



## Humor in the Webtoon *Nerd and Jock*: A Pragmatic Study of Grice's Cooperative Principle and Searle's Illocutionary Acts

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### Abstract

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*This study investigates how violations of Grice's Cooperative Principle and Searle's illocutionary acts contribute to humor construction in digital comics. While previous pragmatic studies have extensively examined humor in spoken discourse, films, and stand-up comedy, limited attention has been given to webtoons as a form of multimodal digital narrative. As a rapidly growing form of online entertainment that combines visual and verbal elements, webtoons provide a significant site for analyzing how humor operates within contemporary digital communication. The object of this study is the webtoon *Nerd and Jock* by Marko Raassina (2017). Employing a qualitative descriptive method, the data were collected through close reading and systematic documentation of selected episodes. The analysis applies Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle, which includes the maxims of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner, as well as Searle's (1980) classification of illocutionary acts—assertive, directive, expressive, commissive, and declarative. The findings reveal 15 instances of maxim violations, with the maxim of relevance being the most frequently violated. Additionally, 38 illocutionary acts were identified, with expressive acts emerging as the most dominant type. The prominence of relevance violations and expressive illocutionary acts indicates that humor in *Nerd and Jock* is primarily constructed through unexpected conversational shifts and intensified emotional expressions. These findings highlight the role of pragmatic deviation in shaping humor within multimodal digital discourse.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics concerned with how meaning is constructed and interpreted within specific contexts of use. Rather than focusing solely on grammatical structures, pragmatics examines the relationship between linguistic forms and speakers' communicative intentions (Levinson, 1983). Meaning, therefore, is not embedded exclusively in sentences but emerges through interaction, shaped by context, shared knowledge, and social conventions. Understanding everyday communication thus requires a theoretical framework that explains language not only as a vehicle for conveying information but also as a form of social action that can influence interpersonal relationships.

One of the most influential frameworks in pragmatic studies is speech act theory. Introduced by Austin (1955) and further developed by Searle (1980), this theory explains that utterances simultaneously perform actions. Searle (1980) distinguishes three components of speech acts: locutionary acts (the literal act of saying something), illocutionary acts (the speaker's intended function), and perlocutionary acts (the effect on the listener). Among these, illocutionary acts are central to pragmatic analysis because they reveal the communicative purpose behind an utterance, such as asserting, requesting, promising, or expressing emotions. Searle (1980) categorizes illocutionary acts into five types: assertive, directive, commissive, declarative, and expressive. Understanding these categories enables readers or listeners to interpret speakers' intentions accurately, even when meanings are implied rather than explicitly stated.

Interestingly, illocutionary intentions do not always align with conversational expectations. In certain contexts, deviations from expected speech behavior can generate humorous effects. Humor often arises when speakers manipulate or violate pragmatic norms, leading to incongruity between what is expected and what is delivered. This phenomenon can be further explained through Grice's Cooperative Principle. According to Grice (1975), effective communication is governed by four conversational maxims: quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. These maxims function as implicit guidelines that ensure cooperation between interlocutors. However, deliberate violations or flouting of these maxims frequently produce unexpected implicatures, which may result in humor. As demonstrated by Suwandi et al. (2015), excessive or irrelevant responses in conversation can create tension and incongruity that ultimately trigger humorous interpretation.

Combining speech act theory and the Cooperative Principle provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing humor pragmatically. Previous studies have applied this framework across various media. Ariadini and Imperani (2020) examined illocutionary acts and humor techniques in YouTube content, finding that representative acts and sarcasm dominated humorous discourse. Suardi (2020) analyzed humor in *The Big Bang Theory*, revealing that violations of Gricean maxims particularly the maxim of quantity played a significant role in humor construction. Similarly, Choiri and Ariyanti (2014) investigated stand-up comedy performances and found that representative illocutionary acts were frequently employed to elicit humor. While these studies confirm the effectiveness of pragmatic approaches in humor analysis, they primarily focus on spoken or performance-based media.

Despite the growing popularity of digital comics, particularly webtoons, pragmatic studies on humor in this medium remain limited. Webtoons are digital comics designed for online platforms, characterized by vertical scrolling and the integration of verbal and visual elements (Park, 2016). This multimodal nature allows dialogue, facial expressions, and visual context to jointly construct meaning, making webtoons a rich site for pragmatic investigation. One such example is *Nerd and Jock*, which portrays humorous interactions between two characters with contrasting personalities. The humor in this webtoon frequently emerges from exaggerated explanations, unexpected responses, and violations of conversational maxims, supported by illocutionary acts that intentionally diverge from communicative norms.

## METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze how humor is constructed through pragmatic features in a webtoon. The writer chose a qualitative method because the data analyzed consist of dialogues whose meanings are shaped by context, speaker intention, and interaction rather than by numerical values. As stated by McMillan (2001), qualitative research focuses on understanding meaning embedded in data and emphasizes interpretation over quantification. In the field of pragmatics, this approach is particularly suitable for examining how utterances function as social actions and how humor emerges from linguistic and contextual deviations.

The analysis in this study is grounded in pragmatic theories, particularly Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975) and Searle's theory of illocutionary acts (1980). By applying a descriptive qualitative design, the writer aims to identify violations of conversational maxims and categorize illocutionary acts that contribute to humorous effects. This method allows the writer to observe and describe patterns of language use in dialogue and to explain how meaning is negotiated in interaction.

The data source of this study was the dialogue found in the webtoon *Nerd and Jock*, written by Marko Raassina. The primary data consist of conversations between characters that contain illocutionary acts and violations of Grice's Cooperative Principle. The webtoon was selected due to its distinctive narrative style and its frequent use of humor arising from contrasting character personalities and unexpected responses. Fifteen episodes were purposively selected: episodes 3, 7, 12, 51, 66, 73, 77, 92, 104, 184, 195, 211, 215, 233, and 245 because they clearly display pragmatic deviations that generate humor.

Data collection was conducted systematically to ensure the reliability of the findings. The writer employed close reading techniques as suggested by Arikunto (2010) and note-taking techniques proposed by Mahsun (2005). Each selected episode was read carefully to understand the conversational context, the characters involved, and the communicative intentions behind each utterance. Dialogues relevant to the research focus were identified and recorded. Notes were taken to document the context of the utterance, the type of illocutionary act, and the violated maxim. This process ensured that all relevant data were accurately captured and prepared for analysis.

The data were analyzed using the qualitative analysis model proposed by Miles et al.,

(2014), which involves data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the first stage, the writer conducted data condensation by selecting dialogues that contained illocutionary acts and violations of the Cooperative Principle, while excluding irrelevant data. In the second stage, the selected data were organized into tables to facilitate comparison and pattern identification. The final stage involved drawing conclusions by interpreting the data and verifying the findings through continuous reference to Grice's and Searle's theoretical frameworks. This analytical process allowed the writer to ensure that the interpretations were consistent with the research objectives and supported by the data.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

In the webtoon *Nerd and Jock*, the interaction between Grice's principles and Searle's illocutionary acts is at the heart of the comedic narrative. Characters frequently violate conversational norms or perform speech acts in unexpected ways, generating humor through pragmatic violations. Through a detailed examination of dialogue excerpts, this analysis reveals how intentional or unintentional violations of conversational principles and the use of illocutionary acts generate jokes and functions.

### **Grice's Cooperative Principle and Searle's Illocutionary Act**

#### **A. Maxim of Quantity**

The principle of quantity requires speakers to provide information in an appropriate amount, neither too much nor too little, so that it is sufficient for the conversation. This principle ensures that communication can be efficient and relevant, avoiding overwhelming listeners with unnecessary details or confusing them with insufficient information (Grice, 1975). In the webtoon *Nerd and Jock*, the principle of quantity is violated, as the characters often provide excessive or insufficient information, creating a humorous discrepancy between expectations and reality.

#### **High-Tech Setup, Simple Game Choice (Episode 66)**

In Episode 66, the Nerd enthusiastically shows off his new gaming rig with elaborate technical details. Evidence of this conversation is seen when Nerd says:

“This bad boy is the most powerful mill on the market! It can run every game at a smooth 120 fps and 4k quality. On top of that, this dynamic gaming chair, VR set, ultra-wide monitor, and 3D audio system maximizes the realistic immersion!”

This detailed exposition sets the expectation of serious and advanced gaming. However, the punchline comes when Jock asks, “What are you going to play?” and the Nerd reveals:

“Solitaire.”

The humor arises from the stark inconsistency between the Nerd's exaggerated descriptions and his use of trivial settings, which demonstrates a clear violation of the Maxim of Quantity, since Nerd provides excessive and unnecessary information that contrasts with the listener's expectations. This finding is consistent with Hamidah et al. (2023), who argue that

violations of the maxim of quantity are a dominant source of humor.

In this interaction, Nerd demonstrates assertive action to convey information and pride.

When Nerd answers "Solitaire," he still takes assertive action that highlights the contrast with the complex equipment. As explained by Searle (1979), assertive speech acts commit the speaker to the truth. Furthermore, Nerd uses a directive act: "Hey, Jock, check out my new gaming set up!" which functions as a subtle invitation (Yule, 1996).

#### Elaborate Morning Routine vs Simple Habit (Episode 77)

Episode 77 shows another violation of the maxim of quantity through the Nerd's long and detailed explanation of his morning routine:

"First thing I do when wake up, I drink a huge glass of water to get my body hydrated! Then I meditate and practice mindfulness to keep my mind healthy! After that I take a quick cold shower to really wake my body up! Lastly at 6 AM, I'll make a to-do-list of all the things I want to do that day."

This is in stark contrast to Jock's short response:

"Me? Oh I just do um... journaling and stuff."

The Nerd's excessive detail violates the quantity principle by overloading the conversation, while Jock's reply provides too little information. This imbalance creates humor (Saefudin et al., 2023). Both characters perform assertive actions, providing personal information they believe to be true (Yule, 1996). Additionally, Nerd's question "What about you? What you do in the morning?" functions as a directive speech act to maintain continuity. Finally, Jock uses an expressive act: "Well, don't you look chipper today!" as spontaneous praise to strengthen their social relationship.

#### Over-Explaining Mistletoe vs Sudden Romance (Episode 233)

The principle of quantity is violated in Episode 233 when the Nerd explains mistletoe in excessive detail to Tiger:

"*Viscum album* is a hemiparasitic plant that grows on branches of trees... Celtic druids of 1st century northern England saw the plant as a symbol of fertility since it could blossom during winter. But the tradition of kissing under it might originate from Norse mythology, from the story of goddess Frigg, but also—"

The humor arises when Tiger cuts him off with a directive act:

"Shut up and kiss me already, you handsome fool!"

Nerd's lengthy explanation exceeds conversational needs, violating the Maxim of Quantity (Hamidah et al., 2023). His speech is an assertive action providing historical knowledge. Tiger's response is a directive that encourages immediate romantic action, changing the flow from rational to emotional. Finally, Tiger performs an expressive act: "That'll shut him up!", reflecting satisfaction and creating a humorous contrast with Nerd's panicked expression (Searle, 1979).

## Jock's Fish Puns While Showing Off Muscles (Episode 211)

In Episode 211, while fishing, Jock provides excessive information filled with puns:

"Says you! Already got one! Gotta admit, those guns ain't no fish sticks. Did you sea those triceps? Made me a bit jelly. And my cod, it's fis(h)ts! It must have a mean right hook! But those cannonball shoulders did look kinda fishy..I mean, if it would compete, would it bass the tests?"

Nerd responds with an expressive act of boredom:

"Enough with the damn fish!"

Jock violates the Maxim of Quantity by giving irrelevant puns. The conversation starts with Nerd's assertive act: "That's a weird looking bait, Jock," and Jock's assertive reply about protein and creatine. Jock's pun "Made me a bit jelly" is an expressive illocutionary act comparing himself to a fish. Nerd's final outburst reflects his psychological state of impatience, which Yule (1996) identifies as a trigger for humor.

These examples illustrate how the quantity principle functions as a comedic device in the webtoon. By exaggerating or abbreviating information, the characters disrupt the cooperative flow of conversation, leading to humorous misunderstandings and ironic counterpoints. Thus, the quantity principle not only governs effective communication but also serves as a means of generating humor through pragmatic violation in the webtoon *Nerd and Jock*.

## B. Maxim of Quality

The maxim of quality, a fundamental component of Grice's cooperative principle, requires that speakers provide information that is truthful and supported by evidence. This maxim requires interlocutors to avoid saying what they believe to be false or for which they lack sufficient evidence (Grice, 1975). In the *Nerd and Jock* webtoon, violations of this maxim are a visible source of humor, as characters often intentionally or unintentionally convey falsehoods, exaggerate, or fabricate. These violations create humorous effects by reversing the audience's expectations of factuality, leading to surprise or absurdity.

### Jock's Prank with a Twist on Words (Episode 3)

In Episode 3, Jock intentionally deceives the Nerd to get him out of the house. The evidence of this conversation is seen when Jock says:

"Hey nerd! I found a girl for you, come check her out!"

Jock fools the Nerd because the "girl" he found is actually a "grill" (a cooking appliance). This deception with wordplay violates the Maxim of Quality because Jock intentionally gives false information, presenting an inanimate object as a person. Humor arises from the clash between expectations and reality. This analysis aligns with Grice's (1975) view that when the truth is deliberately violated, a humorous effect occurs because the listener believes the lie before realizing the truth.

In this interaction, Jock's statement "Hey Nerd I found girl for you, come check her out!"

is included in the directive act so that Nerd takes action. This sentence encourages Nerd to go out of the house. According to Searle (1979), directive acts can be social invitations that function to strengthen relationships. Furthermore, once the prank succeeds, Jock says:

“Hah, got you out of your lair!”

This is an expressive act that shows Jock's satisfaction and pleasure. The term “lair” implies that Nerd is like a creature that rarely leaves its nest. In line with Yule's (1996) opinion, expressive speech acts function to reveal the speaker's inner state and often elicit an emotional response, making the conversation more humorous.

#### Tiger's Nervous Overthinking (Episode 215)

In Episode 215, a violation of the maxim of quality is performed by Tiger. The scene begins with Nerd making an assertive act about the weather:

“Nice day today.”

Tiger, feeling nervous because she thinks it is a date, begins to panic internally. When Nerd notices her strange expression and performs a directive act by asking:

“Are you okay?”

Tiger answers nervously with a lie:

“I-I'm fine, just um... checking these ants.”

This statement is a clear violation of the Maxim of Quality because Tiger is not actually observing ants; she is fabricating an excuse to cover her nervousness. The humor is heightened when Nerd takes the lie literally and performs another assertive act:

“Ah, a fellow myrmecologist, I see!”

Nerd's reaction demonstrates how violating the Maxim of Quality can create humor through the discrepancy between the speaker's intent and the listener's understanding. As Yule (1996) explains, assertive acts are used to provide information the speaker believes to be true. In this case, Nerd believes Tiger's false claim.

Furthermore, this episode is rich with expressive acts from Tiger's internal monologue and nervous speech, such as:

“It is. Wait, is this like... a date?! Maybe not officially, but... what would a real date be?” “I need to calm down or I'll lose my mind!” “Oh well, doing even mundane stuff with him is great enough!”

These sentences are expressive acts because Tiger conveys her emotional reactions explicitly. She feels confused and happy, showing emotional pressure she is unable to hide. According to Yule (1996), expressive acts function to directly convey personal feelings like nervousness or stress, which is clearly evident in Tiger's reaction.

The above episodes demonstrate how the principle of quality serves as the center of

humor in the webtoon. By willfully ignoring expectations of honesty, the characters create humor through wordplay and fabrication. The reader's awareness of the characters' falsehoods and manipulations of reality immediately invites laughter. The principle of quality not only guides honest communication but also provides fertile ground for humor by allowing for deviations from reality that surprise and delight the reader.

### C. Maxim of Relevance

Maxim of relevance requires that contributions to a conversation be relevant and directly related to the topic at hand. This maxim ensures that the interlocutors pay attention to the dialogue in a consistent and focused manner, facilitating mutual understanding and efficient communication (Grice 1975). In the webtoon *Nerd and Jock*, violations of the Maxim of Relevance occur frequently, resulting in humor through unexpected topic changes and inappropriate responses that disrupt the flow of conversation.

#### Jock's Distraction Turns into Unexpected Motivation (Episode 7)

Episode 7 provides a clear example of this maxim being violated. During a weightlifting session, the Nerd performs an explicit directive act by asking for motivation:

"Would you motivate me when I'm doing my set?"

Jock initially encourages him, but suddenly interrupts with an irrelevant piece of news:

"You can do it bro! Just be yourself, bro! ... They just cancelled your favorite anime!"

This statement is irrelevant to the immediate context of physical exercise, introducing an unrelated topic. The humor arises from this sudden diversion, which effectively motivates the Nerd through an emotional shock. This aligns with Grice (1975), who states that when a speaker deliberately ignores relevance, it results in incongruity and humor. Later in the scene, Jock performs an expressive act by saying "Woah!" when he sees Nerd's explosive enthusiasm. This exclamation conveys Jock's honest surprise and psychological state (Yule, 1996), providing a humorous effect as he did not expect such an intense reaction.

#### Nerd Talks About a Black Hole, Jock Jokes About It (Episode 51)

In Episode 51, the Nerd marvels at a scientific achievement using assertive acts:

"Look at this! The first real picture we have of a black hole! Isn't this universe just incredible? All kinds of mysteries are being unraveled during our lifetimes?"

Jock responds with a disconnected and absurd comment:

"Toasty! And there's a giant flaming donut waiting for us to visit it!"

Jock's response is irrelevant to the serious scientific content provided by the Nerd. The humor comes from the absurdity of comparing a cosmic phenomenon to a "giant flaming donut." This finding is similar to Hamidah et al. (2023), where humor emerges when characters divert serious topics to mundane imaginations like food. Jock's exclamation "Toasty!" is an expressive act that changes the atmosphere from serious to funny, expressing his spontaneous

awe toward his own imagination rather than the scientific reality (Searle, 1979).

#### Jock's Teasing Leads to a Surprising Revelation (Episode 12)

In Episode 12, a violation occurs when Nerd focuses on a locker's size, but Jock performs assertive acts that shift the topic irrelevantly:

“Nice locker you got there. Lot of space left, eh? It seems to be pretty much your size. Good, I was looking for a storage for my life size Nerd sculpture.”

This statement has no contribution to the previous focus on the locker's utility. The humor peaks when Jock reveals he actually has the statue. Nerd reacts with an expressive act of surprise:

“You have a statue of me?”

Nerd's spontaneous reaction expresses confusion and surprise (Yule, 1996) at being the object of such excessive attention. This irrelevant topic shift contrasts sharply with the logical flow, illustrating how pragmatics can be used strategically to create comedic moments.

#### Jock Rejects the “Lemon”, Turning It into a Joke (Episode 92)

In Episode 92, Jock is hit by a lemon, but instead of reacting to the pain, he gives an irrelevant response regarding his fruit preferences:

“Man you know what I say to that? I say screw lemons! I have zero use of them. Besides, I'm more of a strawberry guy.”

After a strawberry falls on him, he adds:

“Now that I'm thinking about it, I'm really an ultra HD 4K television kind of guy.”

The violation of relevance is visible in the shift from the physical incident to his desires for a television. Jock uses assertive acts to convey these preferences and claims: “Looks like the universe is finally recognizing my greatness!” These exaggerated self-judgments build his character and create humor through unrealistic confidence. Meanwhile, Nerd performs a directive act as a warning:

“Don't push your luck buddy.”

This directive serves as a marker of social boundaries (Yule, 1996). Jock's initial expressive act of pain, “Oww!”, provides the physical context that makes his subsequent arrogant and irrelevant statements even more ridiculous.

#### Tiger's Confusion Turns into a Funny Moment (Episode 184)

In Episode 184, the violation occurs through Tiger's irrelevant internal response. Nerd takes off his shirt to prepare for what he thinks is a fight, stating an assertive act:

“Obviously I don't want to dirty my best shirt!”

Tiger, however, misinterprets this as a romantic signal and fantasizes:

“W-what are you doing? ... Omg, he's ripped! ... (Imagining Nerd saying): You know, if you're going to get on top of me...”

Tiger's fantasy is irrelevant to Nerd's intention of a "battle." Humor arises when Tiger screams “Aaaagh!” in embarrassment, which Nerd (misinterpreting again) calls a “fierce battle cry.” Nerd's assertive conclusion, “She's ready to go!”, builds the humorous climax through miscommunication. Tiger's internal dialogue and questions are expressive acts that show her admiration and confusion, strengthening the interaction's pleasant but awkward atmosphere (Leech, 1993).

Tiger's Confession Turns into a Group Invitation (Episode 195)

In Episode 195, Nerd responds to Tiger's romantic invitation with a completely irrelevant answer. Tiger uses a directive act to initiate a date:

“There's something I'd like to ask you... Would you go out with me...?”

Nerd misinterprets the intention and replies irrelevantly:

“Of course, you can join our group!”

The humor arises because Nerd treats a serious romantic confession as a request for friendship. This illustrates Grice's (1975) theory on how shared meaning fails without relevance. Nerd and Jock both use assertive acts to welcome her: “The gang is getting bigger! Welcome aboard!” Tiger's response is a confused expressive act, “Eh?”, which highlights the contrast between her romantic expectations and the reality of the misunderstanding. According to Yule (1996), these expressive acts convey the speaker's inner disappointment, which fuels the comedy for the reader who understands both sides.

These examples demonstrate how violations of the relevance principle serve as a powerful comedic tool in *Nerd and Jock*. By introducing off-topic facts or misinterpreting intentions, the characters generate humor through surprise and pragmatic incongruity.

#### **D. Maxim of Manner**

Maxim of manner as stated by Grice is the importance of clarity, conciseness, and regularity in communication. This requires speakers to avoid unnecessary ambiguity, ensuring that their message is delivered in a straightforward and easy-to-understand manner (Grice 1975). In the webtoon *Nerd and Jock*, violations of this maxim often occur when characters make confusing, convoluted statements that disrupt the clarity of the conversation. This violation creates humor by creating misunderstandings, confusing the interlocutor, and entertaining the reader through exaggerated speech.

Jock's Curiosity About Glasses (Episode 73)

In Episode 73, Jock is confused by how the Nerd's glasses stay on his face despite having no ears. Evidence of this conversation starts with Jock's ambiguous question:

“How do your glasses stay on your face? Because you don't have... you know.”

The Nerd responds with a vague and confusing explanation:

“They stick on unconsciously, but if I start thinking about it, it doesn't work!”

This statement is ambiguous because it attributes a physical function to an unconscious mental process, defying rational explanation. The humor peaks when Nerd's glasses actually fall off once he becomes aware of them. This analysis aligns with Grice (1975), as Nerd's failure to provide clarity turns a simple question into a confusing interaction.

In this excerpt, Nerd's explanation is an assertive illocutionary act because he conveys information he believes to be true, even if illogical (Yule, 1996). Later, Jock provides a directive action in the form of an offer:

“Lemme help.”

Although it sounds like a kindness, its purpose is to influence Nerd's actions to accept help. Jock then sticks the glasses back on with gum. When the glasses fall, Nerd performs an expressive act describing his frustration:

“Now I'm too conscious about it, they won't stick!”

This expression shows a strong emotional response to the illogical situation, providing depth to Nerd's character and showing the psychological impact of his frustration (Yule, 1996).

Queen Announces the Nerd as Her Boyfriend (Episode 245)

In Episode 245, the principle of manner is violated through the Queen's overly dramatic and disorganized statements. She creates confusion by constantly correcting herself:

“I'm his girlfriend of course... mean future girlfriend!”

She further complicates the clarity by launching into justifications:

“According to the data from tests and physical exams, he is the most qualified! ... I have chosen you as my new boyfriend.”

Her speech is convoluted, mixing self-praise with out-of-context data. This finding aligns with Hamidah et al. (2023), as the exaggeration creates humor. Queen's statements about tests are assertive acts aimed at validating her decision with objective-sounding evidence. Furthermore, when her friend says, “You are in the presence of a queen!”, it is an assertive act to emphasize her social status.

Queen's statement, “I have chosen you as my new boyfriend,” serves an implicit directive function. She is not just giving information but directing Nerd to accept the relationship as a final decision (Searle, 1979). In response, Tiger performs an expressive act of shock:

“Wha!? What did you say???”

Jock adds to the comedy with his own expressive act:

“Bro sure is popular!”

These expressive acts function to show the characters' emotional reactions—envy, admiration, and surprise—strengthening the social interaction while creating a humorous effect through exaggeration (Leech, 1993).

#### Jock's Panic Leads to an Unexpected Solution (Episode 104)

A violation of the manner maxim occurs in Episode 104 when Jock interprets an idiom literally. In this context, Nerd gives a directive illocutionary act to a panicking Jock during an exam:

“Calm down and focus! Use your head!”

Nerd uses the idiom "use your head" to mean "use logic," but Jock interprets it as a physical instruction and performs a literal "SMASHHHH" (headbutting the test). This creates humor through the ambiguity of figurative language (Saefudin et al., 2023).

The Professor then provides an assertive act that defies academic expectations:

“I have never seen a student who had the guts to just headbutt my test! You get an A+, young lad.”

This assertive act is humorous because the professor's assessment, while believed to be correct in his perspective, deviates from reality and academic norms (Yule, 1996). Before the solution, Jock provides an expressive act of anxiety:

“Oh man! I'm gonna flunk this test.”

This reflects his pessimistic psychological state. The subsequent success achieved through a physical headbutt rather than academic effort provides a humorous nuance because Jock's joy emerges from an unexpected action rather than the intended meaning of Nerd's advice (Searle, 1979).

These episodes show how violations of etiquette principles are a source of humor in the *Nerd and Jock* webtoon. By producing unclear or overly complicated speech, characters disrupt the cooperative flow, leading to laughter through the contrast between expected clarity and actual confusion.

## CONCLUSION

This study's analysis revealed 15 violations of maxims: four violations of the maxim of quantity, two violations of the maxim of quality, six violations of the maxim of relevance, and three violations of the maxim of manner. The most frequently violated maxim is the maxim of relevance, as the humorous strategy in this webtoon relies heavily on inappropriate responses between characters, such as those that deviate from the main topic. This is often used to create humor through deliberate miscommunication. Meanwhile, violations of the maxim of quantity are also quite striking, as *Nerd* frequently provides excessive information in contexts that do not require detailed explanation, creating information discrepancies that elicit laughter. Violations of maxims in this webtoon are not random but are consciously used by the author to

construct humor through pragmatic inconsistencies in the dialogue.

In addition to maxim violations, other types of illocutionary speech acts used by characters also play a significant role in shaping humorous discourse. The analysis revealed 38 illocutionary acts, consisting of 13 assertive, 14 expressive, and 11 directive. The dominance of assertive speech acts occurs because the Nerd character often conveys information, statements, and even opinions. This is usually done in the form of serious explanations, but it creates humor because it contrasts with Jock's innocent responses. Expressive speech acts are often used to display exaggerated emotional reactions such as admiration, embarrassment, or confusion, expressed in an exaggerated manner, creating humor throughout the story. Meanwhile, directive speech acts often appear in the form of commands or invitations, which are then responded to literally by other characters. These three types of illocutionary speech acts dominate because the interaction patterns in this webtoon are built on the different personalities of the characters, leading to frequent misunderstandings in the dialogue that ultimately lead to humor.

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