
VIOLETION OF POLITENESS MAXIMS IN THE TELEVISION SERIES *THE BIG BANG THEORY*

Agus Rohmahwati, Issy Yuliasri

English Language Education Postgraduate Semarang State Univesity, Indonesia

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Abstract

The aims of this research were to analyze the type of politeness maxims were violated by the speakers, to analyze the purposes of violation, and to evaluate the effects of politeness maxims in the conversation. The data of this research were taken from the television series situation comedy entitled the Big Bang Theory. This research used descriptive qualitative method. It was done by using observation and documentation method. This research found all maxims are violated by the character in the conversation. They are tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, sympathy maxim, consideration maxim, and patience maxim. Furthermore, this research found 12 kinds of purposes of violation made by the speakers. They are warning, advising, admonishing, requesting, suggesting, urging, offering, insisting, alleging, boasting, refusing, and condoling. As the effects of the politeness maxims, the researcher analyzed based on two types the effects of the politeness maxims: violation of politeness maxims and following the politeness maxims. From the analysis, it can be concluded that the use of utterances manner in the conversation is very important to reach the major purpose of politeness principle and the goal of communication can be adhered.

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✉Correspondence Address:

Kampus Pascasarjana Unnes, Jalan Kelud Utara III Semarang 50237
E-mail: Agusrahmawati1708@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

As the part of society, people do communication.. They use their own style in having communication, such as verbal or non verbal. Using non-verbal they can convey their message through gesture and expression. For example, when someone feels excited about something, he/ she may uses gesture by raising their thumb in order to show their feeling. Otherwise, we can know that someone is angry by seeing their face expression. Meanwhile using verbal they can convey their message through written and spoken

form. One of the examples of spoken form is utterance. According to Bakhtin in Akhutina states as social event, the utterance entails, first of all, active interaction between the speaker and the listener (the speaker's activity entails and presupposes the activity of the listener). In addition, there is an internally dialogic when it responds the previous context and anticipates the listener's response. It can happen when the first person as the speaker speaks; the hearer listens to what the speaker's said. Afterwards, when the hearer gives the response to what the speaker's utterance, in turn, the speaker gives the response to the previous context. Politeness is one of the important things in communication. Without politeness, communication will be risky because it may hurt other's feeling. Meanwhile, politeness also helps to maintain the social relationship since in order to preserve a goal relationship; the message should be delivered in an appropriate way or polite way. Opposite, when the message is not delivered in appropriate way, it may make the hearer is humiliated by the speaker.

Politeness principle is not only used in social life. It can be reflected in human's creation, such as movies, drama, books, plays, or advertisements. One of the examples of drama is situation comedy. According to Butsch (2005:35), situation comedy is "built around a humorous 'situation' in which tension develops and is resolved during the half hour which is in each episode the situation is re-created". In addition, it can be defined as a form of television

series which have the fixed actors and similar daily scenes.

One of the examples of research which studied about politeness principle in the television series is the research which was done by Deng and Zhou (2013). They studied the realization of Leech's politeness maxims in the television series *Desperate Housewife*. In this study, the result was in coincidence with Leech's opinion which states that some maxims will be used more and some will be used less. Here, they found tact maxim was the most useful maxim but modesty maxim was the least maxim, which nearly none. It can be concluded, in order to show politeness, people tend to produce tact maxim and approbation maxim.

However, this current study is different from those other previous studies of violation of Leech's politeness maxims. The current study identifies the purposes of violation made by the speakers in the conversation of *the Big Bang Theory* and the effect of politeness maxims in the conversation of *the Big Bang Theory*. Thus, according to those explanations, the writer is interested: (1) to analyze the politeness maxims violated by the speakers in the conversation of *the Big Bang Theory*; (2) to analyze the purposes of violation made by the speakers in the conversation under study; (3) to evaluate the effects of politeness maxims in the conversation under study.

METHODS

This research used descriptive qualitative method and focused to employ the Leech's Politeness Principle (1983) which got the additional type from Cruse (2000) and Cutting (2002) in order to analyze the data obtained. The object of the data of this research was excerpts which contained violation of politeness maxims in the character's utterance.

There were some steps in doing this study. They were mentioned below. Firstly, identifying a topic of research to define the topic of the research. Secondly, reviewing the literature related to this study. The researcher reviewed the previous studies and literature

related to this study. Thirdly, specifying the purpose and research questions. Fourthly, the researcher collected the data then analyzing and interpreting the data. The last step was reporting the research. The researcher wrote and composed the research report.

The steps used in collecting the data of the study are as follows: First, choosing adequate episodes that containing the aspects of politeness maxims in its utterances. Next, the researcher watched the adequate episodes of “the Big Bang Theory” for several times in order to understand the whole story. Then, transcribing the data from the utterances in *the Big Bang Theory* situation comedy into the form of dialogues list. Last, identifying the listed dialogues that contain the violation of politeness maxims carried out by each character.

The steps used in analyzing the data are as follows: (1) classifying the violation of politeness maxims in the character’s utterance by using the Leech’s Politeness principle and the additional of politeness maxims by Cruse and Cutting, (2) describing the purposes made by the speakers to the violation of politeness maxims in any type of utterances based on the Bach’s theory which added by the speech act produced the involved speakers, and context of situation in the interaction, (3) analyzing and interpreting the effects of the politeness maxims in the conversation of the Big Bang Theory, (4) the last, drawing conclusion (this drawing conclusion process was the last process of overall data analysis process in this study).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To analyze the types of violation of politeness maxims made by the speakers, this study applied the Leech’s Politeness Principle (1983) which got the additional type from Cruse (2000) and Cutting (2002). This research found that there were 100 utterances which were violated by the speakers in the conversation of *the Big Bang Theory*. They were tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, sympathy maxim,

consideration maxim, and patience maxim. The table below presents the finding of types of violation politeness maxims made by the speakers in the conversation of *the Big Bang Theory*.

Table 1. Summary of the Violation Politeness Maxims

Type of Violation of Politeness Maxims	Season 8 episode 2	Season 9 episode 1	Season 9 episode 4	Season 9 episode 12	Total of Each Violation
Tact Maxim	5	6	5	1	17
Generosity Maxim	-	1	-	-	1
Approbation Maxim	9	12	12	10	43
Modesty Maxim	5	4	-	3	12
Agreement Maxim	2	8	5	-	15
Sympathy Maxim	-	5	-	-	5
Consideration Maxim	-	5	-	-	5
Patience Maxim	-	2	-	-	2
Total	21	43	22	14	100

The table of summary shows that the total numbers of politeness maxims which were violated by the speakers in the television series the Big Bang Theory were 100. They comprised 17 violations of tact maxim, 1 violation of generosity maxim, 43 violations of approbation maxim, 12 violations of modesty maxim, 15 violations of agreement maxim, 5 violations of sympathy maxim, 5 violations of consideration maxim, and 2 violations of patience maxim.

Approbation maxim is the most violation which made by the speakers in the conversation of the Big Bang Theory. This maxim concerns maximizing praise and minimizing dispraise to other. Therefore, if the character employs the violation of approbation maxim, it means the character maximizes praise and minimizes dispraise to other. For example:

- (19) Leonard: "Why not? "
 Sheldon: "Some important new information has come to light.
Women are the worst."

The conversation took place in the situation when Leonard and Penny were getting married in Las Vegas. In the middle of the wedding process, Leonard got a phone call from Sheldon. He wanted to tell Leonard for not getting married because of some reasons. He explained that his heart was hurt because Amy had broken up with him. He felt sad because of it. Therefore, he said, "Some important new information has come to light. Women are the worst."

From the conversation above, it can be seen that in delivering an utterance, Sheldon employed violation of approbation maxim since he maximized dispraise to other by giving a request to Leonard for not doing the wedding since he thought all women were worst.

According to Leech's politeness theory, an utterance can be said polite if it gives a positive result to the addressee, it can support the addressee to do something better in the following times. It also will make a good relationship and a harmonious atmosphere between the participants. In fact, Sheldon's utterance gave a negative effect which made Leonard felt annoyed by preventing him to marry since Sheldon thought that all women were worst. Here, Sheldon's utterance is identified as an impolite utterance since it implicates the cost toward the addressee. Consequently, it will also disturb the relationship and harmonious atmosphere between the participants. In this case is the relationship between Sheldon and Leonard.

The Purposes of Violation Politeness Maxims

There were 12 kinds of found 12 kinds of purposes of violation made by the speakers in the conversation from the television series *the Big Bang Theory*. They were warning, advising, admonishing, requesting, suggesting, urging, offering, insisting, alleging, boasting, refusing, and condoling. The summary of the purposes of

the violation of politeness maxims made by the speakers in conversation of the television series *the Big Bang Theory* is showed in the table below.

Table 2. The Purposes of Violation Politeness Maxims

Type of Violation of Politeness Maxims	Season 9 episode 1	Season 9 episode 4	Season 9 episode 2	Season 8 episode 2	Total of Each Violation
Warning	3	2		2	7
Advising	1	2			3
Admonishing	1	3	1	7	12
Requesting	3				3
Suggesting	1		1		2
Urging	3	1			4
Offering		1			1
Insisting	3			3	6
Alleging	10	6	9	2	27
Boasting	6	1	3	4	14
Refusing	6	5		3	14
Condoling	7				7
TOTAL	44	21	14	21	100

Based on the data analysis above, the highest purpose of violation made by the speakers in the conversation of the Big Bang is alleging. For example:

- (60) Howard: "You reported me to human resources?"
 Sheldon: "*You violated the sanctity of my mouth.*"

Relating to the context of situation, Howard felt annoyed because of Sheldon's action. Sheldon tried to prevent him to take Sheldon's class. He wanted to prove that nobody was smarter than he is. Then Howard reminded him if he wanted to be a crappy teacher than Howard would be a crappy student. But Sheldon kept ignoring. Howard could not handle his feeling, and then he shot the spit ball into

Sheldon's mouth. Because of Howard's action, Sheldon reported him to the human resources.

According to Bach's speech act, the speaker proposes alleging since it required the intension that the speaker wants to tell the hearer an opinion about something without proof. In this case, Sheldon said that Howard was a person who was responsible for his suffering since he thought Howard violated the sanctity of his mouth. Here, he delivered an utterance to the hearer about something without proof and did not consider whether the utterance was appropriate with the fact or not.

The Effects of Politeness Maxims

Based on the result that was mentioned above, this research analyzed the effects of the politeness maxims in the conversation. It can be seen that mostly the effects of politeness maxims which made by the speakers can disturb the relationship and harmonious atmosphere between the participants on the interaction if the speaker did the violation. Opposite, if the speakers tried to avoid the conflict by following the politeness maxims then the communication will run smoothly and the goal of communication can be adhered. For example:

- (28) Sheldon: "Yeah. I know. Turns out, being sweet isn't enough to keep a girl thesedays.I blame Madonna."
 Penny: "I'm sorry to hear about you and Amy."
 Sheldon: "Well, I'm sorry about Leonard."

Based on the context of situation, Amy thought her relationship with Sheldon moved too slowly. She felt her friends had make a progress toward their relationship, such as Howard and Bernadette who had married, then Leonard and Penny who made a plan for getting married. Meanwhile, she and Sheldon still the same since they decided to have a date. It happened because Sheldon was too busy with his research when his girlfriend needed him.

In addition, Sheldon said that he blamed Madonna for his relationship. In this case, he thought Madonna had inspired the girl to do something through her song. One of Madonna's songs entitled *a good girl gone wild* told about a

good girl who became wild. The word *wild* means misbehave. In order to keep the situation harmonious, Penny delivered an utterance by following the sympathy maxim. She said that she felt sorry about the relationship between Amy and Sheldon.

From the example above it can be concluded that the use of utterances manners in a very important conversation. Leech (1983) stated the major purpose of politeness principle is to establish and maintain the feelings of community in the social group. Therefore, to create a comfortable atmosphere in the conversation both of the speaker and the hearer tried to avoid the conflict by following the politeness maxims so that both the speaker and the hearer no one feels offended or misunderstanding in communications. Furthermore, the goal of communicating can be adhered. In this case, Penny felt sorry because of Sheldon's relationship. It can be seen from Penny's utterance. Here, Penny delivered an utterance which made Sheldon felt comfortable. It is indicated that Penny's utterance seemed polite. Moreover, the utterance which was uttered by the speaker gave a positive effect to the addressee by following the politeness maxim. Based on Leech's politeness principle if one of the participants feels comfortable in conversation, it can be conclude that the goal of communication can be adhered.

- (39) Raj : "No, no. I'm just evolving as a musician. You're the one who's stuck in the past."
 Howard : The past was lunch! You know what's really happening here? Your girlfriend is breaking up our band.

Relating to the context of situation, after hearing Emily's opinion about the song, Raj came to Howard's apartment. He said to Howard about his opinion toward the song. Howard felt annoyed because of it. He thought that the band just wrote the song which we could think through it. Then, Howard realized that Raj's utterance appeared because of Emily's opinion. Then, he said that in his opinion Raj was such a wimp. He was a person who did not

have a principle. He would say yes if his girlfriend said yes. Opposite, he would say no if his girlfriend said no but Raj disagreed with it by saying that he was just an evolving musician. The utterance indicated Raj was just a musician who needed to change in order to follow the development of the music. Then Raj said that Howard was the person who was stuck in the past. In this case, Raj's utterance meant Howard was a musician who did not want to change by accepting other's opinion to get the better change. The arguing kept going. Howard defended that the past was lunch. Then he blamed Emily as a person who took responsibility for the situation.

According to Leech's politeness principle, the polite utterance is uttered by the speaker to make the addressee feels glad. Leech (1983) stated the major purpose of politeness principle is to establish and maintain the feelings of community in the social group. Therefore, to create a comfortable atmosphere in the conversation both of the speaker and the hearer tried to avoid the conflict by following the politeness maxims so that both the speaker and the hearer no one feels offended or misunderstanding in communications. Furthermore, the goal of communicating can be adhered.

In this case, Raj felt annoyed because of Howard's utterance. It can be seen from Raj's utterance. Here, Raj delivered an utterance which made Howard felt annoyed. It is indicated that Howard's utterance seemed impolite. Moreover, the utterance which was uttered by the speaker had a negative effect to the addressee which can disturb the relationship and harmonious atmosphere between the participants. Based on Leech's politeness principle if one of the participants feels annoyed in conversation, it can be concluded that the goal of communication can not be adhered. In addition, both of the hearer or the speaker can not create a comfortable atmosphere in conversation.

CONCLUSION

Having communication, it could be better if the speaker try to be relevant between what his said with the situation. In the conversation, in order to reach the goal of communication both the hearer and the speaker have to use the method. In this case, they can use politeness maxims. Based on this explanation, this research found the important role of politeness maxims in the conversation. If the participants created the politeness maxim in the conversation; it made a good relationship each other. Furthermore, both the speaker and the hearer no one felt offended or misunderstanding in the conversation. In fact, this research also found the violation of politeness maxims in the conversation. The violation might occur because of the desire of someone to give intension which implied in utterance, so the communication would not run smoothly since there would be some problem occurred because of violation, such as misunderstanding.

Finally, this study has proven that a humor usually happens in the conversation by violating the politeness maxims. The speakers did the violation of politeness maxims to the addressee in order to create it. As the effects, sometimes it might hurt the addressee's feeling. In addition, from the analysis, it can be concluded that the use of utterances manner in the conversation is very important. It is because to reach the major purpose of politeness principle both of the speaker and the hearer have to be able to create the comfortable atmosphere so there will be no misunderstanding and the goal of communication can be adhered.

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