slimane is the intellectual person, he always tries to use sophisticated and unexpected terms. When he used the word man, he referred to one quality that heroes possess which is "doing big things", but when linking it with طحش the meaning became negative as it describes Sbouai as a hero in eating or a hero in doing bad, useless, big things. Similar examples are included in Appendix E.

### ***Infringing Manner***

Infringing the maxim of manner was considered when the utterance that contains the pun creates ambiguity to the other part mainly because its linguistic structure is not correct. This type of non-observance maxim was caused mainly by Sbouai (*see table 4*) and this may be ascribed to his naïve side, limited knowledge character. The subsequent examples examine deeply the instances of infringing the maxim of manner.

### **Example 08**

Infringing manner can be seen in **S01. Ep26. T36:23**. After having dinner at a restaurant with his mother, his fiancée and Janet, Sbouai returned home with his mother finding himself in the company of Mr. Ben Amour (a friend of Slimane) and his wife, Douja and Mr. Houcine (a friend of Douja) who were invited for dinner in Slimane's house. Seizing the opportunity Slimane introduced His mother and his brother to the guests. Zaineb (commenting on Slimane) said that Sbouai's is getting engaged very soon and they are invited.

fiancé: زوجة بن عمر: عندك برشي

Have you been engaged for a long time?

سبو عي: لا عندي وحدة برك واسمها عزة

No, I have just one and her name is Azza.

In this dialogue, Ben Omar's wife asked Sbouai about the period he has been engaged using the French word "fiancée". This word is a homophonic pun holding the meaning of the verb to get engaged and the nouns of the person who got engaged to. As Sbouai know only the latter meaning of the word, humor arose with his response (one more time, attributed to the nature of the character) when infringing the maxim of manner. Sbouai's limited linguistic knowledge context with Ben Omar's wife made him produce an ambiguous response with no intention to deceive the listener. Yet, a prior knowledge of the character and the situation where the utterance took place is very important for the audience to understand the humorous effect.

The second example of infringing manner is found in Appendix C and the other cases where manner was not observed in relation with other maxims are found and analyzed in the non-observance of more than one maxim category.

### *Violation of Manner*

Instances where the maxim of manner was violated by both main characters are very limited as they were found only in two spots which were done by Sbouai (*See table 4*). Similar to flouting, violating this maxim is done intentionally, however, they differ in the fact that when violating the maxim of manner, the speaker's intention is not to create an implicature but just to deceive and mislead the hearer. Eventually, this might have led to a humorous effect. Consider the coming cases where Sbouai violated the manner maxim in his use of punning expressions.

#### **Example 09**

In **S01.Ep09. T07:18**, Slimane is explaining to Sbouai the meaning of hypnotherapy as he is going to Alhmmamet to attend a seminar on this subject. He told him about a doctor who succeeded to apply this therapy on a chicken and this session of therapy was aired on TV but unfortunately, the chicken died.

سليمان: في بالك مرة واحد نوم دجاجة

Do you know that a person hypnotizes a chicken one day?

سبوعي: إي بالامارة مدت الزوز

Sbouai: yes! and it stretched both legs

شنوه؟:سليمان

Slimane: What?

سبوعي: ماو فيها زوز رجلين. ما نجموش نقولو مدت الأربعة

Sbouai: because it has only two legs, we cannot say it stretched the four.

In Tunisian dialect, there is an idiomatic expression they use to say that someone died which is “مد الأربعة”/ “She or he stretched his/ her arms and legs”. However, in the case of the chicken, because it has two legs, Sbouai said “it stretched the two” using the polysemic pun مدت الزوز/ الأربعة since there is a semantic relation between the two terms. According to this

context, Sbouai deliberately violated to maxim of manner by providing an ambiguous and unclear statement. Yet, if we consider the character of Sbouai, humor may be attributed to his own philosophy and way of analyzing things. The fact that chicken naturally have two legs, Sbouai would be right when neglecting the possibility of saying (مدت الاربعة). However, the absurdity occurred because applying such an idiom in the case of the chicken violate the maxim of manner and lead to humor.

### Example 10

The tenth case was taken from **S04. Ep 23. T09:18** where Sbouai is going to stop a taxi for his wife to go to her work. In his way down he encountered his brother, Slimane and they made the above-mentioned conversation.

يخي وين ماشي: سليمان

Slimane: where are you going?

هابط لوطا: سبوعي

Sbouai: going down

مالا هابط ل فوق؟: سليمان

Slimane: did I say that you are going down up?

Slimane used the antonymic pun هابط ل فوق to comment humorously on the utterance produced by Sbouai. Slimane was trying to mock Sbouai because he exaggerated the description of his destination by using these two semantically opposite words. Understanding the linguistic context is crucial for the audience to understand the humor in Slimane's commenting utterance on Sbouai's as the expression هابط لوطا is commonly used in the Tunisian dialect. However, using this pun in this particular spot build an incongruity which led to a humorous effect.

### *Defying Manner*

This new subcategory, was detected when the utterance was spoken with no intention to deceive or mislead the hearer or create an implicature. On the contrary, the speaker was trying to be cooperative but his failure to observe the maxim of manner occurred when he made himself ambiguous when producing illogical and stupid utterances using punning words and expressions. The only character who was found to defy the maxim of manner, undoubtedly, was Sbouai. The coming examples provide a thorough analysis of how Sbouai defied this maxim and why it can be considered humorous.

#### **Example 11**

The first case of defying manner was found in **S02. Ep16.T32:20** when Slimane asked Sbouai to change the water of the aquarium. After a while, he asked him if he did what he was asked for. Sbouai said that he poured the water in the sink and put the fish in a bowl waiting for the aquarium to dry.

aquarium بدلت الماء نتاع :سليمان

Slimane: have you changed the water of the aquarium?

صايي. صببتو الكل في لافابو:سبوعي

Sbouai: I have poured it all in the sink

و الحوات؟:سليمان

Slimane: and the fish?!!!

كايتهم. (يضحك). نفدالك معاك. أني حطيتهم في الطنجرة حتى يشيح لاکواريوم:سبوعي

Sbouai: I ate them(laughs). Just kidding. They are in the saucepan until the aquarium dries.

The incongruity in Sbouai's reply appears in his use the polysemic pun with the semantic relation between the word "aquarium" and "waiting the aquarium to dry" to fill it with water again. Sbouai neither violated nor flouted this maxim because he was not trying to deceive Slimane deliberately and he had no implied meaning for Slimane to understand.

Sbouai tried to be cooperative while communicating, however his strange way of thinking which lacks logic made his contribution ambiguous to Slimane. Using this form of polysemic pun very cleverly which eventually led to the creation of the script opposition revealing that the aquarium is not supposed to dry before filling it up again with water. From this, the audience can deduce the humor by recognizing how Sbouai is the butt of this conversational joke because of his stupidity.

This non-observance maxim is further explained in detail in the combination category with flouting quantity.

### **Relation Maxim**

Table 5 provides all the numerical data concerning frequencies and types of not observing the maxim of relation.

**Table 5**

#### ***The Relation Maxim Non-observance***

Maxim non-observance	Slimane	Sbouai	Total
Relation flouting	3.5	01	04.5
Relation infringing	00	13.5	13.5
Relation opting out	00	01	01
Relation Violation	00	00	00
Relation suspending	00	00	00
Relation Defying	00	00	00
Total	03.5	15.5	19

This maxim had the lion's share of being not observed, comparing to the other maxims (see table1). When the character uses puns to contribute with unnecessary and irrelevant information and deviates from the original topic being discussed, he was considered failing to



observe the maxim of relation. This maxim was mostly not observed through infringing with frequency of occurrence 13.5 time done by Sbouai, of course. Slimane on the other hand failed to observe this maxim using flouting which copes with his nature and personality. Suspending, violation and defying Relation Maxim were not found.

### ***Flouting Relation***

Flouting the maxim of relation indicates using the punning expression to give irrelevant information and yet conveying an implicature that triggers humorous effect. The most cases where the maxim of relation was flouted are uttered by Slimane. However, in his most contributions, Slimane did not just flout the relation maxim but he combined it with flouting manner or quality. These cases are discussed in the combination category. Only two cases found where Slimane flouted just the maxim of relation. They are analyzed in the following lines.

### **Example 12**

In **S03.Ep02. T27:31**, Baji is known for his interference in people's affairs and snitching their private activities. After hearing a breaking news about Sbouai's issue with his wife Azza, Baji immediately went to Slimane and told him the news.

أيا الباجي بعطيك الصبة ..... أه الصحة لي جيت وقتلي: سليمان

Slimane: so, Baji, thank you so much for your snitching, ah.... For letting me know!!!

By using the paronymic pun (الصبة-الصحة), Slimane flouted the maxim of relation intentionally as he wanted to send a sign to Baji (and the audience) indicating that Baji is a snitchy person, gossip and reveals others' secrets as the word (الصبة) indicates. Because of his personality and character (discussed earlier), Slimane did not hesitate to hint the negative side of Baji's act even though he seemed to appreciate the fact that he came and snitched Sbouai's private affair to him. Understanding this script opposition is very important to appreciate the humor in this utterance when recognizing that the butt of this joke is Baji.

### Example 13

In S01. Ep 11. T10:29, Sbouai is in his office preparing some medical cards for Jannet's clients. He was thinking and almost lost when Slimane appeared suddenly, the act that frightened him and made him drop all the cards in the face of Slimane. Sbouai apologized justifying his act by being lost in thoughts.

بربي قلبي مخك وينو واشيبك كل ما تراني تترعد؟:سليمان

Slimane: Please tell me. Why do you start shivering each time you see me?

يسبوعي: حتى شي. كنت سارح

Sbouai: Nothing, I was lost in thought.

سليمان: اش خص كون جيت سارح. راك تنفع فينا خير.

If only you could be a shepherd, you would be useful to us better.

The pun in this dialogue resolves in the word سارح which Sbouai used, to say he was lost in thoughts but Slimane used it against Sbouai referring to the shepherd who takes care of sheep. The meanings of the two words are too distinct and they have no semantic relation which forms a homographic pun. Slimane flouted the maxim of relation when he added unnecessary information in his contribution referring to Sbouai as a shepherded which stands against the expected answer. Although Slimane's statement (underlined) does not adhere to the relevance of the situation, it was done intentionally for humorous effect. Being familiar with the situational context and the nature of each character helps to recognize that exaggerated the situation for comic purposes. He used the pun in the underlined utterance just to send a conversational implicature to Sbouai (and the audience) about his futility. He implied the connection between Sbouai's state of being lost in thought and his ability to be helpful if he would work as a shepherd, even though there is no logical relation between the two.

### ***Infringing Relation***

When infringing the maxim of relation, the character fails to give information that are relevant to the topic being discussed due to his limited linguistic knowledge and capacities. The infringement of this maxim was found in 12 spots where Sbouai was the only non-observant interlocutor (*see Appendix F for the other examples*). Three additional instances of infringing the relation maxim were also found in connection with other maxims and are analyzed in the non-observance of more than one maxim category. Table 5 states clearly that Slimane does not have any contribution in infringing the manner maxim, so all the following examples analyze how Sbouai's utterances that contain puns might have led to a kind of amusement.

#### **Example 14**

In **S01. Ep06. T15:35** appears Hachmi, a customer of Jannet. He convinced Sbouai to fill in a lottery ticket of football and he won a good amount of money. To repay Sbouai for this favor, he invited him to watch a delayed match in the stadium then have dinner at the restaurant together.

هاشمي: عندنا ماتش روطار، غدوة نتعدالك تمشي معايا.

Hachmi: We have a delayed football match. I will swing by you tomorrow to go with me.

سبوعي: خسارة، روطار موخر عليا. مانجمش نمشي معاك.

Sbouai: Unfortunately, late is too late for me. I cannot go with you.

..، كنا باش نلعبو الاحد، صبت المطر، الجامعة اجلت الماتش!!!! هاشمي: روطار

Hachmi: delayed! We were supposed to play on Sunday, the football club postponed the match.

تعرف اذى ماكنتش نعرفها؟ تعيين الماتشوات يكون من طرف أساتذة متاع جامعة?: Abon: سبوعي

Sbouai: really? I didn't know that organizing the time of matches is held by university teachers.

As Sbouai is not a big fan of football (this is what Azza said when Sbouai was filling the lottery ticket), he has no clue on the terminology used in football. The fact that Sbouai and Hachmi do not share the same background knowledge context about football led to a misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the terms ( روطار ) which means late in English and( الجامعة ) which means university and this led the creation of the homographic puns. The incongruity in Sbouai responses (underlined) led to the creation of humorous effect. Although he thought he has been cooperative as he was responding accordingly (without any implied meaning), his ignorance made him, unintentionally, infringe the maxim of relation when providing irrelevant responses that do not match the expected ones.

### Example 15

In S04. Ep01. T11 :21, Sbouai was assisting the workers in the construction activities of his brother's villa when Zaineb asked him to tell the painter that she wants her bedroom's color to be a light peach.

peche clair احمر واصفر؟ انا ندهن بيت نومي حمرا وصفرا؟ قتلو ادونها!!! شنوا: زينب

Zaineb: What, red and yellow!!!? I paint my room red and yellow? I told him to paint it with light peach color.

؟ ماهو خوخ peach وشنوا معنتها peach شنوى اختي زينب؟ باش توخلوها الكل في راسي؟ ماك قلنتها نوا،: سبوعي  
ولالا؟ والخوخ واش لونو؟ ماهو احمر واصفر.

Sbouai: what's the matter Zaineb? Are you going to blame me on every single thing? you said it, "peach", what color does the peach have? Red and yellow; isn't it?

Humor occurred when Sbouai interpreted her request in a very wrong and irrelevant way and asked the painter to paint the room red and yellow. The incongruity that led to the humorous effect can be recognized when realizing that Sbouai infringed the maxim of

relation. Sbouai took the literal meaning of Zaineb's utterance (*péche claire*) by which he created the morphological pun between the color and the concrete real fruit (peach). Sbouai, because of his limited thinking, concluded that Zaineb meant the real color of the peach. In fact, Sbouai tried to be cooperative because he did not inform the painter about the wrong color deliberately and he had no intention to deceive any one or build an implied meaning. He broke the maxim of relation because of his restricted capacities concerning colors in the French language.

### Example 16

In S04. Ep28. T24: 51, a patient who is interested in proclaiming the rights of the workers is inciting Sbouai against his brother as he saw how badly Slimane is treating Sbouai. The patient asked Sbouai if he is a member of labor Union نقابة العمال to raise his complains to but Sbouai misinterpreted the word.

المريض: فاش قاعد تستنى باش طالب بحقوقك. قلى. يخي عندكم نقابة؟

Patient: what are you waiting for to proclaim for your rights? Do you have a trade union?

béton قوي ينقب بيه حتى chineole لا أحنا معندناش. أما الباجي عندو: سبوعي

Sbouai: We don't have one but Baji has a power drill it can makes holes in the reinforced concrete.

Just like the previously analyzed examples, Sbouai made an incongruity when he created the homophonic pun when he mixed both meanings of the word نقابة which refers to the Workers Union and the word نقابة which refers to the gear used to make holes in walls. Sbouai infringed the maxim of relation when mentioning irrelevant object in the topic being discussed. He did not break this maxim intentionally because he really lacks the information about this topic and he has no clue about the terminology the patient is using with him. His state of being the ignorant and creating this pun because of his limited knowledge made him

the butt of the joke which may trigger the humor in this situation. All the 09 similar examples are found in the Appendix F.

### ***Opting out Relation***

Opting out the maxim of relation did not take a big chance in this sitcom as it appeared only in this spot. Sbouai opted out this maxim when he changed the topic of his conversation with Amani by providing irrelevant information. It may be found funny depending on the situation and the pun that caused this instance (مسخرة mascara).

### **Example 17**

The case of opting out relation can be found in **S02. Ep20. T 28:40**. Sbouai thought that his brother is replacing him with another worker (Foushika) but he discovered that he was wrong. Because he was so happy for not getting fired, he run to Azza to herald to good new. Azza became furious and told him that it is obvious that his brother will keep him because he is getting paid as the Chinese people's salary. Sbouai met Amani and asked her about the nature of the Chinese people salary, she explained to him that the Chinese people work hard for long hours but getting paid small wages. Then, he revealed his conclusion to Amani telling her that Slimane is paying him a Chinese Salary.

كان انتي يخلص فيك كي الشنوة انا يعطيني في مصروف متاع هنود. لا يزي لا بيتزا لا مسكارا tantant بري يزي :اماني

Amani: please stop it uncle! while he is paying you a Chinese salary, he is giving me a pocket money which is not enough neither for pizza nor for mascara.

وانا ما يسالاش يخليني مسخرة قدام خطيبيتي:سبوعي

Sbouai: is it acceptable to make me look like a ridicule before my fiancé.

Sbouai's use of the paronymic pun in the words "mascara and (مسخرة)" made him opt out the relation maxim in his conversation with Amani. Sbouai changed the topic he was having with Amani while she was complaining about the money pocket, she receives from her father without appearing to be uncooperative. The incongruity of his utterance appears when

he included a completely new topic to the conversation about how fool Slimane made him in front of his fiancée. This incongruity made the utterance seems funny.

### **Non-observance of More than One maxim**

It was observed in many utterances that characters, intentionally or unintentionally, fail to observe more than one maxim in a single utterance. This is the reason behind creating the non-observance of more than one maxim category.

### ***Flouting Manner and Quality***

The character flouts the maxim of quality when using the pun to produce untruthful things in a humorous way in order to create an implicature (flouting manner was already explained). The combination of flouting these two maxims occurred in two spots only where Slimane is the only manner and quality flouter in both cases. Only one case is to be analyzed in the following example to avoid repetition.

### **Example 18**

In **S05. Ep01. T7 :44** , Slimane, along with Mr. Tayeb, are trying to sell the exercises machines on a public auction after the bankruptcy of Zaineb's beauty center. When he declared the starting bid amount, Slimane noticed that the clients are giving less offers than the required instead of raising the bid.

هيا اسيدي، شكون باش بيزيد بنقص؟:سليمان

Slimane: so, gentlemen, who is going to decrease the amount of money one more time?

Slimane's use of the antonymic pun (يزيد ينقص) to express his dissatisfaction with these clients reveals a clever blend of sarcasm and humor. Initially, Slimane may appear cooperative when he used this pun as it is commonly used in the Tunisian and Algerian dialects to request a less quantity than what is offered. However, Slimane flouted the maxim of manner for being unclear and ambiguous when he employed these two words together to suggest subtraction in a context, auction, that requires addition. Slimane deviated from this norm when he offered

the clients to decrease the bides. As an educated individual with logical mindset, Slimane undoubtedly recognizes the absurdity of his utterance consequently, he further flouted the maxim of quality which add another layer of incongruity and humor. However, beneath flouting these two maxims, lies an implicit message in which Slimane, intentionally, wanted to convey to the clients that they should be adding to their bides and not subtracting. This subtle communication underscores Slimane's wit and strategic thinking, transforming what could have been a simple expression of dissatisfaction into a nuanced form of communication. The other similar example is found in the Appendix G.

### *Flouting Manner and Relation*

Similar to the previous case, this combination occurred in two spots only where the Slimane (unsurprisingly) is the only character who flouted manner and relation together. Only one case is analyzed, as for the other one to be found in Appendix G.

### **Example 19**

**S03.Ep2. T16:05** shows the scene when Sbouai returned from his honeymoon and he brought presents (strange ones) for all members of the family. For Slimane, he chose to buy a pair of slippers.

في طبرقة. قالك ماتتقطعش جملة هذي راهي شلاكة مشكورة ياسر عندهم غادي:سبوعي

Sbouai: this is a very appreciated slipper in Tebarqua. It lasts forever and never torn.

. قولي برابي. قداش ماشية من كيلومتر هذي؟ Tuples 75/13 زادا أمي. signée اسمع اسيدي. و:سليمان

Slimane: really! it is signed as well, that's incredible! Tuples 75/13. Would you please tell me how many kilometers it consumed?

Slimane created the polysemic pun which construct a relation between the slippers and the act of the car wheels when they consume hundreds of kilometers. Understanding humor in this pun needs to discover the conversational implicature Slimane wanted Sbouai (and the audience) to understand when flouting both maxims of manner and relation. Instead of



thanking Sbouai for bringing him a gift, Slimane started commenting on the present which made his contribution ambiguous and it was not clear whether he is happy or not. Moreover, asking the question “فداش ماشية من كيلومتر هذي” seemed to be irrelevant to the conversation. This way Slimane flouted both the manner and the relation maxim. In order to understand the implied meaning, Slimane wanted to deliver, it is necessary to be familiar with this character and the situational context of the utterance to know that Slimane is trying to make Sbouai the butt of the joke by showing his stupidity. Slimane implied that these slippers are made of cars wheels and not worth to be bought. This implied meaning may be enough to make this utterance humorous.

### ***Infringing Quantity and Relation***

Infringing the quantity occurs when the speaker unintentionally fails to respect the quantity of the required contribution due to his linguistic limited knowledge which hinders him from communicating accurately. This category of combination occurred just once with Sbouai, undoubtedly, since he is the only character, whose utterances are link to infringement. The analysis of the only case reveals how humor can be generated when the character combines flouting quantity with relation.

### **Example 20**

In **S02. Ep11. T26:51** the context was about Saint valentine. Douja is getting out for dinner with her Turkish man whose name is Baha Tal-at Sikandar. When she introduced him to the family, Sbouai was the first one to reply by giving his name and place where he lives.

دوجة: نقدمكم بهاء طلعت سكندار

Douja: I introduce, Baha Tal-at Sikandar

سبو عي الطلعة وساكن الستوديو سبو عي:

Sbouai: Sbouai Talaa and I live in a studio.

Because he lacks the linguistic knowledge and sometimes shows stupidity in his replies, Sbouai misinterpreted the name of the man since it makes a morphologic pun with the verb “live in a house” in Arabic (ساكن دار). Sbouai has infringed the maxim of quantity when he mentioned the place where he lives while introducing himself. Since he lacks linguistic knowledge about Turkish names, he thought that the man’s family name actually means “live in a house” and this led to the creation of humor. For the audience to find the humor, they must be familiar with the situational context where Douja told Zaineb that she is having a date with a Turkish man.

### ***Infringing Manner and Relation***

Unlike the previous case, this combination occurred twice. However, the similarity is found with Sbouai who is the only character infringing the maxims and create humor.

### **Example 21**

In S04.Ep19. T27 :13, Dalanda is having a trouble with her X fiancé, so she went out with him in the lunch time to settle the problem and inform him that is has got engaged to Wassim. When he did not find her, Slimane started to investigate Sbouai with many questions until he got confused.

ماقاتلو شيء على وسيم: سليمان

Slimane: did she tell him anything about Wassim?

اش عندها تقول؟: سبوعي

Sbouai: nothing in particular

ش قالت: سليمان

Slimane: what did she say? (angry tone)

شقاله شكون؟ شقاله؟: سبوعي

Sbouai: saucepan? whose saucepan?

Because he always thinks of food and eating, Sbouai's response, in which he formed the homographic pun (شقالة-اش قالت), created ambiguity because he was not even close to respond Slimane's inquiry which made Slimane think about the meaning of his answer. In this case Sbouai infringed the maxim of manner. Besides, giving a sauce pan as an answer made Sbouai's contribution further irrelevant to the topic being asked about leading to infringing the maxim of relation as well. His limited knowledge along with his continuous desire for food made his response funny. For the audience to understand the humor they should be familiar with Sbouai's gluttony in order to make the link between Slimane's question and his answer. This way, they reveal the script opposition that may triggers humor. Moreover, recognizing the situational context in which this utterance took place is not very necessary to detect the humor because it relies heavily on the linguistic context. So, to find the humor, audience should be familiar with the meaning of the word شقالة in the Tunisian dialect which means a saucepan.

### ***Defying Manner Flouting Quantity***

This combination was found twice throughout this sitcom. The new subcategory of non-observance maxim that was identified in this sitcom is defying a maxim which was observed three times throughout the sitcom when using puns to create humor (the first case was already discussed). In these following two cases the character failed to observe two maxims in a single utterance with two different types of non-observance maxims. Defying manner happens when the character, unintentionally, makes ambiguous and vague contributions due to his stupidity and illogical, unique thinking with determining an implied meaning in his utterance. Flouting quantity, on the other hand, happened intentionally when provided more or less information than needed in order to create a conversational implicature. When combining them using one pun, the character made his contribution funny.

### **Example 22**

After having twins in **S05. Ep3. T12:08**, Sbouai fell into need for extra money so he thought of asking his brother for a raise in salary or decreasing his working hours to find apart-time job.

في لي نعرفهم الكل psychiatric صباح الخير يا أحسن سيدي خو في الدنيا يا أحسن :سبوعي

Sbouai: Good morning for the best psychiatric I have ever known.

قداش تعرف من واحد سليمان: وانتى

Slimane: how many do you know?

انت و سيدي خويا:سبوعي

Sbouai: you and my brother

Sbouai started to glorify Slimane by exaggerating the quantity of psychiatrics he knows. He, intentionally, flouted the maxim of quantity because he wanted to ask Slimane for a raise. Finding the incongruity which lead to humor needs a shared knowledge of the context. He also defied the maxim of manner by responding to Slimane's question in a very illogical, strange and ambiguous manner without any intension to mislead Slimane. Finding humor in defying the maxim of manner does not require the context in which it was produced as it created a conventional maxim. When Sbouai said (انت و سيدي خويا) it can be easily understood that Sbouai knows no other psychiatric but his brother and this is what triggers humor.

### Example 23

In **S03.Ep19. T27:02**, Midoo, a patient of Slimane, wore a pink T-shirt and came for his medical appointment. Self-satisfied with his look, Midoo asked Dalanda her opinion on his pink T-shirt which she liked very much. When he asked Sbouai's opinion he received a shocking reply.

وانت بطي عجبك؟:ميدو

Midoo: what do you think fatty? Do you like it?

سبوعي موش خايب. ثما منو متاع رجال؟

Sbouai: Not bad. Are there similar ones available for men?

Sbouai used the polysemic pun which builds a semantic relation between the color pink and the word men. His contribution was against Midoo's expectation as he was supposed to answer whether he likes the T-shirt or not. After answering the question and showing that he does not quite like it, Sbouai added another statement that was not required by which he flouted the maxim of quantity. When doing so, Sbouai created a conversational implicature (for the audience) to say that the pink color is not supposed to be worn by men, (i.e. Midoo is not wearing like men). Despite the fact that grasping this implicature may make the utterance sounds funny, it holds a deep message about the dangerous transformation of men's fashion during the past few years. By considering the situational context in which the utterance occurred, audience can clearly notice that Sbouai made this statement unintentionally and unconsciously (making gestures and facial expression) which created a sort of ambiguity to Midoo. Once again, Sbouai defied the maxim of manner because of his naïve, stupid thinking. In this case, it is not a problem of linguistic capacities that led to an ambiguous utterance so it is not infringing manner. Yet, asking such a question (ثما منو متاع رجال؟) to "a man" wearing the T-shirt contradicts the logical thinking of normal people. This incongruity in Sbouai's statement may be considered the reason behind finding the humor in this utterance.

### ***Flouting Quality, Manner and relation Maxims***

This combination occurred in three situations from the 41 selected conversations and utterances. In almost all the underlined utterances, Slimane was the one who flouted the maxim of quality when using puns which led to humorous effects. However, it may be attributed to his arrogant and self-confident personality. This makes him always tries to show off by producing sarcastic and indirect utterances and responses in the form of puns that shows his witty thinking. The following examples can illustrate this by analyzing the underlined utterances of Slimane with different family members within its context.

## Example 24

Slimane's eldest daughter, who is preparing for her baccalaureate exam, wants to become a fashion model in S3. Ep 08.T24:50. She opened the subject with her father to take his permission during breakfast time when all family members were gathered. However, instead of just refusing her request by saying “no” or “you are not allowed to”, Slimane pretended to accept her request at first but with one condition, and this act deceived her. In the condition he made, Slimane created a contamination pun when replacing the word mannequin with the word يهلول then joining it to the word academy referring to a contest that does not exist.

casting نحب نشارك في :اماني mannequin academyمتاع

Amani: I want to participate in the contest of fashion model academy

أي وعلاش لا. اما بشرط:سليمان

Slimane: yes, why not! in one condition.

قرائتي والمراجعة والباك قبل كل شيء :اماني promis

Amani: my studies and BAC are my priorities, I promise.

على شرط نشارك انا الاولاني في يهلول أكاديمي ونخرج انا الأول ونقلك أي!!!لالالالا. :سليمان

Slimane: No No No No!! the condition is that I participate first in fool academy and win the first place to accept your request.

The creation of this pun (situational joke) was due the immediate situation where Slimane intentionally and deliberately said something which he knows it is not true and cannot be done both because there is no such a contest and even if there is one, he would never be part of because of his prestigious academic and intellectual status. By doing so, Slimane flouted the maxim of quality. Additionally, his reply to his daughter was not direct holding beneath its letters some ambiguity by which Slimane also flouted the maxim of manner. Moreover, he did not provide a relevant answer to his daughter as he deviated from

the subject she is discussing with him. In this way he also flouted the maxim of relevance. By flouting these three maxims, Slimane created an implicature which can be easily understood by Amani, the family members and the audience as it relies heavily on the linguistic context and the shared knowledge of the character and personality of Slimane. The word بهلول in Arabic refers to the stupid person and, in this context, Slimane implied that only stupid people allow their daughters to participate in these kinds of contests. Since he is an educated and a highly cultivated character, he automatically does not consider himself stupid. Besides, the cultural context in which he lived and was raised prevents him from accepting his daughter's request. Consequently, his reply with the contamination pun implies the rejection of his daughter's request. Humor lies in Slimane's utterance because he created incongruity when imagining himself as a fool person who win the first place in the fool's academy contest.

### Example 25

In this example **S4 Ep 08T 17:28**, Slimane is having a discussion with Hamza (A very intelligent boy and a friend of Amani) about the issue of hemophobia. This discussion was opened as Slimane is going to sacrifice a sheep for entering his new home, which is a ritual in Tunisian culture. Slimane cannot stand blood that is why he cannot slaughter the sheep himself. Hamza asked Slimane if he suffers from hemophobia and this question made Slimane surprised how Hamza knows this term. He told him that Sbouai would never encounter or know this term. At this moment, Sbouai entered asking if they were talking about him. When he replied, Slimane used a contaminated pun joining the word phobia with the name of Sbouai to come with the new term "Sbouaiphobia".

تحكوا عليا؟: سبوعي

Sbouai: are you talking about me?

لي نعاني منها انا ملي تولدت سيادتك phobie نحكو على سبوعي: سليمان

Slimane: we are talking about *Sbouaiphobia* from which I am suffering since the time you were born.

Similar to conversation from (example 01), Slimane tries to show his educational level and competence. To maintain his superiority on Sbouai, who is the illiterate character, he used sophisticated terminology by forming this pun. Slimane was not truthful about the topic he was discussing with hamza. He was also, deliberately, not clear when he replied to Sbouai using this complicated pun as he knows that he would never understand the meaning.

Slimane's reply made his contribution irrelevant to the topic because they were talking about the fear of blood. However, the smart link that Slimane made between the topic they discussed and the pun he created added a humorous effect to the conversation. This humor was created by flouting the three maxims of quality, manner and relation. By flouting these maxims, Slimane wanted to deliver an implied meaning, although it is impossible for Sbouai to understand the audience may grasp. Understanding the implied meaning to find the humor, requires a mutual understanding of the linguistic context which obviously Sbouai lacks and the shared knowledge of the physical context which Sbouai was not part of. These factors, unsurprisingly, prevent Sbouai from understanding the implied meaning. The audience may read what Slimane wants to say between the lines if they are familiar with the theme of the sitcom and the continuous conflict between Slimane and his brother. Since Sbouai always causes troubles and anxiety to Slimane in different occasions and situations, Slimane wanted to say that he developed a sort of fear in the presence of Sbouai and that was the reason behind linking his name with "phobia" which means fear.

### **Section Three: Summary of the Results, Limitations, Implications and Recommendations**

This section is meant to discuss the overall findings of the content analysis section which delved into the frequencies where every maxim was broken by both main characters in



their use of puns and the possible causes that make viewers find their utterances funny. More importantly, it bridges the analytical part with the research questions and objectives of this study.

This analytical study focused on the contextual and situational factors that might be considered a source of humor creation when the character fails to observe one or multiple of the four maxims of cooperative principle proposed by Grice (1975). By analyzing the selected conversations and utterances in their context, in which characters used pun, qualitative analysis provided significant insight on how humor may be generated. Based on the findings of the content analysis, this final section aims at providing a concrete answer to the previously arose questions which are as follows:

1. What nonobservance maxims (flouting, violation, infringing, opting out, suspending) contribute to creating semantic ambiguity in the sitcom?
2. Which conversational maxim (quality, quantity, manner, relation) is frequently not observed when using puns in the process of humor generation?
3. Is it equated with both main characters “Slimane and Sbouai”?

**Research Question 1: What nonobservance maxims (flouting, violation, infringing, opting out, suspending) contribute to creating semantic ambiguity in the sitcom?**

The examination of data concerning the first research question scans the application of the five non-observance maxims (flouting, violation, infringing, opting out, suspending) in humor manifestation. The analysis revealed that all the non-observance maxims took part in the creation of humor in the Tunisian sitcom “Choufli Hal”, to varying degrees, except for suspending which was not found. Basically, in the 41 selected utterances, infringing and flouting had the highest frequency of occurrence where the former occurred 17 times (41.46%), whereas the latter occurred 15.5 times (38.29%). Violation (5 times, 12.19%) and

opting out (1 time, 2.43%) did not have a significant degree of occurrence along with the new observed non-observance maxim, defying which occurred two times (7.31%).

This study aligns to some extent to previous studies on that topic, like the study conducted by Zhao Xue (2017) and Boumara and Boumara (2020), who found that flouting and violating are the most frequently non-observance maxims in the Chinese and British sitcom. Markéta Dančová (2019) and Oksinia et al. (2021) also concluded that flouting and infringing is the most used non-observance maxim in the creation of humor. In contrast to the previously mentioned studies, our research found that infringing a maxim exceeds its flouting which makes it the most frequently adapted non-observance maxim in humor manifestation when using puns in this sitcom. This result is explained and confirmed by the description of each character's personality and his way of thinking. Sbouai is the only character who used infringing mainly because he struggled to understand the meaning of the punning expression which made his contribution funny. On the other hand, Slimane was the one who used flouting most, with some exceptions done by Sbouai, in order to create implicature using puns in a very sophisticated way (this point is discussed with examples in the answer of the second research question).

**Research Question 02: Which conversational maxim (quality, quantity, manner, relation) is frequently not observed when using puns in the process of humor generation?**

The analysis pertaining to the second research question revealed that all the four maxims (quality, quantity, manner and relation) were not observed, yet failed to observe them with varying degrees of intensity.

Unlike the previously mentioned researchers ((Zhao Xue(2017), Boumara and Boumara (2020), Markéta Dančová (2019), Oksinia et al. (2021)) who concluded that quality is the most frequently not observed conversational maxim, especially flouting quality, this study found that the most frequently not observed one is the maxim of relation which

occurred 17.9 times (43.65%), followed by Manner with an occurrence of 14.4 times (37.56%), then quantity with 3.4 occurrences (10.97%) and finally, the quality maxim with the least number of occurrences 3.9 (9.51%). The last finding made a complete contradiction with previous studies.

### **Research Question 03: Is it equated with both main characters “Slimane and Sbouai”?**

In the process of humor creation when using puns, the relation maxim was found to be most not observed maxim precisely infringing relation. In almost all the analyzed utterances, punning words and expression created confusion to Sbouai since his character is known for his limited knowledge and restricted scope of vocabulary. When infringing the maxim of relation, humor arise by detecting the signified of the pun and identify the irrelevant contribution of Sbouai. In the examples 30 and 31 (*see App F*) Sbouai’s responses ( *يعملو طاجين* ) and ( *بالمخ و ميخلولي حتى طرف* ) and ( *نقول لدلندة تعملنا زوز قهاوي* ) are completely irrelevant to the topic and yet, the audience could easily find the humor if they know the gluttony character of Sbouai. In these examples, Sbouai did not create the pun and did not play on words on purpose, he had just misinterpreted the word because his psychological thinking and mind set is related to food. In the examples 33, 34,35 (*see App F*), Humor arose from Sbouai’s failure to observe the maxim of relation which can be attributed to his limited linguistic repertoire. Sbouai could not make inferences of the real meaning of the words, in other words, he failed to resolve the pun. In his contribution with the Slimane, Sbouai failed to deduce the signified meaning of the signifier “سوق الشغل” and mixing it with the word “سوق” which made him contribute to the conversation with irrelevant statements about سوق الاحد. From this point, the character of Sbouai entertained the audience by infringing the relation maxim, simply because they could recognize his limited knowledge and restricted scope of vocabulary which made him struggle to understand the other participants. However, to get the entertainment, the audience must share a general knowledge context by which they could understand, for

instance, why Sbouai linked سوق الشغل with “Sunday” in particular and not any other day.

The situational context in which the utterance took place is also crucial because this utterance is immediately linked to the situation where Sbouai was not satisfied about the salary he receives.

On the other hand, Slimane was found to be the manner flouting non-observant character. Once again, this character fits the way he breaks the maxim since Slimane is known for his ironic statements that, generally, make him purposely unclear about the idea he wants to deliver. In flouting manner, Slimane used puns to create implicatures for many different purposes like mocking, irony and sarcasm. In example 29 (*see App E*), Slimane flouted manner by using polysemic pun (which he often uses) to imply that Sbouai is a failed investigator by linking his failure in the mission with the name of the famous investigator James Bond who has the code “007”. Slimane made a semantic link between this code and the code he gave to Sbouai “000” in a very clever combination. Humor may not arise from this punning combination unless the audience share the general knowledge context (who is James Bond?). Once they recognized the implied meaning of Slimane’s pun, the audience recognize that Sbouai is the butt of the joke and this would trigger humor (laughter).

Ironically and unlike the expectations, Sbouai also flouted the maxim of manner almost the same way Slimane did. This is another special point of “Choufli Hal” which designed Sbouai as a very special character with unpredictable contributions.

To conclude, the main characters of the Tunisian sitcom “Choufli Hal” tended to create humorous utterances in their use of punning expression with different types of puns by breaking the maxims of relation and manner. Sbouai was found to be the only character who broke the maxim of relation by infringing because he misinterpreted the pun and this might have led to creating humorous effect. Slimane, on the other hand, was found to flout the maxim of manner when creating sophisticated puns to manifest implicature and this reflects

his arrogant, educated character. To grasp the humor these two characters tried to create, the audience should know about the general knowledge context, the situational context, the linguistic context and the personality of the character himself.

### **Limitations of the Study**

In our process of conducting this dissertation, we faced several difficulties that hindered our progress and affected the results:

1. Since humor is very hard to be defined and its perception differs from one individual to another, we based our study on the assumption made by Attardo (1994) that puns may create humor.
2. Throughout the data analysis, it was discovered that there are some utterances which broke one maxim but do not fit any of the non-observance maxims which led to another deep review of the literature and then modify the coding book.

### **Implications of the Study**

CP Theory was originally proposed to study the ways for a successful communication in a natural setting. Sitcoms cannot be considered as natural context because their script writers and producers deliberately break the conversational maxims to create humor. As the aim of the sitcom is to make entertainment and fun, we studied the possible reasons behind the fundamental success of Choufli Hal. The different findings of our research can open the gate to a new perception of how humor is created in sitcoms and how it can be appreciated. By exploring the non-observance maxims used to create humorous effects when using puns in an Arabic sitcom, this study may add an insight to the researches on humor especially after uncovering a new type of non-observance maxim that belongs mostly to maxims that contributes to humor creation. Also, context, conversational implicatures and personality of characters plays a crucial role in the creation of humor along with linguistic elements that are specific to each culture and language.

### **Recommendation for Future Researches**

Several recommendations for future researches on that topic can be considered; firstly, researchers may expand the research on the other cultures and languages and compare their findings with this one. Secondly, pun can be studied in a deeper way like focusing on the frequencies of the occurrence of each type in humor creation and the relation between each type of puns and the non-observance maxim. Thirdly, researchers may analyze audience responses to pun-based humor through audience review, for instance, then study the non-observance maxims contributed to humor creation of the detected segments in accordance to the audience responses. Fourthly, new subcategories of non-observance maxims for humor creation in comic shows, where script writers' aim is to create humor in different ways, may be identified in future studies since the conversational maxims are created to maintain successful communication. Lastly, researchers may conduct a comparative study and compare humor creation in Choufli Hal with other sitcoms or comic shows to identify the unique features or strategies specific to humor creation in this sitcom and its cultural context.

## **General Conclusion**

Based on Attardo's work (1994), humor can be created by not observing one or more of Grice's (1975) conversational maxims. All the studies held in this field of research, including this one, came to a conclusion that confirms Attardo's statement. However, the degree and the strategies of not observing each maxim differed significantly between this study and others.

This study focuses on the non-observance maxims contributing to the creation of humorous utterances through character's use of puns in the Tunisian sitcom "Choufli Ha". It aimed to answer the following two research questions; 1. What nonobservance maxims (flouting, violation, infringing, opting out, suspending) contribute to creating semantic ambiguity in the sitcom? 2. Which conversational maxim (quality, quantity, manner, relation) is frequently not observed when using puns in the process of humor generation? 3. Is it equated with both main characters "Slimane and Sbouai"?

This pragmatic analysis research is divided into two chapters that contain a thorough examination on the essence of humor production and perception in the context of sitcoms. In the first chapter a deep exploration of the literature concerning every detail of this study was tackled especially the Cooperative Principle of Grice (1975), the four conversational maxims and the non-observance maxim that represent the corner stone on which we based our study. In the second chapter, a detailed explanation was given about the methodology we used to conduct this analysis, followed by the analytical part of the data with the use of many examples then the discussion of the findings. Based on the results concluded from the content analysis, answers on the research questions were provided and compared with previous studies on this field of research. The final part of this study consists of the contribution that this study may have in this realm of humor in sitcoms followed by limitations and

recommendations for future studies. It is noteworthy that during the analysis, new category (the defying non-observance maxim) was detected that may be assistant to the ensuing studies and broaden the scope of understanding how humor is created in sitcoms and appreciated by the audience.

In the process of answering the previously addressed research questions, data were collected from the Tunisian sitcom Choufli Hal and deeply analyzed. Findings revealed that the maxims of relation and manner play a significant role in humor creation comparing to quantity and quality when using punning statements. Humor was created mostly by infringing relation and flouting manner which do not completely align with previous research findings due to several reasons.

To conclude, humor may be grasped and appreciated by sharing the different types of contexts and familiarize the character's personality which determines his use of punning expressions that led to failure of observing the maxims of relation and manner and consequently creating a humorous effect.



## References

- Abd Al-Tawwāb, R. (1967). *Laḥn al-Āmma wa al-Taṭawwr al-Lughawi*. Al-Qahira: maktabat al-khanji.
- Al-Azhari, M. (2001). *Mu'am tahb al-Lugha* (1st ed.). Dar Ihya' Al-Turāth.
- Asher, R. (1994). *The encyclopedia of language and linguistics*. Pergamon Press.
- Attardo, S. (1994). *Linguistic theories of humor*. Mouton de Gruyter.
- Attardo, S. (1997). The semantic foundations of cognitive theories of humor. *HUMOR*, 10(4), 395-420. <https://doi.org/10.1515/humr.1997.10.4.395>
- Attardo, S. (2001). *Humorous texts: A semantic and pragmatic analysis*. Mouton de Gruyter.
- Attardo, S. (2017). Humor in language. *Oxford research encyclopedia of linguistics*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199384655.013.342>
- Audrieth, A. L. (1998). *The art of using humor in public speaking*.  
<http://www.squaresail.com/onhumor.htm>
- Bach, K. (2006). Pragmatics and the Philosophy of Language. In L. R. Horn & G.L. Ward (Eds.), *The handbook of pragmatics* (pp.463-487). Blackwell Publishing.
- Berger, A. (1993). *An anatomy of humor* (1st ed.). Transaction Publishers.
- Birner, B. J. (2013). *Introduction to pragmatics*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Brumark, A. (2004). *Non observance of Gricean maxim: In family dinner table conversation*. University Södertoms.
- Casting frontier. (2023, September 21). *The three pillars for successful comedy: The tools that build a successful sitcom*. Casting Frontier. <https://castingfrontier.com/blog/three-pillars-comedy-part-1-3/>
- Creeber, G. (2001). *The television genre book*. British Film Institute.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.

- Cruse, A. (2000). *Meaning in language: An introduction to semantics and pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.
- Cutting, J. (2002). *Pragmatics and discourse: A resource book for students*. Routledge.
- Cutting, J., & Fordyce, K. (2005). *Pragmatics: A resource book for students* (4th ed.). Routledge.
- Daniel, J. (2012). *Sampling essentials: Practical guidelines for making sampling choices*. SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452272047>.
- Davis, J. M. (2013). Humor and its cultural context: Introduction and overview. In J. M. Davis, and J. Chey (Eds.), *Humor in Chinese life and culture: Resistance and control in modern times* (pp. 1-22). Hong Kong University Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.5790/hongkong/9789888139231.003.0001>,
- Delabastita, D. (1996). *Word play and translation*. St Jerome Publishing.
- Delabastita, D. (1997). *Traduction: Essays on punning and translation*. St. Jerome.
- Erlinda, R. (2019). *Introduction to English pragmatics: Applying research-based learning Model* (1st ed.).
- European Journal of Humor Research. (2020). Book review: Attardo, S. (2020). *The linguistics of humor: An introduction*. Oxford University Press. The European Journal of Humor Research, 10(4), 245–249. <https://www.europeanjournalofhumour.org>
- Chłopicki, W. (2023). Book review: Attardo, Salvatore (2020). *The Linguistics of Humor. An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. *The European Journal of Humor Research*, 10(4), 245–249. <https://europeanjournalofhumour.org/ejhr/article/view/743>
- Firth, J. R. (1957 [1950]). "Personality and language in society." In: Firth, Papers in Linguistics (1934-1951) (pp. 177-189). Oxford University Press.
- Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. L. Morgan, (Eds.), *Syntax and semantics: Vol. 3. Speech acts* (pp. 41-58). Academic Press.

- Grice, H.P. (1989). *Studies in the way of words*. Harvard University Press.
- Grundy, P. (2000). *Doing Pragmatics* (2nd ed). Edward Arnold.
- Hamamoto, D. (1989). *Nervous Laughter: television situation comedy and liberal democratic ideology*. Praeger.
- Hsieh, H., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). *Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. qualitative health research*, 15(9), 1277–1288.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305276687>
- Huang, A. (Ed.). (2007). *The Oxford Handbook of Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.
- Huang, Y. (2014). *Pragmatics* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Igiri, O. T., Onyekachi, A. J., & Chukwuemeka, O. M. (2020). Pragmatics: The study of its historical overview, meanings, scope, and the context in language use. *IOSR Journal of humanities and social science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 25(6), 51-57.  
<https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-2506035157>
- Jawhara FM. (2020). "Choufli Hal" يحطم الأرقام القياسية على امتداد 20 عاما : ما الحكاية؟ [Choufli Hal Breaks Records Over 20 Years: What's the Story?].  
<https://www.jawharafm.net/ar/choufli-hal-youhatim-arkam-kiyassia-ala-imitad-20aam>.
- Kalliomoki, L. (2005). *Inc and incapability, verbal humor in the TV sitcom Blackladder: A pragmatic and rhetoric analysis*. A pro Gradu Thesis in English.
- Kumar, C. R. (2008). *Research Methodology*. APH Publishing Corporation.
- Latta, R. L. (1999). *The basic humor process: A cognitive-shift theory and the case against incongruity*. Mouton de Gruyter.
- Leech, G. (1983). *principles of pragmatics* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). Longman Inc.
- Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Levinson, S. (2008). *Pragmatics*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Cambridge University Press.

- Levinson, S. C. (n.d.). Article 3.9.73 "*Pragmatics*." In S. C. Levinson (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of language and linguistics* (pp. c. 5000 words). Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, University of Nijmegen.
- Lewis, P. B. (2005). *Schopenhauer's definition of laughter*. *The Monist*, 88(1), 36–51.  
<https://doi.org/10.5840/monist200588112>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications.
- Lund, T. (2012). Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches: Some arguments for mixed methods research. *Scandinavian journal of educational research*, 56(2), 155-165.
- Mey, J. L. (1993). *Pragmatics: An introduction*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Mey, J. L. (2001). *Pragmatics: An Introduction* (2nd Ed.). Blackwell Publishing.
- Morreall, J. (1983). *Taking laughter seriously*. State University of New York Press.
- Morreall, J. (1987). *The philosophy of laughter and humor*. State University of New York Press.
- Partington, A. (2009). *A Linguistic account of wordplay: The lexical grammar of punning*. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 41,1794-1809.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Raskin, V. (1985). *Semantic mechanisms of humor*. D. Reidel Publishing Company.
- Recanati, F. (1989). *The pragmatics of what is said*. *mind & language*, 4(4). DOI: ISSN 0268-1064
- Şafadī, K. I. A. (1987). *Jinān al-jinās* (fi ‘ilm al-badī‘). Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmīyah.
- Sandoval, Andrea. (2024, February 6). What is a Sitcom and Why Are They So Funny? CBR.  
<https://www.cbr.com/sitcom-history-humor-explained/>

- Schwarz, J. (2010). *Linguistic Aspects of Verbal Humor in Stand-up Comedy*. PhD dissertation. Saarland: University of Saarland.
- Senft, G. (2007). *Bronislaw Malinowski and linguistic pragmatics*. *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics*, 3, 79-96. DOI:10.2478/v10016-007-0006-7
- Straus, I. J. (2014). *Incongruity Theory and The Explanatory Limits of Reason* [Undergraduate thesis, University of Vermont]. UVM Scholar Works.  
<https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/hcoltheses>
- Thomas.J.(1995). *Meaning in interaction: An introduction to pragmatics*. Longman Publishing.
- Trask, R. L. (1999). *Key concepts in language and linguistics* (Key concepts). Routledge.  
<https://www.eBookstore.tandf.co.uk>
- Widdowson, H. G. (1984). *Explorations in applied linguistics 2*. Oxford University Press.
- Xiaosu, Y. (2009). *Conversational implicature analysis of humor in American situation comedy "friends"*. University Gent.
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.

## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### The utterances that were excluded during data extraction

##### S02. E02.Time 27:33

سليمان هكا ؟ 04 في math , 06 في العربية , 10 أيام غيابات. معنتها ما جبت المعدل كان في الغيابات.

Slimane : Seriously!!!! You have got 04 in Mathematics, 06 in Arabic, 10 days absences. It

means that you got average only in absences?

##### S02 .Ep 02.T29:40

السبوعي:المفيد عزيزتي نعطلك بوسة بنينة على كيف كيفك

Sbouai: I am going to give a kiss just the way you like?

عزة:مضمض

Azza: rinse your mouth.

السبوعي:علاش عزيزتي

Sbouai: Why, darling?

عزة:يلزمك تمضمض

Azza: you have to rinse your mouth.

السبوعي:ايه والبوسة

Sbouai: okay, and the kiss.

عزة:اه البوسة باهي بعد ما تمضمض زيد مضمض .

Azza : of course, just after you rinse your mouth..... rinse it again.

##### S02.Ep 17.T17:02

دوجة:أما تباركله عليك يا سبوعي ديما عندك un petit creux

Douja : Blessy ou, Sbouai. You always have a little desire for food.

السبوعي:لا يامي دوجا أنا ديما عندي un grand creux

Sbouai : No, mother Douja, I always have a huge desire for food.

**S02.Ep 24 .T33:05**

فوففا :تعرف انا عمري ما ريت كنة تحكي بالخير على حماتها كيما زوبا.

Foufa : do you know that I have never seen a daughter in law mentioning the good things of her mother in law like Zouba.

فضيلة:شكون زوبا.

Fadhila : Who is Zouba ?

سليمان:أمي زوبا هذا joueur يلعب مع غانا

Slimane: Mother, Zomba is football player with Ghana.

**S03.Ep 7.T14:17**

السبوعي:وش حوال عمي الطيب

Sbouai: How is uncle Tayeb?

فوففا :çava هو توا في voyage عندو salon في فرانكفورت

Foufa: He is okay, he has a salon at Francfort.

السبوعي:عندو salon في فرانكفورت. وش يعمل بيه غادي ?

Sbouai: He has a sofa? What is he doing with it at Francfort

فوففا:لا معناها عندو معرض

Foufa: No, it means he has an exhibition

**S03. Ep 13.T31:10**

أماني :بابا وش معناتها la goraphopie

Amani : what does it mean agoraphobia?

سليمان la goraphopie.ايه عندك phopie هي الخوف و la gora هي الساحة العمومية عند الإغريق donc كلها هي

الخوف من الفول بصفة عامة

Slimane: phobia means fear, gora means public place, so goraphobia is the fear of full public places.

فضيلة:عند الحق حتى هو يعمل gas.

Fadhila : they are right. The beans causes gas.

**S02.E20.T:3:08**

سليمان: سبوعي , قوم.

Slimane : Sbouai, wake up.

سبوعي: سيدي خويا؟

Sbouai: Brother?

سليمان: لأ,سيدي منصور جيتك زور

Slimane: No, sidi Manssour, I came to visit you.

**S02.E.26.T: 11:50**

سبوعي :بخي هكاكا, متعرفهاش, خذيتها قطوس في شكاره؟

Sbouai : don't you know her before. Did you marry her blindly?

المريض :ماو صاحبي الله يسامحو. هو لي قالي عليها. و الحقيقة كي شفتهل عجبتي و خذيتها.

Patient:My friend is the one who proposed it to me. To be honest, I liked it the first time I saw it.

سبوعي :و مية في المية بعد ما خذيتها اتقلبت.

Sbouai: 100% once you got married, she showed her other face.

المريض اللطف اللطف . اش موصلنا لهذا يا راجل. أما عيبها الوحيد تاكل ياسر

Patient: for God's sake, don't say that. It has one flaw. It consumes too much.

سبوعي :كيفي.

Sbouai: just like me.

**S03. E17.T:07:41**

سليمان انت حالتك ميؤوس منها على خاطر عندك نهم فطري.

Slimane : your state is helpless because you have a bulimic appetite

سبوعي :علاش كيفاش اذي؟



Sbouai : How is that ?

سليمان : على خاطر أمك مزال ما فطمتكش.

Slimane : because your mother has not weaned you yet.

سبوعي : صار ؟ مالا اتهنى. هاهيكا عزوزتي فطمتتي.

Sbouai : Really !!!! relax my brother because Azza has just weaned me.

### S03.E07.T 30:25

دلندة : مالا وليت vegetarian

Dalanda : so you became a veg?

سبوعي : اش معنتها

Sbouai : what does it mean?

دلندة : معنتها ما تاكل كان الخضرة.

Dalanda : it refers to someone who eats nothing but vegetables.

سبوعي : هكاك مالا وليت كرمب rien

Sbouai : This way I became a cauliflowererrian.

### S03.E16.T10:13

سليمان : دلندة بالله ثم صاحب امانى جايني من بعد . حاول كيفاش تفوتو ما بين زوز مورضا.

Slimane : Dalanda, please ; a frien of Amani is comming to meet me. Try to let him in

between two patients.

سبوعي : أيا مبروك سيدي خويا. هاك شرفت ولاو يخطبو فيك في لبنات.

Sbouai: congratulations brother. You got too old now and you are receiving proposals of

engagements to you daughters.

### S04. E10.time.11:24

فاطمة : قرريت عليك article في مجلة beauté magazine

Fatma : I have read an article about you on Beauty Magazine.

سبوعي : و انا قرريت عليك article في مجلة قفة magazine

Sbouai : And I have read an article about you on Toadying Magazine.

**S04. E12. Time. 7:50**

سليمان : أنا كبروفيسور في علم النفس من واجبي نحتك بالشعب و عامة الناس.

Slimane : As a professor in psychology, I need to keep in touch to people.

كلثوم :خالي سليمان حضر روحك عاد . هاك اليوم اول يوم باش تطلع في الكار غير ما تقلقش من التحكحيك.

Keltoume : Mr. Slimane, this is the first day for you to take the bus, do get fed up from the physical contact in the public transportation.

**S04.Ep12.Time12 :41**

سليمان :برا امشي لل agence و قوللهم الي puce متاعي تسرقت ثماش ما يوقفوها.

Slimane : go quickly to the office of mobile phones and tell them that my SIM card was stolen and it need to be blocked.

سبوعي : صار puce لبرك تسرقت موش البورتابل بكلو؟

Sbouai : AAAhhhh ! only the sim card was stolen, not the whole mobile?

**S04. E20. Time. 16:24**

سليمان :امشي ل architect وتقولو يعطيك لبيانو.

Slimane : go to the architect and bring the plan of the house.

سبوعي : باهي . نتعدى نهز معايا فوشيكة و الباجي باش يعاونوني على الهزان.

Sbouia : okay. I will take Fouchika and Baji with me to help me lift it.

سليمان : وعلاش ما تكريش كميون. ماش خير؟

Slimane : why don't you rent a truck.. It would be better, no?

## Appendix B

The conversation that was omitted because Slimane observed the four maxims

### S01. Ep16. T28:25

#### Context

The patient claims that he is a vegetarian but when Slimane asked him what he likes eating it appeared that he eats almost nothing.

المريض: انا الفلفل الحار ماناكلوش. اما الطماطم أي. الففوس نخاف نحط ايدي على كعبة تطلع مرة والبصل بيكييني والبطاطا تسمن والبقول والحمص ينفخو الكررش والكرنب يعملني الغاز

Patient: I can't eat hot peppers. But tomatoes are fine. For cucumbers I am afraid to put my hand on one and turns out to taste bitter, onions make me cry, potatoes make me fat, and beans and chickpeas bloat my stomach, and cabbage gives me gas."

سليمان/ هاك ماكش vegetarian مالا انتي ما تاكل في rien

Slimane: You are not a vegetarian then, you eat nothing.

## Appendix C

### Data Coding

**Table A 1:** Categories with a brief Definition

	Categories	Definition
<b>Conversational Maxims</b>	<b>Quality</b>	to be true in the contribution by saying what is believed to be correct and evidence on.
	<b>Quantity</b>	To be as informative as required and not to more informative as required.
	<b>Relation</b>	Not to make irrelevant contribution to the topic.
	<b>Manner</b>	To be clear, not vague, orderly and brief.
<b>Non-observance of Grice's maxims</b>	<b>Flouting</b>	breaking a maxim intentionally in a very obvious way in order to create a conversational implicature with no intention to mislead.
	<b>Violation</b>	breaking the maxim intentionally to mislead the hearer.
	<b>Infringing</b>	Breaking the maxim unintentionally due to lack of linguistic knowledge and capacities which prevent responding or contributing appropriately.
	<b>Opting out</b>	failure to observe to the maxim by withdrawing from the conversation. It can be done by changing the subject completely.
	<b>Suspending</b>	no necessity for any maxims to be observed due to some circumstances. (No case was found in this sitcom).
	<b>Defying</b>	Unintentional failure of observing a maxim because of the limited, illogical and stupid thinking without any intention to mislead the hearer or create an implicature.
<b>Puns</b>	<b>Homophonic puns</b>	These puns exploit words that sound alike but have different meanings or spellings.
	<b>Homographic puns</b>	These puns use words spelled the same but with different meanings or pronunciations
	<b>Paronymic puns</b>	Also referred to as rhyme-based puns. They refer to words which have similar but not identical orthographic and phonemic representations like "braid" vs. "grade"
	<b>Polysemic puns:</b>	Incorporate two puns into a single sentence, often with one nested within the other. polysemy is the ability to create a semantic unity using one word to serve different objects of reality.
	<b>Antonymic puns</b>	They rely on words that have opposite or contrast meanings
	<b>Contaminated puns</b>	They occur when mixing two different words together to make an entirely new, and usually funny word with another meaning.

## Appendix D

### Quality Maxim

#### *Flouting Quality*

#### Example 26: S3. Ep1.T3:44

#### Context

Zaineb is very upset because she is over loaded with house chores after Fadhila stopped taking care of everything because she missed Sbouai. She could not stand a word from her husband Slimane which made her insult him in front of their daughters.

سليمان: شنوة زينب ما تصبحش على مولى الدار؟

Slimane: what's the matter Zaineb? Aren't you going to say good morning to your husband and the head of the house?

زينب: موش كان نعطلك كاري الدار خير؟ وتوه بجاه ربي خليني. يخي ماكش ترى فيا مشنوقة؟

Zaineb: wouldn't be better if I call you the renter of the house? Now, please leave me alone.

Don't you see how much I am swamped?

سليمان: بالطبيعة مشنوقة. بعد لي لسانك صبح داير برقبتك.

Slimane: of course you would be swamped as your tongue, this morning; is around your neck

#### *Violating Quality*

#### Example 27: S04.Ep7. T14 :20

#### Context:

Before he went to his work, Fadhila asked Slimane to bring her a bunch of coriander in his way back. When he arrived to his office, he assigned this task to Sbouai who liked the rhyme between the words *قصر/ اصبر*.

سليمان: برا اخطف روحك للمارشي و جيبلي كتة قسبر

Slimane: go quickly to the supermarket and bring a bunch of coriander.

سبوعي: هات حقها

Sbouai: give me money to buy it

سليمان: اصبر

Slimane: wait!!!

سبوعى: اش باش نجيبلك

Sbouai: what do you want me to buy?

سليمان: كتة قصير

Slimane: a bunch of coriander.

سبوعى: اطلع بيهم

Sbouai: hand the money, quickly!!

سليمان: اصبر

Slimane: wait.

## Appendix E

### Manner Maxim

#### *Flouting Manner*

#### Example 28: S04.Ep26. T 20 :15

##### Context

Sbouai and Foushika are hiding from a dangerous person in Foushika's studio. Sbouai became very hangry and asked Foushika to bring some sweets from his mobile store.

سبوعي: وعلاش ما تمشيش لببروك و تجييلنا شوي بشكوتو و شوي شكلاطة

Sbouai: Why don't you go to your store and bring some biscuits and some chocolate?

فوشيكاة: تحبني ناكل راس مالي

Foushika: do you want me to eat my capital?

سبوعي : اما خير ولا تاكل راسك

Sbouai: it is better than eating your own head (better than dying)

#### Example 29: S03. Ep 16. T26:26

##### Context:

Slimane was having a conversation with Amanie's new friend "Hamza" to give him some recommendations about the group of revision they are intending to create. After Hamza left the office to bring his school things and start revising with Amani, Slimane gave Sbouai the mission to follow him and investigate where exactly he going with Amani. In his way down, Sbouai fell on the stairs and twisted his ankle badly.

سليمان: قل لي سي James Bond 000 كيفاش تفصعت ساقك؟

Slimane: Tell me James Bond 000, how did you twist your ankle?

#### *Infringing manner*

#### Example 30: S05. Ep9. T24 :46

##### Context

Slimane was singing to Dalanda a traditional Syrian song when Sbouai entered the office, stood behind him and start listening. Once Slimane finished, Sbouai cheered him but using the wrong words.

سبوعي: ايبيبيبيببي... عظمة على عظمة يا ست...اه يا سبتي خويا..... اه سبدي خويا

Sbouai: ooooooh!! Great great madam... ah madam brother..... ah mister brother



## Appendix F

### Relation

#### *Infringing Relation*

#### Example 31: S02.Ep21. T30:48

#### Context

At the night of Ramadan, Foushika gave Sbouai a cigarette to try. In the morning, Fadhila found the tobacco in his pocket and started investigating how gave it to him, eventually he told her that Foushika tried to teach him how to smoke.

سبوعي: انا اش مدخلني. أي هي لقات حشيشة الدخان في مكتوبي ولات شكت فيك

Sbouai: what is this has to do with me. She found the tobacco in my pocket consequently she suspected in you.

فوشيكة: هكا؟ من دون خلق ربي لكل ماشكت كان فيا انا؟ أيا الحمد لله لي مالقاتش عقاب طاجين بالمشخ في طبق متاع سحور ولا راي شكت الي انا سرقتلك الذكاء متاعك.

Foushika: thanks God, she didn't find a part of tajin dish with brain left from Sohur or she would have accused me that I stole your intelligence.

سبوعي: اش تقصد

Sbouai: what do you mean?

فوشيكة: اش نقصد؟ نقصد لي مافهمتوش يا سبوعي

Foushika: I mean what you have not understood Sbouai

سبوعي: امان امان؟ يعملو طاجين بالمشخ وما يعطيونيش حتى طرف؟

Sbouai: So, this is the case? They made tajine with brain and they didn't give me a piece?

#### Example 32: S03Ep06.T18:35

#### Context

Slimane needs Sbouai for his own interests (already discussed when describing the personality of Slimane) so he called him into his office to make a deal. Slimane wanted

Sbouai to sell his land and gives him the money in order to build his villa in the Street of Nasr.

سليمان: هيا نـكـو cool سـبـوعـي

Slimane: let's talk cool, Sbouai

سـبـوعـي: مـالـا نـقـول لـدـلـنـدـة تـحـضـر نـا زـو ز قـهـاـوـي؟

Sbouai: do I ask Dalanda to make us two coffees?

### Example 33: S04.Ep1. T3:33

#### Context

Sbouai is being responsible for the construction activities and on the workers in his brother's villa. He wanted the gardner to teach him how to plant.

البـسـتـانـي: قـبـل مـا نـعـلـمـك لـازـمـنـي نـعـرـف ايدك خضرة ولا لا؟

Gardner: before I teach you how to plant trees, I need to know, do you have green hands?

سـبـوعـي: لـالـا وـاللـه لـا . هـاك تـشـو فـ.

Sbouai: I swear no, look they are not green

### Example 34: S04.Ep 10. T26:10

#### Context

Sbouai wants Slimane to raise because his salary is not being sufficient for him and his family anymore. Because Slimane is overloaded with debts and he cannot afford raising Sbouai's salary, he tried to convince him by saying that he should be thankful for having a job because the job market is facing shortage nowadays.

سليمان: برى اخرج اعمل طلة حتى من بعيد على سوق الشغل

Slimane: go and take a look on the job market.

سـبـوعـي: و قـتـاش هـذا؟ نـهـار الـأـحـد؟

Sbouai: when is that? On Sundays?

### Example 35: S04.Ep17. T 16 :34

**Context:**

Since Dalanda is having a date with her fiancé, she told Sbouai to take her place for one hour asking him not to accept any further patient for today as the list is closed for that day. Sbouai got furious as one patient insisted to take an appointment for treatment with the doctor by making continuous calls. Meanwhile, the financial controller entered the cabinet doctor and Sbouai thought he is a patient asking for an appointment as well.

المراقب المالي: يظهر لي مافهمتيش. FISC متاع controlleur انا

Financial controller: I think there is a misunderstanding. I am the financial controller of taxes.

سبوع: اتهنى الفيكس لا باس عليه

Sbouai: Don't worry, nothing is wrong with our landline telephone.

**Example 36: S04.Ep29. T3 :03****Context**

Sbouai is replacing Dalanda at work and Slimane gave him a normal task to use the computer as Dalanda used to do but he could not understand what he should do.

سليمان: صب فيشات هاذم في في l'ordinateur و من بعد صبهم في clé USB نتاعي

Slimane: put these documents in the computer then in my flash disk.

سبوع: بربي كيفاش الفيشات هاذو ما باش نصبهم في porte clé نتاعك؟

Sbouai: please tell me how can I put them in your keychain?

**Example 37: S05. Ep03. T36 :51****Context**

Mobdi, the director, is filming a scene in Slimane's office but he actor who was supposed to play the role of the nurse was absent. Sbouai proposed himself to act the role instead.

مبدع: انتي مثلت قبل؟

Moubdi: have you ever acted before?

سبوعي: أي ممثل برشي على خويا ...

Sbouai: yes, I have acted may times on my brother

### Example 38: S05.Ep05.T10:34

#### Context

Sbouai is filming an advertisement for the first time. When he got there, he saw a turkey and started introducing himself to it. He met another actor and asked him if he have ever acter before. The actor started narrating his experience in acting ads saying that he is a pro.

ممثل: ممبراني محترف

Actor: of course I am a pro!!

سبوعي: تسمع. السيد طلع منحرف

Sbouai: you see? ( talking to the turkey) He is a deviant person

### Example 39: S05Ep15. T15 :05

#### Context:

Wassim, Dalanda's fiancé has just returned from abroad and brought a very nice car.

وسيم: حتى هي full options

Wassim: my car is full options

سبوعي: اش مدخل الفول في الحكاية

Sbouai: what beans have to do with the story?

## Appendix G

### Non-observance of more than One Maxim

#### *Flouting Quality and Manner*

#### Example 40: S05.Ep5. T3:41

#### Context

Slimane is standing in the living room holding his shirt and trying very desperately to find someone who could iron it for him, meanwhile, his daughter Fatma appeared and tried to make fun of him.

فطومة: دكتور اشديك؟ قاعد تشيح في سوريتك؟

Fatouma: what's the matter doctor? Are you drying your shirt?

سليمان: لا. قاعد نشيح في ريتي.

Slimane: no, I am drying my throat

#### *Infringing Manner and Relation*

#### Example 41: S02. Ep17. T14:05

#### Context:

In this episode, it is estimated that tomorrow will be the first day of Ramadan. Sboui has just eaten a croissant in his office. When he got out of the office, he met Douja at the door and wished her Ramadan Mubarak. Douja replied surprisingly, if Ramadan croissant have been seen. Sbouai replied that he saw it and he had just eaten it, referring to the baked croissant.

سيوعي: انشاء الله رمضانك مبروك

Sbouai: I wish you Ramadan Mubarak aunt Douja.

دوجة: يخي ريتو le croissant

Douja: Have you seen the croissant already?

سيوعي: شنوا ريتو؟ ريتو و مازلت كي كليتو

Sbouai: Of course! I have seen it and I have just eaten it.

## Résumé

Dans la sitcom tunisienne *Choufli Hal*, l'humour joue un rôle significatif, souvent issu de jeux de langage comme la transgression de certaines règles de communication appelées maximes de Grice, particulièrement visibles dans les jeux de mots. Cette étude s'est plongée dans le domaine de l'humour de cette série, en se concentrant sur les moments où les personnages enfreignent ces règles de communication dans leur utilisation des jeux de mots pour créer de l'humour. Pour explorer cela, nous avons examiné minutieusement les conversations de l'ensemble des 135 épisodes de la sitcom afin de mettre en lumière la mesure dans laquelle les personnages principaux de la sitcom ignorent les maximes de Grice et les types spécifiques de non-observance couramment associés aux jeux de mots pour la création d'humour. Pour atteindre cet objectif, une conception de recherche descriptive a été adoptée, complétée par une analyse de contenu comme principal instrument méthodologique. L'étude a employé un échantillonnage raisonné, garantissant un examen complet des données pertinentes. Grâce à ce cadre méthodologique, le problème de recherche a été efficacement abordé, permettant une exploration nuancée de la création d'humour dans "*Choufli Hal*". Nos résultats ont mis en évidence que le type de transgression de règle le plus courant est "l'infraction de relation" suivi par "le non-respect de la manière" comme les types les plus élevés de non-observance observés dans les jeux de mots pour la création d'humour. Notamment, chaque type de transgression de règle est associé à un personnage spécifique. Ces résultats contribuent non seulement à l'ensemble des connaissances en recherche sur l'humour, mais offrent également des implications précieuses pour comprendre les subtilités du principe coopératif de Grice dans des contextes comiques, en particulier dans les sitcoms.

**Mots-clés :** humour, non-observance, maximes de Grice, jeux de mots, sitcom

## الملخص

في المسلسل الكوميدي التونسي شوفلي حل، تلعب الفكاهة دورًا كبيرًا، غالبًا ما ينبع من حيل لغوية مثل خرق بعض قواعد التواصل المعروفة باسم قواعد غرايس، خاصةً في التلاعب بالألفاظ. هذه الدراسة تطرقت إلى مجال الفكاهة داخل هذا المسلسل، مركزةً على اللحظات التي يتلاعب فيها الشخصيات بهذه القواعد للتواصل من خلال استخدام التلاعب بالألفاظ لخلق الفكاهة. لاستكشاف ذلك، قمنا بفحص المحادثات من جميع الحلقات الـ 135 للمسلسل بعناية لتسليط الضوء على مدى تجاهل الشخصيات الرئيسية في المسلسل لقواعد غرايس والأنواع المحددة من عدم الالتزام المرتبطة عادةً بالتلاعب بالألفاظ لخلق الفكاهة. لتحقيق هذا الهدف، تم اعتماد تصميم بحث وصفي، مدعوماً بتحليل المحتوى كأداة منهجية رئيسية. استخدمت الدراسة العينة الهادفة، مما يضمن فحصًا شاملاً للبيانات ذات الصلة. من خلال هذا الإطار المنهجي، تم معالجة مشكلة البحث بفعالية، مما سمح باستكشاف مفصل لإنشاء الفكاهة في "شوفلي حل". أبرزت نتائجنا أن أكثر أنواع خرق القواعد شيوعًا هو "الانتهاك في العلاقة" يليه "التحايل في الأسلوب" كأعلى أنواع عدم الالتزام الملحوظة في التلاعب بالألفاظ لخلق الفكاهة. ومن الجدير بالذكر أن كل نوع من أنواع خرق القواعد يرتبط بشخصية معينة. تسهم هذه النتائج ليس فقط في المعرفة العامة في بحوث الفكاهة ولكن أيضًا تقدم دلالات قيمة لفهم تعقيدات مبدأ التعاون لغرايس في السياقات الكوميديّة، خاصة في المسلسلات الكوميديّة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** فكاهة، عدم الالتزام، قواعد غرايس، تلاعب بالألفاظ، مسلسل كوميدي