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THESIS

**A STUDY OF NON-OBSERVANCE OF GRICE'S COOPERATIVE
PRINCIPLE FOUND IN HUMOR DISCOURSE: A CASE ANALYSIS OF
THE SITUATION COMEDY THE BIG BANG THEORY**

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Latan Chaipreukkul 2013: A Study of Non-Observance of Grice's Cooperative Principle Found in Humor Discourse: A Case Analysis of the Situation Comedy The Big Bang Theory. Master of Arts (English for Specific Purposes), Major Field: English for Specific Purposes, Department of Foreign Languages. Thesis Advisor: Assistant Professor Pornsiri Muangsamai, Ph.D. 125 pages.

This study aims to investigate the types of non-observance of Grice's Cooperative Principle employed in humor discourse of the series entitled The Big Bang Theory and to explore the rhetorical techniques that are used to help non-observance of the Cooperative Principle provoke the sense of humor in the dialogue of the series. The theoretical frameworks are applied using Thomas (1995) and Berger's inventories of the rhetorical categories (1990).

The data of this study is based on the texts of subtitle collected from the American comedy series The Big Bang Theory from the third season. The investigation concentrates on the parts of the text that receives a humorous effect; namely, soundtrack laughter.

The findings reveal that there are five various means of non-observance of the Cooperative Principle maxims contributing to humor generation in which flouting is the most frequently used type by occurring 117 times (66.86%) throughout the series, followed by infringing (16.57%), violating (13.71%), and opting out (1.71%) respectively. The least frequently employed type is suspending with 2 times (1.14%). In view of the rhetorical techniques of humor, the use of repartee (16.22%) is mostly employed by characters to interchange a witty reply during conversation whereas literalness (2.03%) is the least occurred technique. In summary, the results reveal that the rhetorical techniques of humor are used to complement the types of non-observance to the study by rendering a reason for the cause of humor in a way that the non-fulfillment types of Gricean maxims cannot.

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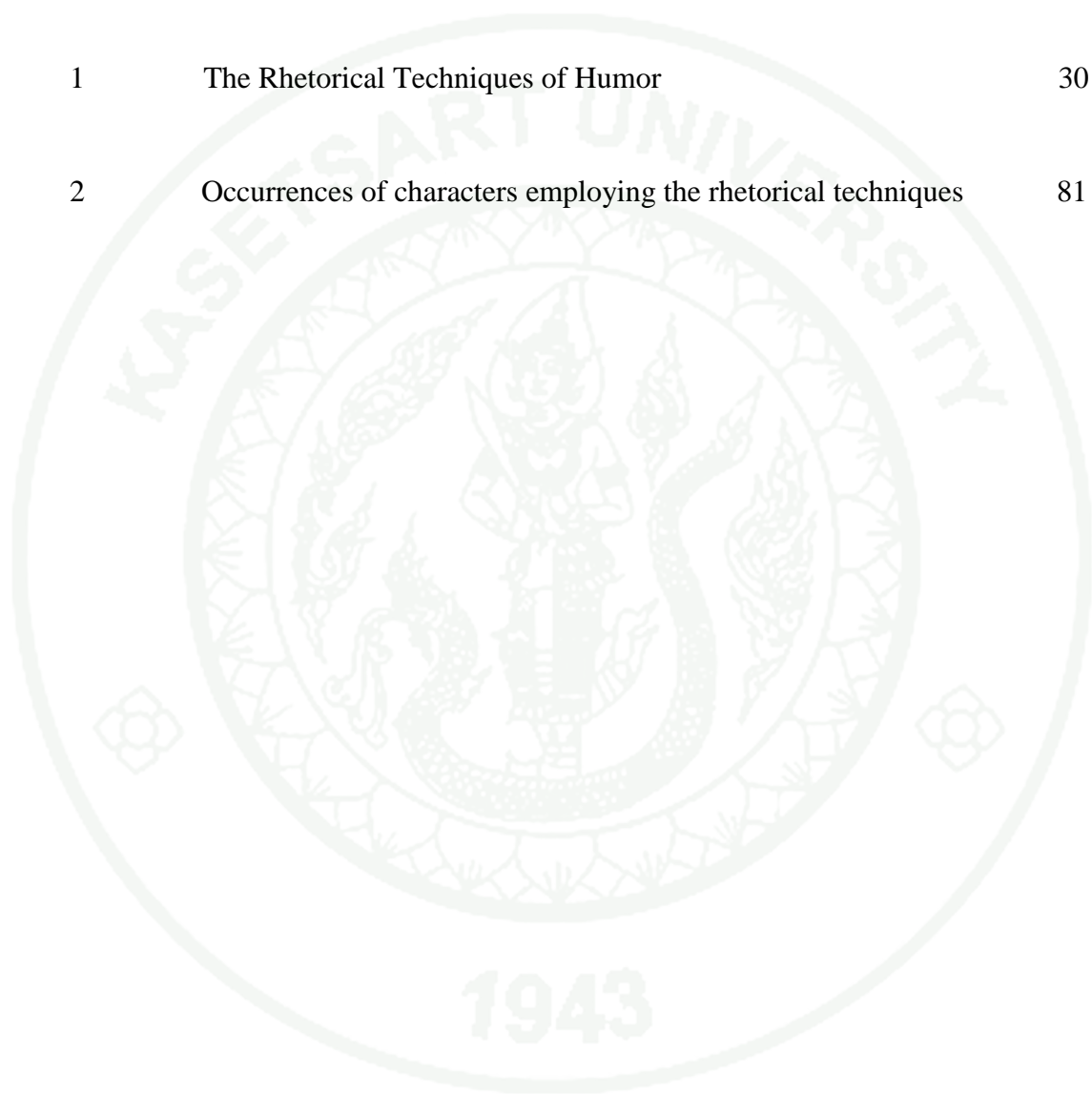
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Humor is a quality that involves amusement and funniness, it can be perceived in human trait and character through speech and action which can be further expanded into other forms of human creations such as literature in books, a comedy in television and broadcasting radio, music, and work of arts etc. Since it plays a crucial part in various situations, the impact of humor is unquestionably powerful; it can alleviate the conflict happened in an argument, when encountering an intense and stressful situation, a speaker tends to employ humor to relieve listener's tension and pressure; apart from that, people utilize humor as a way to attract attention from others, as in advertising field, it is considered as one of the most successful means to satisfy consumer's curiosity and need for entertainment (Wells, Moriarty, Burnett, 2005: 4). The complicated subjects can be easily communicated through humor. With its valuable contributions in several aspects, humor has become an interesting topic for many scholars to study it thoroughly.

For over centuries, the studies on humor have come a long way within different perspectives as found in sociology, philosophy, esthetics, and also linguistics. As Walte (2007) states in her master thesis that linguists conduct a research on verbal humor, merely in the areas of semantics and rhetoric. However, humor studies have expanded to cultural, social, and finally pragmatics areas since 1980s because of the dramatic growth in pragmatics approach (Mey, 2001).

Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics which popularly emerged in the late 1970s. Crystal (1987) defines pragmatics as a study examining the factors that control speaker's choice of language and the effects of the language selection upon hearers in a conversation. Another explanation of pragmatics defined by Thomas (1995) is that pragmatics concerns with speaker's intended meaning which is often implicitly stated, contextual meaning, and the hearer's interpretation of the speakers' words. In other

words, the real message of what the speaker intends to convey sometimes lies underneath the surface of the utterance, and thus it relies on the listener who is responsible for interpreting a meaning that is vaguely expressed by the speaker. In this manner, the conversational implicature is produced, and the Cooperative Principle (CP) with four conversational maxims introduced by Paul Grice, one of the most distinctive pragmatists, is in progress.

The CP runs as the following sentence: *"Make your 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"* (Grice, 1975). With the conversational principle in which the participants anticipate each other to follow this rule, the CP is employed to examine the contradiction between the expressed utterance and the true aim of the speaker. Furthermore, the CP can be subdivided into four conversational maxims which are the maxim of quantity (informatively), quality (truthfully and sincerely), relation (relevantly), and manner (orderly). In other words, the hearer expects the speaker to make an utterance that *"is adequate, but not overly informative, does not believe to be false, is relevant and clear, avoids ambiguity and is orderly"* (Mey, 2001).

Nonetheless, upon interpreting the utterance, it is not at all possible that the hearer can always grasp the intended message from the speaker correctly. It is because according to Thomas (1995), there are chances when speakers do not follow the four conversational maxims; therefore, she proposes another five ways of not observing the four maxims based on Paul Grice's framework which can be referred to as breaking maxims in a conversation; namely, flouting a maxim, violating a maxim, opting out a maxim, infringing a maxim, and suspending a maxim. Violating and flouting maxims can be divided into four kinds: violating and flouting maxims of quality, quantity, relation, and manner while the other non-observance types left may not cover all the four maxims. With all these types of breaking the maxims, the interlocution may not be as much successful as it should be regarding the cooperation between the speaker and the listener.

Problem Statement

As the studies of humor have recently started to gain attention from some scholars who conducted a research in the field of pragmatics (Raskin, 1985; Attardo, 1994; Kotthoff, 2003), various ranges of humor topics have been explored substantially from the cognitive theories which focus on incongruity to social dimension on interpersonal and adversarial interaction (Brone, 2008). According to Attardo (1991: 240), violations of one or more of Grice's conversational maxims can be observed through joke telling. Likewise, there is a general agreement among humor researchers that the non-observance of one or several of the Cooperative Principle maxims can create humor effect (Thomas, 1995).

As a result, there are quite a few research studies conducted to analyze the violation of the CP maxims in verbal humor. The previous study is by Dornerus (2005) concentrating on breaking maxims in conversation found in the two series *Desperate Housewives* and *That 70's show*. This study focuses only on the two strategies of non-observance; namely, flouting and violating a maxim. Another study is by Li Yang (2009) under the title 'An Interpersonal Rhetoric Study of English Verbal Humor – A Case Analysis of the Situation Comedy *Friends.'* The study explores the relationship between humor production and a set of Interpersonal Rhetoric principles; particularly, the non-observance of the CP maxims, the breaking of the Politeness Principle maxims, the Irony Principle, the Banter Principle, the Interest Principle, and the Pollyanna Principle in a qualitative method.

Even though there are limited contributions of breaking the Cooperative Principle maxims found in the humor discourse, many studies on the violation of these maxims have been greatly conducted in other contexts such as in a news article (Himmah, 2010), a novel (Mantalay, 2007), a movie (Mulyani, 2010), and an advertisement (Na Chiangmai, 2008) etc. However, most of them concentrate either on the violating or flouting forms while there are three types of non-fulfillment of the CP maxims which are opting out, infringing, and suspending the maxims left. Apart

from that, either the terms *violate* or *flout* is mistakenly used to cover all forms of non-observance (Thomas, 1995: 72), since the two terms are difficult to identify the difference in usage.

Hence, in this study, it includes an analysis of breaking the maxims of Grice's Cooperative Principle which consists of all forms of non-observance and the rhetorical techniques of humor complied by Berger (1990) which has been added to fill in the gap that the prior studies have overlooked. The rhetorical techniques of humor also include a more comprehensive understanding on humor generation judged by the fact that whenever the characters from the selected series *Big Bang Theory* break the conversational maxims, the laughter occurs. Therefore, there might be an explanation of what types of humor are created with the help of these techniques in order to understand the reason behind the breaking maxims of the characters which can serve the humorous purpose in the script.

The *Big Bang Theory* series is an American situation comedy television show from Chuck Lorre Production. It is distributed by Warner Bros Television airing on the CBS network and also it broadcasts internationally across the continents in Asia, Europe, Australia, and Africa. The first season was premiered in 2007. With its popularity, the show has been continuing to the fifth season. During 2009 to 2011, *The Big Bang Theory* has been nominated for many awards such as Emmy Awards for "Outstanding Comedy Series", Golden Globe for "Best Television Series", Teen Choice Awards for "Choice TV Show: Comedy" and sometimes won as "Outstanding Achievement in Comedy" from Television Critics Association Awards, "Favourite Comedy Series" from TV Guide Awards, "Favourite TV Comedy" from People's Choice Award. The main story is about the life of two roommates who are very intelligent physicists but are lacking social interaction skill. They enjoy hanging out with the other two socially dysfunctional friends who are scientists. Their ordinary lives have been changed since a young attractive woman moves into a room which is next to their room.

The theme and situations of the *Big Bang Theory* series are suitable for this current study since the main characters lack social skills in properly communicating with others; therefore, generating non-observance of the CP maxims which sometimes disturb the interlocutor during conversation, but amuse the viewers, judged from a burst of laugher alongside the story. Since the show involves a live studio audience in order to create laughter to the show's soundtrack, this study intends to take into account the laughter element. In other words, the study aims to analyze the types of non-observance of Grice's Cooperative Principle maxims which cause a laugh track as an instant feedback on humor, found in the dialogue of the series entitled "***The Big Bang Theory***."

Research Questions

Regarding the background and rationale, the research questions of this study are the followings:

1. What types of non-observance of the Cooperative Principle are employed in humor discourse of the *Big Bang Theory* series?

2. What are the rhetorical techniques in the *Big Bang Theory* series that are used to help non-observance of the Cooperative Principle provoke the sense of humor?

Objectives of the Study

This study is intended to find out the answers of the statement of problems mentioned above. The research's objectives are as follow:

1. To explore the types of non-observance of the Cooperative Principle (CP) which are employed by characters in humor discourse of the *Big Bang Theory* series

2. To investigate how each type of the non-observance of the Cooperative Principle that promotes the sense of humor with the help of the rhetorical techniques in the *Big Bang Theory* series

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study are hoped to contribute the benefits to both academic areas concerning pragmatics and a professional field in comedy television series in regard to a scriptwriter as follow:

1. To serve the academic purpose, the results of this study are expected to give more insights into the influence of non-observance of Grice's Cooperative Principle and the rhetorical techniques of humor on playrole in creating verbal humor genre found in a dialogue.

2. To serve the profession practice, the results of the study will offer new ideas and strategies to comedy playwrights in creating humorous scripts that are considered effective since the scriptwriters learn from the findings the frequent use of particular types of non-observance of the CP maxims that receives the laughter effect from the successful comedy series *The Big Bang Theory*. Therefore, the playwrights will apply the most frequently occurred types in their own series and avoid the least occurred ones.

Scope of the Study

The data for the investigation in this study is based on the texts of subtitle collected from the American comedy series *'The Big Bang Theory'* in which the English version was written by Chuck Lorre and Bill Prady. The researcher only selected the third season airing from 21st September, 2009 to 24th May, 2010 in the United States which contains 23 episodes in this study since it has received the highest rating of all seasons and gained a positive comment to be the most outstanding

season from the critics (Murray, 2010). The investigation in this study focuses on the parts of conversation spoken by both main and minor characters that receive a humorous effect which means a laughter sound from a live studio audience.

Definitions of Terms

The terms used in this research are referred to as follows:

Cooperative Principle: refers to conversational principle which describes how people interact with each other. This principle enables effective communication (Grundy, 2000).

Conversational Maxims: refers to any of four rules proposed by Grice. There are four conversational maxims which are Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner (Thomas, 1995).

Quantity maxim: refers to a conversational rule in which a speaker utters words adequately (Thomas, 1995).

Quality maxim: refers to a conversational rule in which a speaker utters truthful words (Thomas, 1995).

Relation maxim: refers to a conversational rule in which a speaker utters words that are relevant to the topic (Thomas, 1995).

Manner maxim: refers to a conversational rule in which a speaker utters words that are not ambiguous, and are orderly (Thomas, 1995).

Non-observances: refers to any failing to observe a maxim or breaking a maxim which consists of 5 types: flout, violate, opt out, infringe, and suspend (Thomas, 1995).

Flouting: refers to the act of breaking the rules of Cooperative Principle and conversational maxims with the deliberate intention of generating an implicature (Thomas, 1995).

Violating: refers to the act of breaking the rules of Cooperative Principle and conversational maxims with the intention to deceive the hearer (Thomas, 1995).

Opting out: refers to the act of breaking the rules of Cooperative Principle and conversational maxims by indicating unwillingness to cooperate (Thomas, 1995).

Infringing: refers to the act of breaking the rules of Cooperative Principle and conversational maxims with no intention to generate an implicature or to deceive the hearer (Thomas, 1995).

Suspending: refers to the act of breaking the rules of Cooperative Principle and conversational maxims by refraining from saying things regarded as taboo words (Thomas, 1995).

Humor discourse: refers to an amusing or comical communication of thought by conversation in the series

Situation comedy: refers to a humorous television series featuring the reactions of a regular cast of characters to unusual situations, such as misunderstandings or embarrassing coincidences.

The Big Bang Theory: refers to an American sitcom created by Chuck Lorre and Bill Prady. The series from the third season is broadcasted in Thailand on True Series channel on every Monday starting from May 2010 – June 2011.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter comprises of the theories and the conceptual frameworks which are provided as a fundamental knowledge for the analysis of the types of non-observance of Cooperative Principle in humor discourse. This part is organized as the following: that is, humor, the rhetorical techniques of humor, pragmatics, the Cooperative Principle, the conversational maxims, the types of non-observance, and the previous studies that are related to the types of non-observance and humor discourse as found in comedy series respectively.

Humor

Definition of Humor

Many scholars find it difficult to provide a concise definition that combines all the factors and complex elements of the word 'humor' since humor, according to most experts in the field of philosophical studies, is thought to cause a person positive sentiment such as joy, happiness, love, and other optimistic feelings. According to McGhee (1979), humor is a perception in which an individual find funny. The following is a definition to illustrate this complicated perception (McGhee, 1979):

> Humor is the mental experience of discovering and appreciating ludicrous or absurd ideas, events, or situation that bring pleasure or enjoyment to the individual. It is the quality of being funny or appreciating funny thoughts or acts of behavior; the ability to perceive/ enjoy what is funny or comical, a state of mind, feeling, or mood.

Other definitions of humor from the world-renowned dictionaries are the following. According to *Longman Advanced American Dictionary*, humor is (a) 'the ability or tendency to think that things are funny or funny things you say that show you have this ability,' (b) 'the quality in something that makes it funny and makes people laugh.'

Based on *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, humor is (a) 'a message whose ingenuity or verbal skill or incongruity has the power to evoke laughter,' (b) 'the trait of appreciating and being able to express the humorous; a characteristic (habitual or relatively temporary) state of feeling,' (c) 'the quality of being funny,' (d) 'one of the four fluids in the body whose balance was believed to determined your emotional and physical state; the liquid parts of the body.'

According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, humor is (a) 'the quality of being amusing or comic, especially as expressed in literature or speech,' (b) 'the ability to express humor or amuse other people,' (c) 'a mood or state of mind,' (d) 'each of the four chief fluids of the body (blood, phlegm, yellow bile (choler), and black bile (melancholy) that were thought to determine a person's physical and mental qualities by the relative proportions in which they were present.'

Based on the above definitions, humor in the context of this study is the ability to produce funniness through verbal creation of the speaker, and also to understand and appreciate that funniness on the part of the listener or an audience.

Major Conventional Humor Theories

Most of the humor theories may fall into three categories, according to Attardo (1994), a major theorist of this field, there are the following: superiority theory, incongruity theory, and relief theory, which are often called three traditional humor theories.

1. The Superiority Theory

This theory mentions about an occasion that we feel elated when we compare ourselves favorably to others as being less stupid, less ugly, less unfortunate, or less weak and mockery, and laughter at the foolish actions of others are central to the humor experience. Thomas Hobbes (cited in Gruner, 2000: 13) stated that:

> …the passion of laughter is nothing else but sudden glory arising from some sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly: for men laugh at the follies of themselves past, when they come suddenly to remembrance, except they bring with them any present dishonor.

For every humorous situation, there is a winner and a loser. This concept can be reflected from the world's well-known philosophers. Plato proposes that there is a spiteful tendency of laughter to the inferior, and the combination of pleasure and pain is found in his idea toward humor quality. Therefore, one way to gain pleasure is to make others feel pain. Aristotle believes that there is an imitation of men worse than average. He further defines the term 'worse' here which refers to one particular kind of Ridiculous, a type of the Ugly (Li, 2009:16).

In this sense, to feel superior to someone is to feel good, to achieve or accomplish expected goal(s), and to be more victorious or successful than others. People may usually laugh at others' mistakes, or sometimes their own mistakes in the past.

2. The Incongruity Theory

This theory states that humor arises as a reaction to something that does not meet our expectations or is inappropriate to the context. According to Aristotle, the most effective mean to create laughter is to settle an anticipation in the audience and

then deliver something that renders a twist, thereby making the audience laugh because of the twisted ending (Li, 2009: 17). Accordingly, this statement can be viewed as disappointed expectation results in humor.

The full development of this theory is credited to Kant (1987) whose famous definition of laughter is "laughter is an affection arising from the sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing" (Kant, 1987 cited in Attardo, 1994: 48). This statement asserts the root of the incongruity theory in which it is the sudden turning of the expectation into nothing. Kant even further elaborates that the jest must contain something that is capable of deceiving for a moment.

Raskin (1985) believes that humor is operated by perceptual disparity between the covered meaning and the discovered meaning. This concept is corresponded to Millers (1998:21) that "while we are following one line of meaning, we are surprised by a new one." He further explains that "release of tension from the first expectation being reduced to nothing by the switch to the second scenario is what creates the humor." Nevertheless, the shift of one circumstance into another is still relevant to each other. With this reason, the audience can understand and make sense together.

In other words, incongruity theory refers to a joke that starts with one direction and then suddenly changes into another which makes the listener surprised at since the twisted ending does not correspond to what the audience has previously expected.

3. The Relief Theory

The relief theory comes from a release of tensions and pressure created by societal constraints through laughter and humor. In the physiological and psychological perspectives, there are two famous theorists who mention about the relief theory, that is, Herbert Spencer and Sigmund Freud.

Spencer does not study the causes of humor, but the reason why people react to humor by way of laughter based on the physiological point of view. He also notices that human body may release the pent-up energy caused by any reasons. The large mass of emotion and unmet expectations caused by the incongruity is released by the half-convulsive actions titled as laughter. With this reason, Spencer regards laughter as the consequence of releasing excessive nervous energy (Morreall, 1987).

According to Freud (1990), three types of laughter situations are categorized; namely, joking or wit, the comic, and humor, in which all three situations involve a saving of psychic energy which is summoned for a specific task. However, this kind of energy is later not to be needed for that task anymore; therefore, it is released in the muscular movements and becomes laughter. As for joking, the energy that would have been used to repress sexual and hostile feelings is saved and then is released by laughter. The second kind of laughter is the comic in which the energy that would have been summoned to perform cognitive processing is saved and then released through laughter. Humor, the third laughter situation, can save emotional energy.

Apart from that, some of the contemporary theorists support Spencer's and Freud's theories. They perceive humor as a way to outwit the internal restraint of human's natural instincts which are dark impulses such as aggressive and sexual urges. According to Miller (1998: 241), humor is defined by citing the psychoanalytic theory that "humor serves as an acceptable outlet for repressed aggression and sexuality, which might explain why we so enjoy sexual innuendo and bodily function humor." Raskin suggests that "this kind of release of psychic energy seems to be logical companion of the suppression laughter… it is usually associated with sex and, less frequently, with aggression" (Raskin, 1985: 39).

Based on these definitions from the eminent theorists, relief theory stems from the fact that there are moral codes and social constraints that control and

suppress human's behavior in the society which can create stress and anxiety to them; hence, they want to release that pressures and dark instincts.

From the three conventional humor theories mentioned previously, they place significance on many viewpoints of humor: the superiority theory underlines the sociological perspective defining the reason humor arises and put a spotlight on the relationship between the interlocutors; the incongruity theory is a cognitive study of humor highlighting the stimuli of humor; the relief theory is a physiological and psychological exploration of human's reaction to humor via laughing.

Linguistics Humor Study

The beginning of humor research on a linguistics field has started in 1980's and rapidly gained an increasing interest from researchers. According to Attardo, this expanding attention of humor is a step forward in linguistic area since linguists have never taken humor topics, only puns that is their main concern, into study area until 1980's (Attardo, 2003: 1287). Up to the present days, many linguists have been making valuable contributions of humor research into this field. The establishment of conferences and particular institutions of humor study with a great amount of research papers and major linguistic theories are real proofs that verify the importance of humor toward linguistics. This section proposes the three most distinguished linguistics-based humor theories from significant researchers.

1. The Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH)

In the introductory period of linguistic humor study, there was no theory that was relevant or involved with humor, until Raskin has proposed Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH) which was regarded as the new beginning of the development of humor in this field. This theory concentrates on the linguistic aspect of humor and examines the text itself which is in contrary to the previous three traditional humor theories mentioned earlier in a sense that the three conventional

theories mainly highlight the psychological and other motives for the generation of humor. Attardo (2003: 1289) states that "it establishes both semantic and pragmatic foundation of humor and the idea of studying the humor competence of speakers (i.e. the necessary and sufficient conditions for a text to be funny)."

The Semantic Script Theory of Humor has been proposed by Raskin in 1985. A script is a systematized complex of information about some entities, which generally speaking, is relevant to an object, whether real or imaginary, an event, an action, a quality, and etc. The speaker internalizes a script which is considered as a cognitive structure, providing that the information on how things are done, organized, and many more (Attardo, 1991: 171). The major hypothesis of the SSTH is: a text can be characterized as a single-joke-carrying-text if both of the conditions are satisfied; that is, (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 overlap fully or in part on this text (Raskin, 1985: 99). According to Attardo (1991: 175), the SSTH assumes a semantic theory that incorporates as follows:

> …the set of all scripts available to the speakers, and a set of combinatorial rules. The combinatorial rules … their function is to combine all possible meanings of the scripts, and discard those combinations that do not yield coherent readings. Those combinations that yield coherent readings are stored and incorporated with other successive combinations, until all the elements in the text have been processed.

Thus, the logical interpretation of the text is approved as the meaning of the text. In a broadest sense, when a text is compatible fully or in part with two opposing scripts, the Semantic Script Theory of Humor categorizes it as being "funny." Raskin states that "the script oppositions fall into three classes: actual vs. non-actual, normal vs. abnormal, and possible vs. impossible" (Attardo, 1991: 176), which are additionally explained in more common oppositions, for example, correct/wrong,

life/death, obscene/non-obscene, dark/ light, etc. In order to express his principles clearly, Raskin gives his eminent "the doctor's wife joke" as an 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."

The selected text is regarded to be compatible with two scripts DOCTOR and LOVER based on the analysis method of Raskin's Semantic Script Theory of Humor, which is opposed on the SEX/ NO SEX basis. Therefore, this text is appraised as humorous due to its compatibility of the two conflicting scripts.

2. Non-bona-fide communication mode

One of the contributions Raskin makes to the humor study is his theory of the maxims of non-bona-fide communication mode.

Owing to the fact that Grice has originated the theory of Cooperative Principle in 1975, since then, there has been an increasing claim that jokes, or in this sense, humor could be observed in terms of violations of maxims of the Cooperative Principle. Attardo states that "a consensus has been built within humor research that humorous texts violate one or several of the maxims" (Attardo, 1993: 528). With this reason, among other researchers in this field, Raskin proposes one of the most significant principle; that is, the Non-bona-fide Communication mode (NBF). Raskin points out the distinction between bona-fide and NBF communication in his *Semantic Mechanisms of Humor* (1985). According to Raskin, the bona-fide communication is the earnest, serious, information-conveying mode of verbal communication which is dominated by Grice's Cooperative Principle whereas non-bona-fide modes of communication involve lying, play acting, or joke telling. Raskin maintains that the purpose of joke-telling is not to convey any information but rather to generate a special effect via the text, that is to say, to entertain the hearers and make them laugh.

Raskin notices that jokes appear to comply with a distinct set of principles other than the Cooperative Principle. He also proposes four maxims of the non-bona-fide communication mode:

a) Maxim of Quantity: Give exactly as much information as is necessary for the joke;

b) Maxim of Quality: Say only what is compatible with the world of the joke;

c) Maxim of Relation: Say only what is relevant to the joke;

d) Maxim of Manner: Tell joke efficiently (Raskin, 1985: 103).

Attardo completely agrees with Raskin's theory. He points out that all jokes belong to the non-bona-fide communication mode without exception (Attardo, 1994: 206). The NBF mode, however, encounters many questioning feedbacks, particularly on the information-conveying aspect of joke texts.

3. The General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH)

As SSTH is aimed to apply on jokes, it turns out to be problematic when used to analyze humor other than jokes. Consequently, a General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH), which is a new revise from the SSTH, was introduced by Attardo and Raskin in 1991. This theory is supposed to be applicable, in principle, to any type of humorous text.

The difference between these two principles is that while the SSTH is a "semantic" theory of humor, the GTVH is a linguistic theory "at large," in other words, it combines other areas of linguistics, including most notably textual linguistics, the theory of narrativity, and pragmatics (Attardo, 1991: 196). Attardo presents six Knowledge Resources (KR) for creating a joke: the script opposition (SO) which deals with the script opposition/ overlap requirement presented in the SSTH; the logical mechanism (LM) that accounts for the way in which the two senses/ scripts in the joke are brought together; the target (TA) which selects who is

the butt of the joke; the narrative strategy (NS) which is the form of narration a joke takes, for example, either as a simple narrative, as a dialogue, as a pseudo-riddle, as an aside in conversation, etc. ; the language (LA) which is the actual verbalization of a text; and the situation (SI) parameter which can be thought of as the "props" of the joke, in that, any joke must have some situation which refers to the objects, participants, instruments, activities, etc. in a joke (Attardo, 1994: 223-226).

The GTVH is intended to be suitable for generating an unlimited amount of jokes by combining the several values that each parameter can take. Though GTVH appears to be powerful than SSTH, it is still not the answer to all the issues encountered in the field. In the end, Attardo acknowledges that some problems remain unexplored and cannot be solved, thus more researches should be conducted.

 Types of Humor

There are many groupings for types of humor produced by various scholars due to the difficulties in classifying the types of humor which they find them complex and overlapping. However, the introduction of types of humor by Seaward (2006), has been regarded as "standard references." (Phimtan, 2011). He classifies 10 types of humor as follows:

   1. Parody

Parody is a type of humor in which something or someone is imitated for humorous effect. Parody can be both a verbal or physical expression of humor bringing imperfections to light. The person who copies his or her target often exaggerates it in terms of behavior and characteristic to make it more entertaining and funny.

2. Satire

Satire and parody have many resemblances. One of the major differences between a parody and satire is related to their goals. Satire emphasizes on a social or political change through humor which can be the combination of the humor and anger by exaggerating it for comical outcome; whereas, parody underlies on mimicry of people or things for fun without any attempts on bringing a personal, cultural, and social issues toward society. The movies *The Princess Bride* and *Shrek* contain examples of satire of the classic fairy tales.

3. Slapstick comedy

Slapstick comedy is a type of comedy involving exaggerated violence and activities which may exceed the boundaries of common sense in order to generate laughs from audience such as slipping on a banana peel, or getting a pie in the face, and reeling from a slap on the cheek. Originating in the French theater, the slapstick was a piece of leather nailed to a flat board in producing a sound effect at the proper moment on stage, in that way the use of slapstick can produce laughs. It is considered this type of humor to be an aggression in which the audience releases hidden anger through laughing by means of watching someone else gives and receives physical pain in a harmless way.

4. Absurd / Nonsense humor

Absurd / nonsense humor is about a violability of causal reasoning with the events or behaviors that are logically improper such as cow driving car, shark wearing glasses, and cheetahs using vending machines. Another example from Wright's first CD, *I Have a Pony*, expressed in an utterance is the following: *"I like my dental hygienist very much. In fact, while in the waiting room, I eat an entire box of Oreo cookies. (pause) Sometimes they have to cancel all their other appointments."*

5. The Double Entendre

The double entendre is a type of wordplay in which the speaker's expression has two meanings. The double entendre usually involves a sexual nature.

6. Black humor

Black humor is about changing a bad or sadness situation into joke with the purpose to decrease the fear or concern of those situations and to bring a good atmosphere back to the bad situations. Black humor is originally based on the fear of death and dying which is a common fear among human-beings; therefore, the best way to cope with this fear is to make fun of it as a way to become more comfortable with the unfortunate circumstances.

7. Bathroom humor

Bathroom humor is a form of humor that often describes as a rude joke. The name 'bathroom humor' derives from the use of various body functions known to occur in the bathroom. This kind of humor can be obviously seen from some movies such as *American Pie*, *South Park*, and *American Wedding*.

8. Irony

According to Nash (1985: 152), irony is described as the following:

…the consensus appears to be this: that the ironist insincerely states something he does not mean, but through the matter of his statement - whether through its formulation, or its delivery, or both – is able to encode a counter-proposition, his 'real meaning,' which may be interpreted by the attentive listener or reader.

To make it easier, Nash defines irony as the speaker's intention of conveying a real intended message that is different from or opposite to the spoken utterance.

9. Sarcasm

The surface meaning between irony and sarcasm are similar, that is, what the speaker speaks does not match the underlying meaning from what he thought. On the contrary, sarcasm is used more particularly to hurt and embarrass the person personally. The differences between irony and sarcasm can be marked by tone of voice and the way of delivery. The revelation of hidden anger is seen in sarcasm through some elements of clever wit. In other words, people use sarcasm to show an attempt to get verbal revenge. A sarcastic remark usually comes after the punch line, "I'm just kidding," to avoid hurting the feelings of a person at whom sarcasm is aimed.

10. Dry humor, quick wit, and puns

They can be described as a clever wit which involves the use of clever wording or phrasing that makes impression on the listener. The description of dry humor is recognized as clever and esoteric wit. It usually involves double entendres, words with more than one meaning or connotation which always includes sexual innuendo. According to Nash (1985), he categorizes pun into 12 types as follows:

a) Homophones. Homophones are pairs (or more) of words having the same sound but different meanings, e.g. rain/ reign; urn/earn, etc. Many riddles turn on homophonic puns: For example, *when does the baker follow his trade? Whenever he needs (kneads) dough.* The above example illustrates the homophonic pun between *needs* and *kneads* and the homonymic play on *dough*.

b) Homophonic phrases. Homophonic phrase is the phrase that has the same sound but different meaning. The speaker uses this tactic just to make fun to the listener. For example:

Where did Humpty Dumpty leave his hat?

Humpty dumped 'is' at on a wall.

<div align="right">(Nash, 1985: 139)</div>

c) Mimes. Nash (1985: 139) states that " 'Mimes' (a nonce-word) are phonetic similitudes, usually rhymes, with the appeal of homophones." For example, *what do cats read? The Mews (news) of the World.* And, *what did the duck say as it flew upside down? I'm quacking up.*

d) Mimetic phrases. The mimetic phrase is about mimicking the previous phrase of the story by substituting it with a new phrase that has similar sounds, but in a humorous way. For example, *Hollywood, land of mink and money* is mimetic of the Biblical 'land of milk and honey.'

e) Homonyms. Homonym is a word that shares the same spelling, but has several meanings, i.e., *school* means: (a) 'educational establishment'; and (b) 'collection of fish.' For such numerous meanings of that word cause the word humorous. For example, *where do fish learn to swim? In a school.*

f) Homonymic phrases. Homonymic phrase is the phrase, idiom, or sayings that share the same spelling, but has several meanings, i.e., *'I have designs on you,' as the tattooist said to his girl.* The idiom *'to have designs on'* means (a) 'to have plans to exploit or somehow take advantage of someone or something,' in which in the romance language means "I intend to have a sexual relationship on someone"; and (b) 'I have tattooed you.' The two meaning of this idiom make the listener confused which can cause the humor.

g) Contacts and Blends. Sometimes phrase may resemble well-known idioms and takes a color of meaning from them; thus, there is a blending of semantic elements, e.g. *the student seems to have read around linguistic*. The phrase here evokes *sleep around* which means 'sleep with several partners over time without any deep relationship.' Thus, in this case, it can be implied that 'the student consult various books, without intellectual discipline.' Thus, it appears that the student has not 'read deeply' or understood linguistics thoroughly.

h) Pseudomorphs. Pseudomorph is a false or irregular form of word which is made up in order to make a homonymic pun (identical sound but different meaning). Prefixes like *dis-* and *ex-* are also popular in making a pseudomorph pun. For example:

A: In his exposition, he took a very firm stand on spending cut.
B: How can you stand in and ex-position?

(Nash, 1985: 143)

i) Portmanteaux. Portmanteaux is a new word that is derived from blending of sounds and meanings of the two words into one word to make an ambiguous word. This type of pun is now widely used, especially in youthful riddles. For example, *If buttercups are yellow, what color are hiccups? Burple.* This riddle plays on words *Burple* which is derived from the word blue and purple and then mix them together to create a new word *Burple*.

j) Etymological puns. Etymological pun is the pun that the root of words or the origin of words is taken into the context in order to make a joke. However, this kind of joke is just used in some groups of people who are in the same field and know the origin of that word. If not, that word might not be funny (Nash, 1985).

k) Bilingual puns. The bilingual pun is the foreign pun that is taken into the conversation or the context to make a joke. Nash (1985: 145) states "[t]he bilingual pun is another demonstration of cute pedantry." For example:

Question: คนประเทศอะไรรวยที่สุดในโลก

Answer: คนไอริช

(Thabthan, 2007)

Back-Translation

Question: Which nationality is richest in the world?
Answer: Irish

The above example illustrates the foreign word that is taken to the conversation of Thai people to make a joke by playing with homophonic word.

l) **Pun-metaphors.** Pun-metaphor is the pun using metaphor in a different sense to make it more interesting and to attract readers. For example:

Murky consequences of washing our hands of Europe

(Nash, 1985: 146)

This selected example from the Guardian newspaper exemplifies the pun-metaphor of *washing one's hands* which the writer does not refer to the referential meaning of that metaphor meaning that to absolve oneself of responsibility, but to signify the meaning of 'withdrawing from' in different sense which the writer refers to the fact that there is a chance of Britain to withdraw from the European Economic Community.

The Rhetorical Techniques of Humor

Rhetorical Theory

The traditional meaning of rhetoric is the art of persuasion. In the ancient times, Aristotle, one of the world's well-known philosophers, separates the means of persuasion into three categories; that is, Ethos, Pathos, and Logos. According to Ramage and Bean (1998), they define these three concepts in the following way;

Ethos (Greek for "character") refers to the trustworthiness or credibility of the writer or speaker. Ethos is often conveyed through tone and style of the message and through the way the writer or speaker refers to differing views. It can also be affected by the writer's reputation as it exists independently from the message: his or her expertise in the field, his or her previous record or integrity, and so forth. The impact of ethos is often called the argument's "ethical appeal" or the "appeal from credibility,"

Pathos (Greek for "suffering" or "experience") is often associated with emotional appeal. But a better equivalent might be "appeal to the audience's sympathies and imagination." An appeal to pathos causes an audience not just to respond emotionally but to identify with the writer's point of view; that is to say, to feel what the writer feels. In this sense, pathos evokes a meaning implicit in the verb "to suffer" which means to feel pain imaginatively. The most common way of expressing a pathetic appeal is through narrative or story, which can turn the abstractions of logic into something evident and present. The values, beliefs, and understandings of the writer are implicit in the story and conveyed imaginatively to the reader. Therefore, Pathos refers to both the emotional and the imaginative impact of the message upon an audience, the power with which the writer's message moves the audience to decision or action.

Logos (Greek for "word") refers to the internal consistency of the message: the clarity of the claim, the logic of its reasons, and the effectiveness of its supporting evidence. The impact of logos on an audience is sometimes called the argument's logical appeal.

The three concepts, namely Ethos, Pathos, and Logos, described above will make awareness in terms of the author's perspective, the audience's perspective, and the logical perspective respectively. Aristotle mentions about the systematic discovery of argument and the learned art or craft-like knowledge of oratory. He also discusses how authors could use with an irony to hide their intentions (Graban, 2008: 400-401).

Nowadays, however, the term of rhetorics is used much more broadly. According to Covino and Jolliffe (1995: 10-24), the major elements of rhetorical theory are the rhetorical situation, the audience, the pisteis or "proofs" and the five canons of rhetoric: invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery. Of all the five elements, memory can be traced back to the most of the ancient roots of the rhetorical theory. In the ancient Greek and Roman period, the rhetors were expected to remember their speeches by heart. Thus the art of memory was practiced with the help of association. The rhetor associated parts of his speech with visual images in some physical setting. As the importance of memorizing diminished and written texts became a major part of rhetorics, the significant of memory also decreased. Primeau (1979: 21, cited in Berger, 1995: 52) agrees that there is a connection between *memoria* and modern rhetorics. He refers *memoria* to the "techniques used by message inventors to make memorable what they had created, arranged, stylized and delivered, such as the alliteration, repetition, use of figurative language and so forth." Berger (1995: 51) claims, that modern rhetoricians are concerned with, for instance, how written communication works, the nature of narrativity and stylistics in general.

Additionally, according to Foss(1996: 6), rhetorics is no longer limited to written or spoken discourse, but any form of communication; it can be in the form of speeches, conversations, television programs, art or dance, all of these are in the scope

of rhetorics. In this study, the data comprise a television series script and the central theme is humorous. Therefore, the next section will devote to how humor is connected to rhetorical study.

Rhetorical Study on Humor

Humor has been bound to critical expression and argumentative writing since the eighteenth century with social and political satire. Researchers on the language of humor recommend that various comic forms are effective means of supporting risk-taking behavior; for example, recognizing and reversing power structures, challenging social orders, alleviating fright, and promoting dialogic resistance (Graban, 2008: 415).

Apart from that, there are supporting evidences about using humor in rhetorical pedagogy to encourage critical thinking, build community, and promote intellectual play and invention. The importance on the study of humor has expanded considerably to conference and publication channels. At the Conference on College Composition and Communication, there is an annual "Humor Night" which has been published as *The Rhetoric of Laughter: The Best and Worst of Humor Night* (Graban, 2008: 415). Moreover, the principal rhetoric and composition journals, humorous poems, and funny titles are the proofs of how humor and its connection to rhetoric have greatly impacted the public in general, particularly on the rhetorical teaching.

Generally speaking, humor is used to link with rhetoric in a way that it has contributed to public in terms of intellectual, social, and political gains. This study, however, does not concentrate on humor in that aspect, but rather on how humor and its connection to rhetoric affect unserious topics such as entertainment, drama, and music etc. which are prevalently found in the present day among popular culture.

According to Hart (1997), studying rhetoric through such an unserious text is important due to the following reasons:

a)   Rhetoric is the most powerful when it is not noticed, and nobody notices popular culture;

b)   People are easiest to persuade when they are in a good mood, and entertainment creates such moods;

c)   Some of our most basic values come to us when we are young, and the young consume entertainment voraciously; and

d)   The mass media disseminated entertainment far and wide, thus affecting millions (Hart, 1997: 24).

In his analysis of humor, Berger (1995) approaches the subject from a rhetorical perspective by regarding that rhetorics can be used to analyze popular culture. Since the data in this study is television script, in which television comedy series is considered as popular culture in the present time, the series has been seen not only in the United States, but all over the world. This study attempts to adapt Berger's analysis of the rhetorical techniques of humor to it because it covers a much wider range of humor techniques than Seaward's 10 types of humor do. According to Berger (1995: 53), techniques that can be used to make people believe something are insignificant, rather the techniques used to 'persuade' people to laugh are more emphasized. So being the focus is on techniques, or what the classical rhetoricians would call *memoria.* Berger (1995: 54) has analyzed humorous materials from writers, artists, stand-up comedians and so forth, and has come up with an inventory of 45 techniques that have been used to generate laughter. He has divided the techniques into four categories: humor involving language, humor involving logic, humor involving identity and humor involving sight or action, which he calls visual humor (Berger, 1995:54). Berger claims that these techniques have been used to create humor from the earliest comedies to the present day. The techniques are presented in the following table:

Table 1 The Rhetorical Techniques of Humor

Language	Logic	Identity	Visual
Allusion	Absurdity	Before/After	Chase
Bombast	Accident	Burlesque	Speed
Definition	Analogy	Caricature	Slapstick
Exaggeration	Catalogue	Eccentricity	
Facetiousness	Coincidence	Embarrassment	
Insults	Comparison	Exposure	
Infantilism	Disappointment	Grotesque	
Irony	Ignorance	Imitation	
Misunderstanding	Mistakes	Impersonation	
Literalness	Repetition	Mimicry	
Puns and Wordplay	Reversal	Parody	
Repartee	Rigidity	Scale	
Ridicule	Theme/ Variation	Stereotypes	
Sarcasm		Unmasking	
Satire			

Source: Berger (1990: 59)

Berger (1990, 1995) acknowledges that the techniques are quite different. Whereas some of them are quite straightforward, some, like irony, are so complex and versatile that the entire study could be devoted to them. However, the more unfamiliar terms relevant to this study (expressed through language) are explained in more detail in the following. Some of the explanations are from *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, and some from Berger himself.

The Definition of Language Based Techniques of the Rhetorical Techniques of Humor

Allusion: a brief or indirect reference for example to literature (Oxford).

Bombast: words without meaning used to impress other people and sound important (Oxford).

Definition: a statement giving the exact meaning of a word or phrases; the action or process of stating the exact meanings of words or phrases (Oxford).

Exaggeration: the action of exaggerating something by making it seem larger, better, worse, etc. than it really is (Oxford). A standard technique in comedy writing. It is not always verbal, it can be manifested also in some characteristics of the characters. Berger reminds that exaggeration is often tied to insult, which is a very aggressive form of humor (Berger, 1995: 61-63).

Facetiousness: trying to be amusing but in a way or at a time that is not considered appropriate (Oxford).

Insult: a remark or act hurtful to the feelings or pride. Targets of insults often include different kinds of groups (occupational, political, citizens of different countries, public figures, mothers-in-law etc.), and insults can be used together with comparison (Berger, 1995:61-63)

Infantilism: the state in older children or adults of keeping the physical or mental characteristics of a very young child (Oxford).

Irony: the expression of one's meaning by saying the direct opposite of what one is thinking but using tone of voice to indicate one's real meaning. Irony is used in order to be amusing or to give something emphasis (Oxford).

Misunderstanding: a failure to understand something correctly or in the right way (Oxford).

Literalness: the act of taking words in their usual or most basic sense without metaphor or exaggeration (Oxford).

Puns and wordplay: the clever or humorous, amusing use of words especially involving a word that has two meanings or different words that sound the same, a play on words (Oxford).

Repartee: conversation that consists of quick clever comments and replies (Oxford).

Ridicule: language or behavior intended to make somebody or something appear foolish or absurd; to make somebody or something look foolish or to mock somebody or something (Oxford).

Sarcasm: remarks that imply the opposite of what they appear to mean and are intended to upset or mock somebody. The revelation of anger is seen through sarcasm (Oxford).

Satire: the art or practice of mocking people, institutions, etc. and making them appear ridiculous in order to show how foolish, wicked or incompetent they are (Oxford).

Since Berger (1990) introduced 45 rhetorical techniques of humor and divided the techniques into four categories; that is, language, logic, identity and visually based techniques, the one that is applicable to this study and will be taken into account is the language-based techniques because the present research concentrates on the use of language that is considered as humorous.

Pragmatics

Definitions of Pragmatics

There are several definitions of pragmatics. According to Leech (1983:10), pragmatics is the study of the relation between language and context that is the basic to an account of language understanding. Levinson defines pragmatics as being "the study of those relations between language and context that are grammaticalized, or encoded in the structure of a language" (Levinson, 1983: 9). However, Thomas (1995: 22) explains this term as the use of meaning during communication by stating the following:

> … this (pragmatics) reflects a view that meaning is not something which is inherent in the words alone, nor is it produced by the speaker alone, nor by the hearer alone. Making meaning is a dynamic process, involving the negotiation of meaning between hearer and speaker, the context of utterance (physical, social and linguistic) and the meaning potential of an utterance.

The three linguists define pragmatics as a study that involves meaning and context. However, Thomas puts more emphasis on the interaction of meaning between participants, while Leech focuses on the language understanding, and Levinson highlights more on the ability of a speaker to create any form of utterances through the use of grammatical rules in any context or situation.

The Scope of Pragmatics

There are some points discussed in pragmatics. Levinson (1997: 27) comments that pragmatics is the study of deixis, implicature, presupposition, speech act and an aspect of discourse structure which will be briefly mentioned as the following.

1. **Deixis**

Deixis is a technical term originated from Greek for one of the most basic things people do with utterances. Deixis indicates "pointing" through language (Yule, 1996: 9). Deixis is a form of referring that is tied to the speaker's context. With this reason, the deixis of utterance is meaningful if the context of the utterance is accurately known.

2. **Implicature**

It is a statement based on the interpretation of the language use and its context of communication surrounding the utterance in order that the participants can understand what the implication of a message or utterance in a different way from what the speaker literally means.

3. **Presupposition**

According to Yule (1996: 25), presupposition is something the speaker assumes to be the case prior to making an utterance. Presupposition of a statement will remain constant, though that statement is negated.

For instance, two statements 'John's car is not red' and 'John has a car' have the same assumptions that John has a car and the color is not red.

4. **Speech Act**

Speech act involves some actions in an utterance. Austin in Yule (1996: 49) claims that in uttering a sentence, one might be said to perform action. There are three basic acts; namely,

a) Locutionary act is the basic fact of utterance since it generates a meaningful linguistic expression.

b) Illocutionary act is performed through communicative force of an utterance in order to make a statement, an offer, an explanation, or other communicative purposes.

c) Perlocutionary act is done to have an effect from the utterance.

5. Discourse Structure

It relates with the organization of conversation. Every conversation can be analyzed through conversation analysis since almost every type of talk has its own form and pattern. For instance, turn taking is done when a person respects each other in taking their turns during conversation and adjacency pairs is a fundamental unit of conversational organization that manages the kind of paired utterances in which question should be replied by answer, greeting by greeting, or offer by acceptance.

Those five elements have the relation with the context because without taking into consideration the context of utterance, the messages of a speech cannot be interpreted efficiently and accurately.

Implicature

One of the most important concepts in Pragmatics is implicature in which Grice has divided it into conventional implicature and conversational implicature (Levinson, 1983). In general, implicature is meant to provide an account of how it is possible to mean more than is actually said. According to Thomas (1995:1), the speaker does not always say exactly what he or she intends to convey, this practice causes the hearer to look for an implicature. The word of implicature is derived from the verb to imply, which means to fold something into something else (Mey, 1993:

99) while Yule (1996: 12) defines implicature as an additional conveyed meaning. According to Gazdar, "an implicature is a proposition that is implied by the utterance of the sentence in a context even though that proposition is not a part or not an entailment" (Gazdar, 1979: 38).

From the definitions above, it can be concluded that implicature is a hidden meaning conveyed in an utterance in certain context of situation which is hinted for the hearer to interpret; therefore, the hearer must assume that the speaker intends to convey more than being said, and start to make his own interpretation based on the hinted clue in the speaker's utterance. In the next part, more explanation of the difference between conventional implicature and conversational implicature will be mentioned.

1. Conventional Implicature

In the case of conventional implicature, the same implicature is always conveyed, regardless of context (Thomas, 1995: 57). According to Yule (1996: 45), conventional implicature is not based on the cooperative principle or the Grice's conversational maxims. Moreover, it does not have to occur in a conversation, and it does not depend on special context for their interpretation. For this reason, the conventional implicature is unrelated to this study and thus will not be observed.

The conventional implicature is connected with specific words, which leads to added conveyed meanings. Levinson (1983: 127 cited in Thomas, 1995:57) lists four words; that is, but, even, therefore, and yet. The following example is used with the word "but."

Mary suggested black, but I choose white.

(Yule, 1996: 45)

The word "but" carries the implicature that what follows next is opposite to expectations, that is to say, the utterance indicates that the expectation between Mary and I is different.

2. Conversational Implicature

Thomas (1995: 57) states that in the case of conversational implicature, what is implied varies according to the context of utterance. Whereas Mey (1993: 99) defines conversational implicature as something which is implied in conversation, in other words, something which is left implicit in utterance. The definitions from the two scholars are similar.

However, Leech (1983:40) comments that conversational implicature is stemmed from the intention of a speaker to be polite in conversation, and thus saying that sometimes speakers may avoid the directness of message conveyed in the utterance. Additionally, Yule (1996: 40) claims that conversational implicature is an additional unstated meaning that has to be assumed in order to maintain the cooperative principle. Conversational implicature is separated into two main elements:

a) Generalized Conversational Implicature

This type of implicature occurs without any particular context or specific scenario being necessary. For example,

Charlene: I hope you brought the bread and the cheese.
Dexter: Ah. I brought the bread.

(Yule, 1996:41)

From the above example, it is unnecessary to use a particular context in interpreting other additional meaning.

b) Particularized Conversational Implicature

This type of implicature occurs and becomes some special factors that are inherent in the context of utterance and are not usually carried by the sentence used. In brief, it is an implicature that needs a specific context for an accurate interpretation. For instance,

Ricky: Hey, coming to the wild party tonight?
Tom: My parents are visiting.

(Yule, 1996: 43)

From the above conversation, Tom does not answer Ricky's question directly. In fact, he does reply to the question by mentioning something that seems to be unrelated to the topic being talked about in order to indirectly respond to the question. Based on Tom's reply, it can be implicated that he will not attend the party tonight because he has to welcome his parents and spend his evening with them.

In this study, conversational implicature will be the main concern for the researcher since the conversational implicature concentrates on how the speaker's utterance is interpreted by the hearer by taking into consideration the certain background knowledge of the interlocutor and context of situation, and thus involving the cooperative principle and the Grice's maxims to accurately understand what is implied behind the utterance.

The Cooperative Principle

In order to explain the mechanism by which people interpret conversational implicature in logic and conversation, Grice introduces four conversational maxims and the Cooperative Principle (Thomas, 1995: 61-63). The Cooperative Principle runs 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."

In this principle, Grice tells the speakers how they should behave. He advises that during communication, people work on the assumption that a certain set of rules is in operation, unless they get a signal to the contrary. When the speaker has conversation, he ought to obey the rule in order not to mislead the hearer; therefore, the conversation will go smoothly. However, there will be a time when the hearer has wrong assumption in understanding the speaker's intent because of the misunderstandings. Thomas (1995: 62) says that Grice is not recommending that people are always well-expressed and kind or cooperative in any everyday sense of that word. They may sometimes denote other meanings. Generally speaking, people observe certain regularities in interaction and their aim is to explain one particular set of regularities. Consequently, it governs the production and interpretation of conversational implicature.

Example:

The speaker has accidentally locked herself out of her house. It is winter, the middle of the night and she is stark naked:

A: Do you want a coat?
B: No, I really want to stand out here in the freezing cold with no clothes on.

(Thomas, 1995:62)

On the surface, B's reply is untrue and uncooperative, but in fact this is the sort of sarcastic reply we encounter every day and we have no problem at all in interpreting. According to Grice, if A assumes that, in spite of appearances, B is observing the Cooperative Principle and she has made an appropriate response to his question, he will look for an alternative interpretation. Grice argues that without the assumption that the speaker is operating according to the Cooperative Principle, there

is no mechanism to prompt someone to seek for another level of interpretation. The observation that the speaker has said something which is manifestly untrue combined with the assumption that the Cooperative Principle is in operation, sets in motion the search for an implicature (Thomas, 1995:63).

Conversational Maxim

Grice's theory (1975) develops the concept of implicature. The basic notion of his concept is how people use language. Grice in Thomas (1995: 63-64) proposes four basic maxims of conversation as a guideline. They are maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner which are formulated as follows:

1. **Quantity**

   Make your contribution as informative as is required.
   Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

   The maxim relates to the amount of information given by the participants. They have to give sufficient information, no more or no less than what is required since the speaker gives an inappropriate amount of information will lead to failure in conducting conversation.

2. **Quality**

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

   This maxim requires the speakers to utter the words that are considered to be only a fact. Apart from that, the participants must express words with sufficient evidence as a proof that the contribution is true, and thus reliable.

3. Relation

Be relevant.

It means that each of participants must say something that is relevant to the subject of the conversation. The participants of the conversation will find difficulties in understanding the topic if it has no relevance and the utterances will appear quite unconnected.

4. Manner

Avoid obscurity of expression.
Avoid ambiguity.
Be brief. (avoid unnecessary prolixity.)
Be orderly.

Considering the following example from *The Big Bang Theory* series (Episode 11):

Beverley: Oh, did I thank you for the flowers?
Sheldon: You did.

(Taken from 'The Big Bang Theory')

In the dialogue above, Sheldon observes all the four conversational maxims by replying Beverley's question clearly (Manner), truthfully (Quality), giving the right amount of information (Quantity), and being directly related to the point (Relation). Apart from that, Sheldon does not generate an implicature since there is no additional level of meaning appeared here.

Non-observance of the maxims

Any failing to observe a maxim may be referred to as breaking a maxim. When a speaker breaks a maxim, the hearer looks for the implicature as he assumes the Cooperative Principle to be in operation. Non-observance of the maxims is often employed intentionally in order to evoke humor or to avoid discomfort when giving the direct answer may disturb the listener. Grice mentions five ways of failing to observe a maxim as follow.

1. Flouting

When flouting a maxim, the speaker does not intend to mislead the hearer but wants the hearer to look for the conversational implicature, that is, the meaning of the utterance not directly stated in the words uttered. With this reason, when the speaker intentionally fails to observe a maxim, the purpose may be to effectively communicate a message (Thomas, 1995: 65). Therefore, the hearer is ready to look for a clue from the utterance to help interpret the speaker's utterance. The example is:

> Katee was a very talkative person and always annoyed her friends by her
> sarcastic comments. She saw her classmates arranged a trip to Rocky
> Mountains and thought that she could join the group, so she asked:
>
> Katee: How are we getting there?
> Amy: Well **we're** getting there in Dave's car.

<div align="right">(Thomas, 1995: 69)</div>

Amy flouts the maxim of Quantity. She blatantly gives less information than Katee needs, thereby generating the implicature that, while she and her friends have a lift arranged, Katee will not be travelling with them. Apart from that, from the word **'we're'** which is highlighted in her tone of voice obviously suggests that 'we' represents herself and her friends in the group while Katee is excluded. Therefore,

through the use of high-rising intonation on a specific word in the sentence, the implicature is observed.

2. Violating

In contrast to flouting, when violating a maxim, the speaker intends to mislead the hearer; there is no obvious clue in the utterance. Grice defines violation as the unostentatious non-observance of a maxim (Grice, 1975: 49 cited in Thomas, 1995: 72). It means that the speaker has an intention of conspiracy. The instance, which is an extract from a novel '*A Village Affair*' by Joanna Trollope, can be seen in the following:

> Alice has been refusing to make love to her husband. At first he attributes this to post-natal depression, but then he starts to think she may be having an affair:

> 'Alice. I've got to ask you this.' He stopped.
> 'Ask me then—'
> 'Will you give me a truthful answer? However much you think it'll hurt me?
> Alice's voice had a little quaver. 'I promise.'
> Martin came back to his chair and put his hands on its back and looked at her.
> **'Is there another man?'**
> Alice raised her chin and looked at him squarely**. 'No,'** she said. '***There isn't another man.'*** And then Martin gave a long, escaping sigh, and grinned at her and said he thought they had better finish the champagne.
>
> (Thomas, 1995: 73)

It is later revealed that Alice's assertion that she is not having an affair with another man is true, but not the whole truth. In fact, Alice is having an affair with a

woman. From her reply, the unostentatious violation of the maxim of Quantity generates the intentionally misleading implicature that Alice is not having an affair with anyone. Consequently, when the maxims of conversation are violated, there is no way that the hearers will be aware that they are being fooled by the speakers since there is no suggestion or hidden clue to infer the given information.

3. Opting out

When opting out of a maxim the speaker is unwilling to cooperate and reveal more than he already has. The speaker chooses not to observe the maxim and states an unwillingness to do so (Thomas, 1995: 74). The example is mentioned as follow.

The first speaker is a caller to a radio chat show. The second speaker is the host, Nick Ross:

Caller: … um I lived in uh a country where people sometimes need to flee that country.
Ross: Uh, where was that?
Caller: **It's a country in Asia and I don't want to say anymore.**

(Thomas, 1995: 75)

The caller opts out a maxim of Quantity when he gives less information than is required, but he explicitly indicates the unwillingness to answer the question instead of using other strategies in escaping to answer a question.

4. Infringing

When the speaker infringes a maxim, he unintentionally deceives or fails to observe the maxim. The speaker does this with no intention of generating an implicature (Thomas, 1995: 74). Infringing happens when the speaker does not know

the culture or does not master the language well enough, as when he is incapable of speaking clearly such as when being intoxicated, excited, and nervous etc. For example,

Someone learning English as a second language speaks to a native speaker.

English speaker: Would you like ham or salad on your sandwich?
Non-English speaker: **Yes.**

The interlocutor has not intentionally generated an implicature. In fact, he or she has not understood the utterance due to his or her English deficiency. However, the answer might be interpreted as non-operative. Mooney (2004: 910) stated that this is a case of social implication in the absence of implicature.

5. Suspending

In certain circumstances, it is not necessary to observe the maxims due to cultural-specification or it is specific to particular events such as trials, telegrams, funeral orations, and poetry etc. Additionally, when there is no expectation on the part of any participants that the maxims will be fulfilled; consequently, the implicature is not produced (Thomas, 1995: 76-77). When one suspends a maxim, it is understood that what is said is not completely true or that there are things the speaker ought not to say such as taboo words. The example from *Meaning in Interaction* by Jenny Thomas is illustrated here.

'…they told him he could not be cured,' Bistie's daughter said in a shaky voice. She cleared her throat, whipped the back of her hand across her eyes. **'That man** was strong,' she continued. 'His spirit was strong. He didn't give up on things. He didn't want to die. He didn't hardly say anything at all. I asked him. I said, "My Father, why--" ' She stopped.

Never speak the name of the dead, Chee thought. Never summon the chindi to you, even if the name of the ghost is Father.

(Thomas, 1995: 77)

In this excerpt, Chee suspends the maxim of Quantity when mentioning a name of a dead person which is a taboo word in her culture. On the surface, 'that man' would generate an implicature that the speaker does not know the name of the mentioned person. However, among the Navajo this implicature would not be generated in the case of a person who had encountered a premature death since mentioning his name in this circumstance is considered taboo. With this reason, the non-observance of the maxim of quantity provides no implicature because all the participants know that it is suspended.

Previous Studies

There are a few research studies that are concerned with the non-observance types of the Cooperative Principle in humor context.

Dornerus (2005) under the research title *Breaking Maxims in Conversation* examines how scriptwriters use the two non-observance types of Grice's conversational maxims; that is, flouting a maxim and violating a maxim. To make it clearer, the researcher explores the maxims that are most frequently broken in the different shows and why they are broken. The selected shows are *That 70's Show* and *Desperate Housewives* which are comedy and drama shows respectively. The findings reveal that Relevance maxim is the most frequently flouted to create different comical or dramatic situations. The maxims of Manner and Quantity are commonly flouted in *That 70's Show* to create humorous situations while the maxims of Quantity and Quality are often broken in *Desperate Housewives* in order to make the characters look unreliable. This study suggests that real conversation happened in different contexts should be further researched.

Li Yang's study '*An Interpersonal Rhetoric Study of English Verbal Humor*' (2009) puts an emphasis on a pragmatics-based humor research from the perspective of Interpersonal Rhetoric by exploring the relationship between humor generation and the following principles; that is, Grice's Cooperative Principle, Politeness Principle, the Irony Principle, the Banter Principle, the Interest Principle, and the Pollyanna Principle. This study proposes that humor is produced by non-observance types of the Cooperative Principle maxims through analyzing humorous conversations in the situation comedy '*Friends.*' Based on the framework that is related to the present study, the results reveal that verbal humor is generated by different forms of non-observance of the CP maxims including flout, violate, opt out, and infringe. The researcher finds out that it is much easier to obtain humorous conversations involving flout than the other types of non-fulfillment and humor produced is perceivable to the hearer and the third party while humor produced by other ways of non-observance is mostly perceptible to the third party.

Laura Kalliomaki (2005) studies pragmatic and rhetorical techniques employed to generate verbal humor in the British television series *Blackadder*, the result reveals that the humor in this series is largely found on intentional misuse of language by using the main strategies of pragmatics based on Grice's violation of conversational maxims, which are violations of the maxims of quality and manner through rhetorical techniques of humor; that is, repartee, insults, sarcasm, lies and absurdity. However, absurdities and mistakes are used unintentionally by more simple characters of the series, they are often not used for the purpose to offend any other characters, while the main character, Blackadder, employed repartee, insult and sarcasm the most, in accordance to his vicious attribute. Apart from that, there are two techniques of humor in the data which were not included in Berger's inventory techniques of humor (1990): lying and stating the obvious techniques. The study suggests that different kinds of data such as a short story and a novel, or even another sitcom can be conducted with pragmatic and the rhetorical approaches to concentrate on some specific aspects of verbal humor in the data such as on the relationship between certain characters and how it reflects on the verbal humor of the series, the

power structures between the characters and how humor is used to both establish and maintain them.

The above previous studies include the non-observance types of Grice's Cooperative Principle found in humor context, that is, the television comedy shows both from American and British series.

In summary, there is a dearth of studies which concentrate on Grice's theory of Cooperative Principle and Conversational Maxims in terms of non-observance types. However, most of these studies focus only on the flouting maxims while there are other types of non-observance left. In addition, it is evident that Grice's theory of Conversational Maxims is highly accepted; yet the study of the whole non-observance types: Violating, Flouting, Suspending, Opting out, and Infringing is not thoroughly and widely examined. Thus, this study attempts to shed light on the non-observance types of Grice's Cooperative Principle and the rhetorical techniques in the area of humor generation found in American comedy series.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter consists of the methodological procedures employed in this study. There are research approach, data collection, data analysis, and verifying conclusions.

Research Approach

The design of this research was descriptive qualitative method. It was a descriptive approach since the researcher collected the data and made an analysis by describing the types of non-observance of the Cooperative Principle and the rhetorical techniques found in the utterances of *The Big Bang Theory* series text script, and then drew a conclusion. The case study was used in this research. The case of this study was the television series "*The Big Bang Theory*," the third season.

Data Collection

The data in this study were the utterances spoken by the characters in *The Big Bang Theory* with the focus on the types of non-observance of the Grice's Cooperative Principle which were flouting a maxim, violating a maxim, opting out a maxim, infringing a maxim, and suspending a maxim. The researcher collected the data based on Thomas's guideline (1995). *The Big Bang Theory* TV series, the third season that was aired during September 2009 – May 2010 in the US, was purposively selected for many reasons. First, it is a very popular comedy series that gains many viewers across countries. Second, it is a story that represents the group of people who lack social interaction and do not know how to communicate properly, which is suitable for pragmatics approach of this study. Third, it includes many conversations

of the characters that contain the types of non-observance of the Cooperative Principle which are considered funny and receive laugh track.

Technique of Collecting the Data

The data of this study were collected by doing the following steps. First, the researcher watched *The Big Bang Theory* series to understand the story. After watching the series, she looked for the transcript of the series and retrieved it from the website 'bigbangtrans.wordpress.com/'. Then, the series was replayed in order to underline the utterances of the characters that received a laughter effect.

<div align="center">

Data Analysis

</div>

After collecting the data from the series, the data were analyzed according to the following stages. First, the researcher identified the five types of non-observance of the Cooperative Principle maxims: (1) flouting, (2) violating, (3) opting out, (4) infringing, (5) suspending based on Thomas's (1995) framework in the dialogues receiving only the laughter effect. Then, the researcher also determined how the sense of humor had been reflected through non-observance based on the framework introduced by Berger (1990) on rhetorical techniques of humor: (1) allusion; (2) bombast; (3) definition; (4) exaggeration; (5) facetiousness; (6) insult; (7) infantilism; (8) irony; (9) misunderstanding; (10) literalness; (11) puns and wordplay; (12) repartee; (13) ridicule; (14) sarcasm; (15) satire. Next, the researcher rechecked the types of non-observance previously analyzed for accuracy and consistency. Later, the researcher randomly watched the series again in order to recheck the types of non-observance previously analyzed for accuracy and consistency. After that, the researcher categorized the types of non-observance and the rhetorical techniques of humor in groups and counted the number for each classification in order to decide which types or techniques were employed.

Afterwards, the researcher started to write the paper by describing the characters and context of situation that took place in the selected excerpts contained the types of non-observance. Next, in each excerpt, the researcher determined how non-observance forms of the Cooperative Principle maxims had been employed by the characters according to the prior identified transcripts with a thorough review before writing. Subsequently, the data found in the dialogue of the series were analyzed by explaining the character's reason behind the non-observance of the CP maxims. Lastly, the rhetorical techniques were identified based on the preceding identified transcripts. Any other techniques found besides the suggested techniques were also coded. The conclusion from the analysis of the data was drawn.

The technique used to check the trustworthiness of the data is triangulation. This study employed the triangulation of the data source and peer debriefing since the differences between the data from the website and the data from the series in the form of English subtitle could occur. The researcher cross checked the text script in the website and compared it to the series subtitle in the English version in order to confirm that the data were similar. It was found that there was no difference between the data found in the two sources. In addition to triangulation of data source, 10% of the data was validated by two experts in the field of pragmatics who specialized in Grice's framework of the conversational maxims and five types of non-observance. It was found that they reached 80% of agreement in their ratings.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This chapter reveals the research findings of this present study. The study was conducted to answer the following questions:

1. What types of non-observance of the Cooperative Principle are employed in humor discourse of the *Big Bang Theory* series?

2. What are the rhetorical techniques in the *Big Bang Theory* series that are used to help non-observance of the Cooperative Principle provoke the sense of humor?

With this reason, the findings are divided into two major sections. The first section presents an analysis of the types of non-observance of the Gricean maxims that are utilized in the series to create humor. The second section concentrates on how the types of non-observance of the Gricean maxims reflect the sense of humor in the series through the application of the rhetorical techniques.

In order for a better comprehension of the humor expressed in the series, the background of the main and minor characters is firstly presented since the characters' background is more or less contributing to the kinds of humor the breaching of the Gricean maxims have created in the series. The information of both major and minor characters appearing in every episode of the series is based on IMDb which is one of the most popular online database of information related to films, television programs, and celebrity content.

Sheldon

Sheldon is a Caltech theoretical physicist who shares an apartment with his colleague and best friend, Leonard Hofstadter. They live across the hallway from a highly sociable waitress named Penny. This character displays a total lack of social skills, a slight perception of irony, and a general lack of humility, thereby failing to conceive the simplest sarcastic jokes made by other characters. Apart from that, his very high IQ has created a superiority complex. Despite his intelligence, Sheldon's eccentricities, direct remarks, and demanding nature put him at odds with his own friends. Emotionally immature, he is always confused by common social interactions.

Penny

Penny is the only major female character on the show. Penny's lack of advanced education but outgoing personality drastically contradicts the personalities of the primary male characters in the series, even though she is considered part of their group. Leonard has fallen in love with her since the first season of the series and they started dating during the third season. In contrast to the rest of the group, Penny is not well-educated, but she has great social skills. Her good-looking appearance always allures the opposite sex.

Leonard

Originally from New Jersey and a graduate of Princeton University, Leonard works as a Caltech experimental physicist, mainly working with lasers, and shares an apartment with colleague Sheldon Cooper in Pasadena, California. While certainly a geek by most definitions, he is less socially inept than Sheldon (who is unable to comprehend social norms), Raj (who is unable to talk to women), and Howard (who is often seen as "creepy" when flirting with women).

Howard

Howard is a Jewish Aerospace Engineer at Caltech's Department of Applied Physics who frequently visits Leonard and Sheldon's apartment. Rajesh Koothrappali is his best friend. Howard envisions himself a "ladies' man" and tends to provides unacceptable pick-up lines toward ladies which lead to embarrassing rejection from these women. Unlike Leonard, Sheldon, and Raj, Howard does not have a Ph.D. and is sometimes ridiculed about it, by Sheldon.

Raj

Rajesh is Howard Wolowitz's best friend. He works as an astrophysicist in the Physics Department at Caltech. His principal characteristic is a case of selective mutism which does not allow him to talk to women outside of his family or while not under the influence of alcohol, or believing that he consumed alcohol. One of Raj's primary personality quirks is his tendency to act or speak inappropriately according to the situation, especially when it is not called for, often earning him glares and negative remarks from the other characters.

Minor characters

Minor characters are the persons occasionally appeared in the series, they are not the main point of the story. With this reason, the minor characters might be momentarily involved in the action, and will disappear. Nonetheless, they still interact with those main characters and grab their attention. Examples of minor characters in *The Big Bang Theory* are Leonard's mother, Will Wheaton who is Sheldon's enemy, and Stuart who is the owner of the book store that the main characters always go there and buy the comics etc.

The plot summary of the series is centered on five characters: roommates Leonard Hofstadter and Sheldon Cooper, two physicists who work at the California

Institute of Technology (Caltech); Penny, a blonde waitress who lives across the hall; and Leonard and Sheldon's equally geeky and socially awkward friends and co-workers aerospace engineer Howard Wolowitz and astrophysicist Rajesh Koothrappali. The geekiness and intellect of the four men are contrasted for comic effect with Penny's social skills and common sense (IMDb.com, 2007).

1. What types of non-observance of the Cooperative Principle are employed in humor discourse of the *Big Bang Theory* series?

In order to answer this research question, the non-observance types provided by Thomas (1995) are applied to the analysis of this comedy series' script. However, Thomas herself has developed her theory based on Grice's famous *The Cooperative Principles.* With this reason, the so-called conversational maxims created by Grice will be found in the analysis. There are four maxims; that is, the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. According to the findings, some types of non-observance cover all of the four maxims while some do not; the detailed explanation of these conversational maxims will be given later.

The types of non-observance found in *The Big Bang Theory* include all of the five forms: flouting, violating, opting out, infringing, and suspending. They all are found 175 times in total. It is obvious that flouting is the most employed type of non-observance in the series by 66.86% (117 times). Infringing is employed secondly by 16.57% (29 times), followed by violating which receives 13.71% (24 times) and opting out by 1.71% (3 times) respectively, while suspending the maxims is the least employed type by gaining 1.14% (2 times) to create humorous effects. The fact that the characters fail to observe these maxims, results in a burst of laughter in the part of the audience; therefore, all forms of non-observance emerged in the script are for the purpose of engendering humor. The five types of non-observance found in this series presented according to their occurrences are shown as follows:
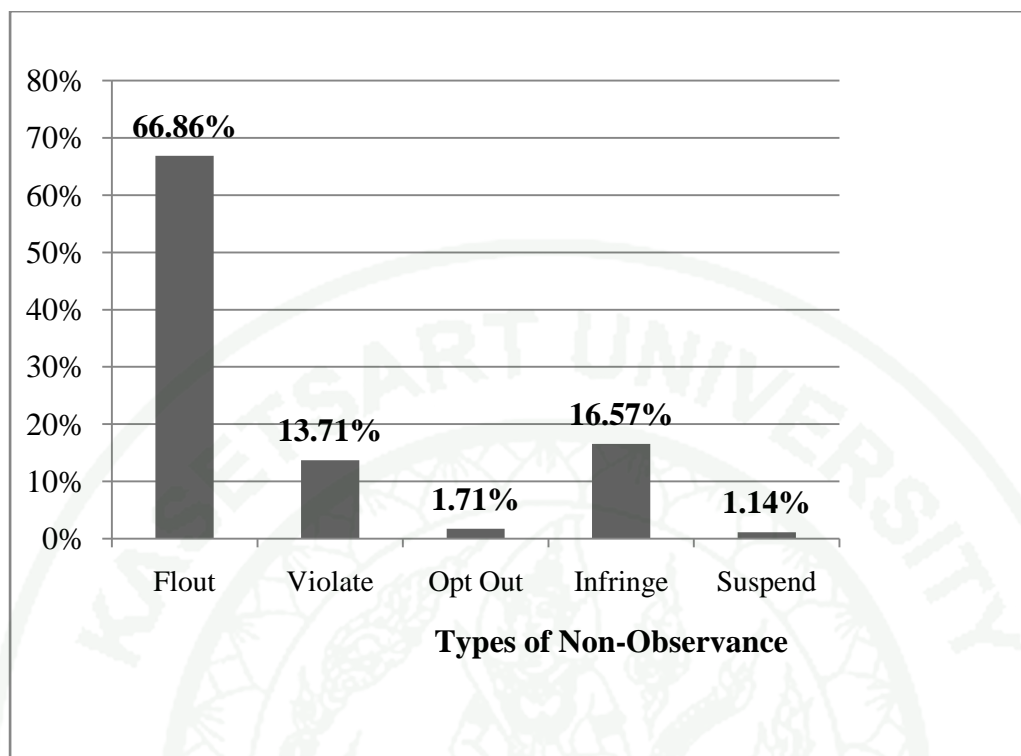
Figure 1 Percentages of occurrences of non-observance type in The Big Bang Theory

Flouting the Maxims

According to Grice (1975), the speaker flouts a maxim so as to urge the hearer to search for another possible meaning which is dissimilar to the expressed meaning. This alternative way of interpretation is termed as 'conversational implicature.' It is important to note that, for the case of flouting a maxim, the speaker clearly reveals a signal for the hearer to interpret what is said, and mostly the hearer is well-aware of the implicature, thus the conversation will go smoothly since the message is understood by the conversational partner(s).

Based on the findings, the characters flout all the four conversational maxims. The maxim of Quality is the most frequently flouted by 44 times (37.61%). The maxim of Relation receives the second rank as it is flouted by 33 times (28.21%), followed by the maxim of Manner which is flouted 24 times (20.51%). The maxim of

Quantity is the least flouted by characters with 16 times (13.68%). The occurrences of each character flouting the conversational maxims are appeared in the following figure:
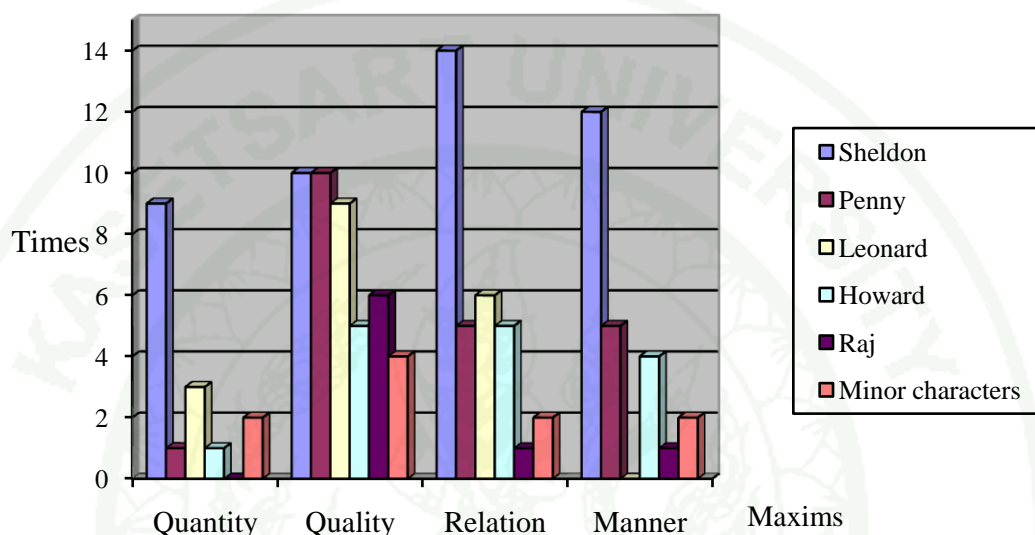

Figure 2 Occurrences of characters flouting the maxims

Humor produced by flouting the maxim of Quantity

The maxim of Quantity is described as the following: (1) make your contribution as informative as required for the current purpose of the exchange, (2) do not make your contribution more informative than is required. Thus, providing either more or less information than demanded is considered as breaching the maxim of Quantity, and also in this case can give rise to humorous effect.

Example 1 (Episode 4: The Pirate Solution)

Context of situation: Leonard and Penny have spent the night together in Leonard's room while Sheldon is at work. Howard feels lonely and has no place to go since his best friend, Raj, is helping Sheldon figuring out his physic work. He decides

to go to Leonard's apartment for a company in the early morning. However, Leonard and Penny need some alone time.

Data description:

> Howard: Top o' the mornin' o ya!
> Leonard: What are you doing here?
> **Howard: Well, usually, on Sundays, I go with Raj to scam on hippie chicks at the farmers market, but he's still working with Sheldon, so I thought I'd come over here and make you guys scrambled eggs and salami. It's the perfect meal for après l' amour.**
> Penny: Oh, kill me.

Howard flouts the maxim of Quantity by giving too much information than Leonard needs with the long background information of what he does on Sundays with Raj and then leads to his answer which is making breakfast for Leonard and Penny. In this context, the answer *"I thought I'd come over here and make you guys scrambled eggs and salami."* would be enough or *"I have no place to go so I came here."* However, Howard's extra reply with the thorough explanation of the activity he always shares with Raj and his comment of his dish *"It's the perfect meal for après l' amour,"* can generate laughter for audience**.**

Howard's superfluous details can be noticed as a signal that he produces an implicature. Howard wants Leonard and Penny an empathy to understand his feeling and let him hang out with them. Apart from that, the unnecessary comment:*"It's the perfect meal for après l' amour,"* is uttered to please both Leonard and Penny that he has cooked a healthy recipe suitable for couple. Howard is aware that his presence may interrupt their couple moment causing him to give excessive explanation than Leonard requires in order to permit him stay with them.

Example 2 (Episode 10: The Gorilla Experiment)

Context of situation: Penny, Leonard's girlfriend, asks Sheldon to teach her physics in order to get along with Leonard easily**.** It is necessary for Sheldon to know Penny's background in science before starting his lecture. At first, Sheldon denies because he is certain that Penny lacks of basic science knowledge; therefore, it is difficult to teach her.

Data description:

Penny: Come on, Sheldon, this is important to me.

Sheldon: Penny, this would be a massive undertaking, and my time is both limited and valuable.

Penny: You're sitting here playing video games all day.

Sheldon: Okay, point. What sort of foundation do you have? Did you take any science classes in school?

Penny: Sure. I did the one with the frogs.

Sheldon: The one with the frogs. (using a rising intonation with a facial expression of being puzzled and confused)

Penny: Yeah, actually, it was pretty cool. A lot of the girls threw up, but I gutted that thing like a deer.

Sheldon: I'm sorry, Penny, I don't think so.

Penny is flouting the maxim of Quantity by providing not a right amount of information for a hearer to know. She does not give a more specific detail of science class that she took before since there are some sub-categories of science classes such as biology, chemistry, physics, and many mores. In this case, Sheldon is expecting a name or subject of the science class Penny used to take in particular in order to know Penny's background level of science. The audience will laugh at the unexpected, not enough information from Penny's answer.

Penny's answer produces a conversational implicature since Penny does not have much knowledge about science and never takes study seriously. It is possible that she forgets the name of the subject and never pays attention in class; consequently, all she can remember is her impressive and proud moment with the frogs in science class that she can tolerate them which is not a specific answer, and is not useful for Sheldon to know her background knowledge in sciences. It can be interpreted that Penny is hiding her inferior ability concerning her study performance by providing less information than it is required.

Humor produced by flouting the maxim of Quality

The maxim of Quality is regarded as attempting to make the contribution one that is true, specifically: (1) do not say what you believe to be false, (2) do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence. However, the uncooperative act of the maxim of Quality found in the interlocution in this series leads to humor.

Example 3 (Episode 4: The Pirate Solution)

Context of situation: Raj, who is an astrophysicist, takes the university's money for conducting his research, but fails to finish his research within six months and will become unemployed by his university. With this reason, his visa will be expired since he is no longer working anymore, causing him to look for a new job. Fortunately, Sheldon finds a solution for Raj by hiring him to work for Sheldon. At first, Raj denies the offer.

Data description:

Raj: You want me to work with you?
Sheldon: For me. You're going to have to listen more carefully when you're on the job.

Raj: Okay, uh, please don't take this the wrong way, but I'd rather swim buck-naked across the Ganges with a paper cut on my nipple and die a slow, agonizing death from a viral infection than work with you.

Raj clearly flouts the maxim of Quality by lying to Sheldon in a form of exaggeration. The lie to *"swim across the Ganges"* sounds impossible; there is no way that he will take his life into dying such a tormenting pain than working for Sheldon which provided him an opportunity to continue living in the United States. Thus, his exaggerated utterance contains an implicature that he expresses his firm choice of not working with Sheldon; to encounter *"a slow agonizing death"* seems more pleasurable than to work with Sheldon who possesses the unusual and annoying characteristics such as his rambling habit, his high self-esteem, and his behavior of being headstrong. The exaggeration works very well that the audience find it amusing. In the end, Raj who desperately needs a job decided to work for Sheldon which is opposite to what he said earlier.

Humor produced by flouting the maxim of Relation

The maxim of Relation is considered as making contributions in conversation that is relevant to the exchange the speakers are engaged in. Alternatively, the utterances that the interlocutors are conversing are directly related to the subject being talked about. Neglecting to follow this maxim may sometimes yield comic consequences in the comedy series.

Example 4 (Episode 23: The Lunar Excitation)

Context of situation: Leonard invites Penny and her new boyfriend named Zack to observe the experiment that he and his friends are conducting at the roof of the apartment. They intend to shoot a laser off one of the reflectors positioned by the astronauts on Apollo 11 on the surface of the moon, and let the light bounce back into their photomultiplier.

Data description:

       Howard: Preparing to fire laser at the moon.

       Sheldon: Make it so.

       Howard: There it is. There's the spike!

       Leonard: 2.5 seconds for the light to return. That's the moon! We hit the
moon!

       Zack: That's your big experiment? All that for a line on the screen?

       Leonard: Yeah, but, uh, think about what this represents. The fact that we can
do this is the only way of definitively proving that there are man-made objects on the
moon, put there by a member of a species that only 60 years before had just invented
the airplane.

       Zack: What species is that?

       Sheldon: I was wrong. Penny can do better.

       Sheldon flouts the maxim of Relation by saying something unrelated to the
question being asked, or mentioning the topic that the interlocutors are not talking
about. In this dialogue, Leonard is describing about the objective of their experiment
to Zack. Zack does not carefully contemplate what Leonard explains; therefore, he
asks a question that reflects his low intellect, causing Sheldon to reply what seems to
be unconnected to the question. In this circumstance, showing contempt to others'
ability or brain somehow generates funniness.

       Though the utterance Sheldon produces in the above conversation has nothing
to do with the species that Zack is mentioning in a literal sense, the audience could
assume that the speaker in some ways complies with the Cooperative Principle;
therefore, they are searching for an implicature which is hidden in the context as a
way to comprehend the unrelated utterances. The implicature from Sheldon is that
Zack is more stupid than Penny whom Sheldon always regards as having a low
intellectual performance throughout the whole seasons (this is the third seasons of the

series). It is clearly seen that even though Sheldon's reply is unrelated, in the deep level, the context enabled audience to relate the topic to Sheldon's message.

Humor produced by flouting the maxim of Manner

The maxim of Manner is illustrated as the following: (1) avoid obscurity of expression or ambiguity, (2) be brief, (3) be orderly. Any breaching of the maxim of Manner can lead to funniness and absurdity.

Example 5 (Episode 3: The Gothowitz Deviation)

Context of situation: At the apartment kitchen, Penny is cooking breakfast while singing and dancing along to "Man I Feel Like A Woman" by Shenia Twain when Sheldon enters.

Data description:

Penny: Morning, Sheldon. Come dance with me.
Sheldon: No.
Penny: Why not?
Sheldon: Penny, while I subscribe to the many worlds theory which posits the existence of an infinite number of Sheldons in an infinite number of universes, I assure you that in none of them am I dancing.
Penny: Are you fun in any of them?
Sheldon: **The math would suggest that in a few I'm a clown made of candy. But I don't dance.**

Sheldon flouts the maxim of Manner by replying to Penny in an extremely long-winded and convoluted sentence which is hard to understand. He is not in a state of intoxication, nor through any inability to speak clearly. His answers sound absurd to both Penny and the audience since the clause *"while I subscribe to the many worlds*

which posits the existence of an infinite number of Sheldons in an infinite number of universes" seems illogical: Sheldon is an individual person; there is no way that he will become *'an infinite number of Sheldons.'* This reflects his obsession with science that he sees himself as becoming part of the scientific theory; however, others would regard his physics preoccupation as ridiculous which turns him from a very genius person into a crazy one.

Moreover, the sentence structure of Sheldon's utterance is rather complex by using relative clause with a repetition of *'an infinite number of'* which is unlikely to be a form used in a dialogue between friends in an informal occasion. To sum up, both structure and content of the utterance are difficult to comprehend. It would be simple to say *"I don't like dancing,"* or *"I've never danced."* The implicature of his utterance is that he who regards himself as possessing a high intellectual ability will only concern the important matters such as knowledge, sciences, and mathematics etc., and do not pay attention to the non-sensible matters like dancing.

Again, another reply to Penny's *"Are you fun in any of them?"* that shows Sheldon's senselessness and absurdity is that he claims himself as being a clown made of candy which is considered as flouting the maxim of Manner as well. It is still hard to understand on the surface; however, his reply implies that he sometimes has some fun moments but not through dancing. In other words, there are many activities that he enjoys doing except dancing. The audience will find it funny because generally people will find dancing pleasurable while Sheldon do not.

According to the analyzed data, it can be summarized at this point that flouting is the maxim being used mostly in the maxim of Quality, followed by Relation, Manner, and Quantity.

Violating the Maxims

The distinction between the two terms 'flouting' and 'violating' the maxim is somewhat apparent. However, the use of them is sometimes overlapped; that is, either flouting or violating is used to include all forms of non-fulfillment. In this study, there is an attempt to identify the obvious use of all types of non-observance correctly. According to the previous section, the term 'flout' has been mentioned; consequently, the following part will concentrate on 'violate.'

According to Grice (1975: 49 cited in Thomas, 1995: 72), the definition of 'violation' is the unostentatious non-observance of a maxim. Alternatively, the speaker who violates the maxim 'will be liable to mislead.' The researcher has observed the difference in terms of usage between 'flout' and 'violate' and accordingly define these two words as follows:

(1) **On speaker's part:** When the speaker violates the maxim, he or she intends to delude the conversational partners by concealing some information that the hearers need to know. Though what the speaker utters is true, the whole truth is withheld. In contrast to 'violate,' the term 'flout' is used when the speaker does not aim to deceit the hearers. However, the speaker uses techniques that make his utterances untrue such as exaggeration, irony, and understatement etc.

(2) **On hearer's part:** The hearer is liable to be misled in the case of violating the conversational maxim. He or she is not conscious of the speaker's deceitful words, and tends to readily believe what is heard, whereas the hearer is prompted to search for an implicature in the case of flouting the maxim since the speaker conveys a signal. With this reason, the hearer tends to perceive the real message, though not implicitly expressed.

As a result of the analysis, the maxim of Quality is the most regularly violated than other maxims and it is violated 21 times (87.5%). The maxim of Quantity is the second violated maxim with merely 2 times (8.33%) whereas the maxim of Relation and Manner is the least violated, they both violate only 1 time (4.17%). The occurrences of each character are shown as follows:
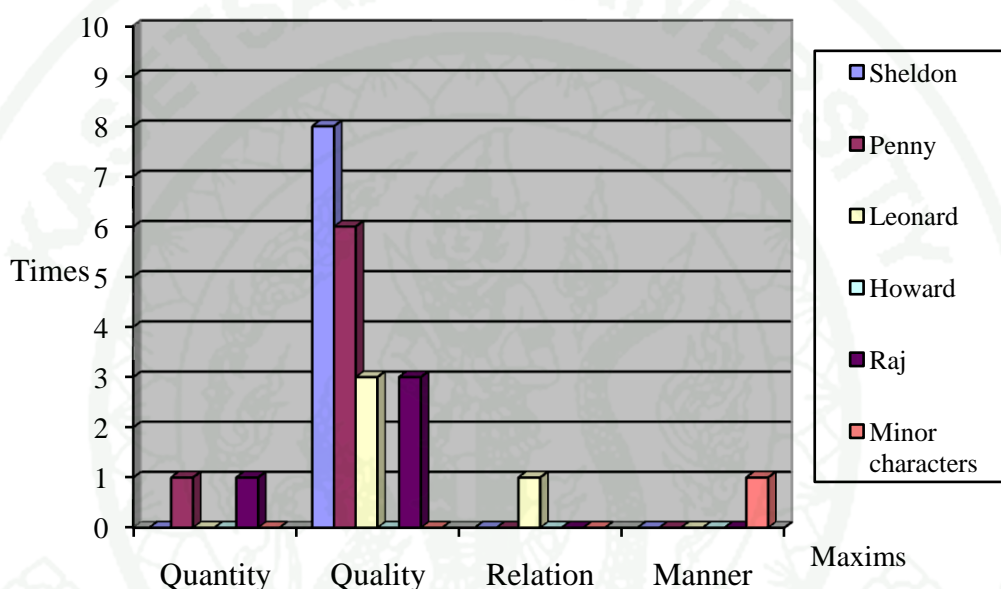

Figure 3 Occurrences of characters violating the maxims

Humor produced by violating the maxim of Quantity

Example 6 (Episode 4: The Pirate Solution)

Context of situation: Raj has gone to a job interview and been rejected due to his unintentional verbal sexual harassment to a lady who will be a research team leader. When telling his friends about the interview, Raj creates a lie to his friends that the reason of his being denied stems from the employer's racial discrimination.

Data description:

Howard: What do you mean you didn't get the job? How could you not get it?

Raj: You know, he's British, I'm Indian, ever since Gandhi they haven't liked us very much.

Leonard: Wait, are you saying that he discriminated against you? Because we should file a complaint.

Raj: That's okay. A complaint has been filed. So, that's it. That was my last hope. I'm going to be deported, sent home in disgrace, exposed to the sardonic barbs of my cousin Sanjay. Or, as you may know him, Dave from AT&T customer service.

Raj violates the maxim of Quantity by abstaining from telling the necessary information in order to hide the whole truth. In other words, he speaks the truth, but not the entire truth with his intention to deceive Leonard who knows nothing about Raj's sexual remark during his interview. In this manner, audience laughs at Raj who provides less information than required causing Leonard to misunderstand Raj's employer since the audience knows the complete truth. With the sentence *"A complaint has been filed,"* the audience will suddenly realize that 'a complaint' is actually referred to the one that the lady files for Raj's misbehavior toward her, not a complaint that Raj sends for complaining about the employer's racial discrimination as Leonard understands.

Humor produced by violating the maxim of Quality

Example 7 (Episode 20: The Spaghetti Catalyst)

Context of situation: Leonard has recently broken up with Penny causing Sheldon in an awkward circumstance since he has to choose sides between Leonard or Penny. He meets Penny accidentally at the lobby and has a conversation. After knowing that Penny plans to cook spaghetti which is Sheldon's favorite dish, Sheldon decides to have dinner with her and will bring hot dogs in order to mix them in the

spaghetti dish. When he enters his room, Sheldon finds out that Leonard bring him tangerine chicken.

Data description:

Leonard: Sheldon, I got you your tangerine chicken. I hope you're hungry.

Sheldon: Well, of course I'm hungry. And as I have no plans to eat with any other team, I will consume my tangerine chicken with the appropriate gusto. Mm, mm, mm!

Leonard: Okay.

Sheldon: Just out of curiosity, do we still have hot dogs?

Leonard: I don't know. Why?

Sheldon: Just making dinner conversation. Go, Team Leonard!

Sheldon is violating the maxim of Quality by lying to Leonard that he has no plans to have dinner with Penny since he was criticized by Howard about his talking to Penny who is now no longer dating Leonard. As for Sheldon, he is on Leonard's side since Leonard is his roommate and best friend; therefore, he has to hide the truth that he was secretly being invited to dinner at Penny's room. Another reason that Sheldon lies to Leonard is that Leonard has already bought tangerine chicken for him, by refusing not to eat it and joining Penny's dinner might hurt or cause a problem with Leonard. It is funny because what Sheldon says is a lie that is intended to eagerly please Leonard by saying that he has no plan to have dinner with Penny and will enjoy the taste of Leonard's tangerine chicken.

At the end of his sentence, again Sheldon lies to Leonard of why asking for hot dogs in order to conceal his planning to have spaghetti with Penny. It is funnier since he makes a cheering statement *"Go, Team Leonard"* to overtly satisfy Leonard.

Humor produced by violating the maxim of Relation

Example 8 (Episode 6: The Cornhusker Vortex)

Context of situation: Dating with Penny for a while, Leonard wants to meet Penny's friends in order to better get along with her. At first, Penny seems reluctant about introducing her friends to Leonard because they are extremely different from Leonard in many ways.

Data description:

Penny: Leonard, look, if you want to meet my friends, that would be great. I just, you know, I didn't want you to be bored.

Leonard: I wouldn't be bored. Why would I be bored?

Penny: Well, 'cause they're not genius scientists.

Leonard: Penny, I like all sorts of people. In fact, some of my best friends aren't geniuses.

Penny: Like who?

Leonard: Okay, some of my Facebook friends aren't geniuses. My point is, if we're going to be a couple, I should be friends with your friends.

Leonard is violating the maxim of Relation by abruptly changing the subject without responding to the question being asked earlier by the interlocutor with an intention to mislead. In this conversation, Leonard deliberately fails to reply to Penny by naming the persons who are not geniuses because he forgets the facts that all of his best friends who are clever scientists are genius except Penny. As for Penny, she knows this fact very well causing her to request the names of Leonard's friends and that makes Leonard realize that the answer will be Penny and that will somehow insult her of not being genius since she does not earn a degree and she is also a waitress whose profession is considered for low intellectual achievement.

Consequently, he resolves by not replying to Penny and suddenly changes his topic from *'some of his best friends'* into *'some of his Facebook friends'* who are not geniuses. With his sensitiveness toward Penny's feeling, Leonard is tricky enough to violate the maxim of Relation, making his utterance amusing, and he successfully manages to turn Penny's attention from the previous topic into the new one by using the phrase *'My point is.'*

Humor produced by violating the maxim of Manner

Example 9 (Episode 19: The Wheaton Recurrence)

Context of situation: Sheldon plays bowling against Wil Wheaton whose nature is cunning. Wheaton has once lied to Sheldon in order to win the card game and get the money. This time, Sheldon has been fooled by him again by implying from Wheaton's utterance that he will be the one who bowls first since he is on the right-hand lane. While concentrating on the bowling ball and about to bowl, Sheldon is abruptly interfered by Wheaton who starts to bowl instead of him, leading Sheldon to lose focus and fail to bowl.

Data description:

Wil: After you.
Sheldon: No, after you, as we are currently crushing you, Wesley.
Wil: It's customary for the player on the right-hand lane to bowl first.
Sheldon: All right. (starting to bowl, but abruptly interfered by Wheaton)
Wil: It's a custom, not a rule.

In this situation, Wheaton violates the maxim of Manner by misleading the hearer by way of an ambiguous word, causing the hearer to misinterpret the utterance. From what Wheaton says, he is not lying since it is factual information that a person

on the right-hand lane will always be the one who bowls first. However, he utilizes the word *'customary'* because of its vague meaning into deceiving Sheldon. In the end, after his successful bowling, Wheaton answers Sheldon who is still confused that it is not obligatory to follow the custom since it is not a rule. Wheaton does not choose the word that is clear for the hearer because his intention is to fool the opponent.

With this reason, the audience laughs at the trick to win the bowling game that Wheaton plays on Sheldon, who considers himself genius but is innocent toward the world outside textbooks.

According to the analyzed data, it can be concluded at this point that violating is the maxim being used the most in the maxim of Quality, followed by Quantity, and Relation which receives the same rank as of the maxim of Manner.

Opting Out the Maxims

Based on this type of non –observance, Grice (1975) states that a speaker opts out of observing a maxim by indicating a reluctance to comply in the way the maxim requires. In other words, there is an explicit intention from the speaker that does not wish to generate a false implicature or appearing uncooperative, thereby employing this non-observance.

According to the findings, there is only the maxim of Quantity which is opted out since its definition is well-expressed in a way that the speaker refuses to give information by saying it directly to interactants; consequently, other three maxims are not found and therefore excluded from opting out the maxims. In this study, opting out of the maxim of Quantity by giving less information than required is found 3 times (100%) throughout the series. The subsequent figure is shown for illustration:
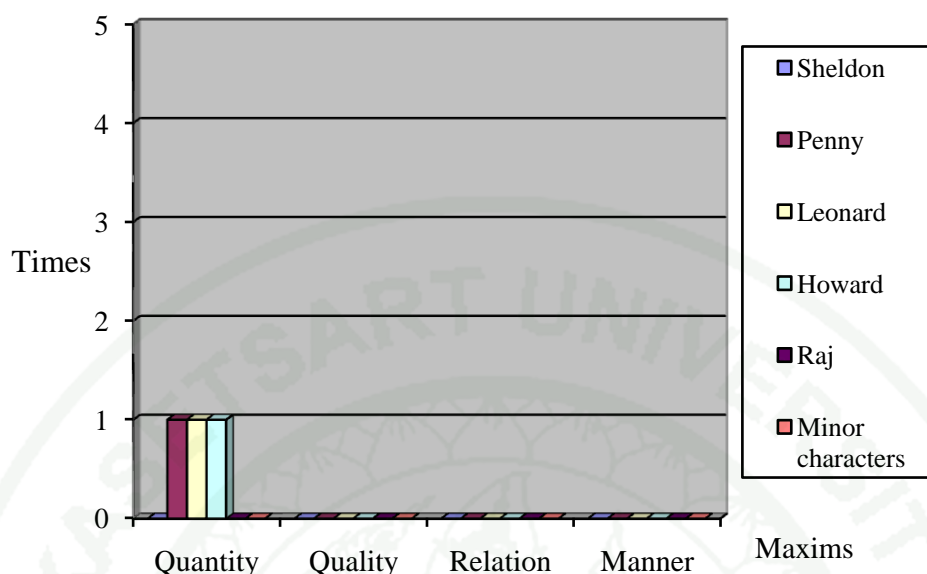
Figure 4 Occurrences of character opting out the maxims

Humor produced by opting out the maxim of Quantity

Example 10 (Episode 17: The Precious Fragmentation)

Context of situation: Howard tells their friends about the profile of the ring that they find out at the garage sale. According to an unknown man from whom Howard obtains information, the ring is an actual prop from the movie *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Raj wants to know the name of Howard's anonymous guy.

Data description:

Howard: Listen, I was looking at the ring, and it seemed a little weird. No copyright notice on it. So, I took it down to this buddy of mine who deals with, shall we say, the seedy underbelly of the collectibles world.

Raj: Who's this mysterious buddy you suddenly have?

Howard: Just a guy. I know a guy.

Raj: Is it Eddie Crispo?

Howard: No, I can't tell you who it is. Stop asking.

Howard opts out a maxim of Quantity when he gives less information than is required, but he explicitly indicates the unwillingness to answer the question instead of using other strategies such as lying, changing the topic, or making it difficult to understand etc. in avoiding to answer a question. He may have some reasons of not wanting to disclose information of the mysterious guy to his friends since revealing the name might affect the guy's career as a dealer in a black market. It is amusing since Raj already knows the identity of the guy whose name is Eddie Crispo, but Howard is insisting on concealing the guy's name from his friend after all.

Based on the analyzed data, it can be summarized at this point that opting out is the maxim being opted out in the series by merely the maxim of Quantity due to its nature of the maxim that excludes the other three maxims from the analysis.

Infringing the Maxims

According to Thomas (1995), neither the speaker intends to produce an implicature, nor does he wish to deceive the hearer(s) in the case of infringing the maxims. The reason that causes the speaker to perform this low interaction are the speaker's own impairment such as intoxication, excitement, incapability of speaking clearly or to the point, and being a foreign learner with little linguistic knowledge of that language.

The findings reveal that, the maxim of Relation is the most often infringed by 12 times (41.38%) while the maxim of Quality is not found in this type of non-observance. The maxim of Quantity is the second maxim that is frequently found

infringed with 10 times (34.48%), followed by the maxim of Manner that is infringed 7 times (24.14%) respectively. The occurrences of each character infringing the conversational maxims are shown as follows:
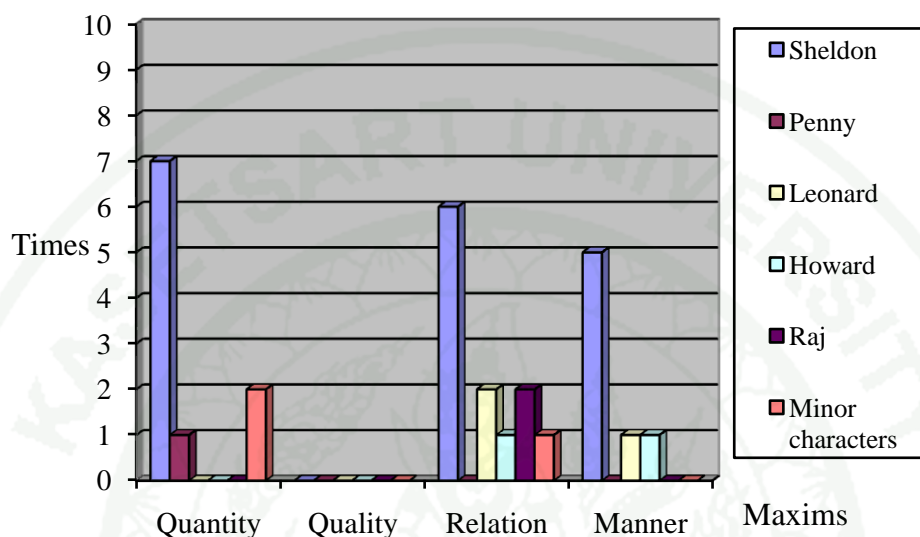
Figure 5 Occurrences of characters infringing the maxims

Humor produced by infringing the maxim of Quantity

Example 11 (Episode 2: The Jiminy Conjecture)

Context of situation: At the apartment, Sheldon has just come back from the bank where he retrieves his old comic books from the safe deposit box in order to give them to Howard. He also runs into Penny and has a conversation with her at the apartment lobby before entering into his room. Leonard has already been at the room.

Data description:

Sheldon: Hello.
Leonard: Hey. What's going on?

Sheldon: Oh, you'd like to catch up on the events of the day. All right. Well, there was a half-hour wait at the bank to get into my safe deposit box, I was forced to talk to Penny about your sexual problems, and, oh, yes, in a moment filled with biblical resonance, pride wenteth before my fall, causing my Flash 123 to goeth to Wolowitz.

Sheldon infringes the maxim of Quantity by unintentionally giving too much information than the hearer demands owing to his miserable mood with his losing the bet to Howard. Sheldon's performance is impaired from sadness, he then generates no implicature and does not try to mislead Leonard. The audience laughs at Sheldon's long and excessive details describing what he did during the day when he could have said *"Not very good."* Generally speaking, the sentence *"What's going on?"* does not require an answer; it is used for greeting a person. Therefore, Leonard or even the audience is unexpectedly surprised at the detailed response Sheldon gives.

Humor produced by infringing the maxim of Relation

Example 12 (Episode 2: The Jiminy Conjecture)

Context of situation: After hearing a cricket chirping in Sheldon and Leonard's apartment room, Howard and Sheldon make a wager, at first with money, then they decide that the winner should get one of the other's favorite comic books. Their wager is on whether the cricket is a common field cricket (Howard's assertion) or a snowy tree cricket (Sheldon's assertion).

Data description:

Howard: Okay, okay, tell you what. I am willing to bet anything that's an ordinary field cricket.

Sheldon: I can't take your money.

Howard: What's the matter, you chicken?

Sheldon: I've always found that an inappropriate slur. Chickens are not, by nature, at all timid. In fact, when I was young, my neighbor's chicken got loose and chased me up the big elm tree in front of our house.

Sheldon infringes the maxim of Relation by not answering directly to the point without producing an implicature. In other words, he fails to address the topic directly. This type of non-observance occurs due to Sheldon's unique nature of not speaking to the point. Instead of replying to Howard the reason why he does not want to accept money as their bet, Sheldon however expresses his opinion about the term *'chicken'* which is irrelevant to the point. It is funny because his nature of rambling on almost everything, and sometimes paying attention to totally irrelevant matters, which in this case, chickens, makes his utterance absurd. It is even more ludicrous that, based on the content, his scare of chickens renders his character to look stupid though he is the most genius character in the series.

Humor produced by infringing the maxim of Manner

Example 13 (Episode 2: The Jiminy Conjecture)

Context of situation: After hearing a cricket chirping in Sheldon and Leonard's apartment room, Howard and Sheldon make a wager, whether the cricket is a common field cricket (Howard's assertion) or a snowy tree cricket (Sheldon's assertion). In order to identify the species of the cricket, they have to find the cricket for examination. At this scene, Sheldon lowers himself down the broken elevator shaft to look for it while Raj stands at the elevator door.

Data description:

Raj: Be careful.
Sheldon: If I were not being careful, your telling me to be careful would not make me careful.

Sheldon infringes the maxim of Manner by speaking long and confusing sentence unintentionally. He does not produce an implicature since it is his characteristics to speak long which made it difficult to understand. There is also no intention to deceive the hearer. It would be simple to say *"Thank you, I am."* instead of employing the Condition Clause with the repetition of *'be careful'* to confuse the hearer. The utterance receives laughter effect because its perplexing sentence which in some ways irritates Raj who is the hearer, and is needed a second interpretation as *'he has already been careful,'* but it shows that the audience likes Sheldon's absurd and annoying disposition.

To summarize, it can be concluded at this point that infringing is the maxim being infringed from the most to the least are the maxim of Relation, Quantity, and Manner respectively. The maxim of Quality is not found in the analysis.

Suspending the Maxims

When one suspends a maxim, it can be implied that what is said is not entirely true. Particularly, there are things the speaker should not to say such as taboo words. It may be due to cultural differences that a speaker suspends a maxim or to the nature of certain events or situations (Thomas, 1995: 77). This non-observance of the maxims creates no implicatures since all the participants know that it is suspended.

According to the result, the maxim of Quantity is the only maxim that is found by suspending only 2 times (100%) throughout the series. The following figure is shown to clarify the above statement.
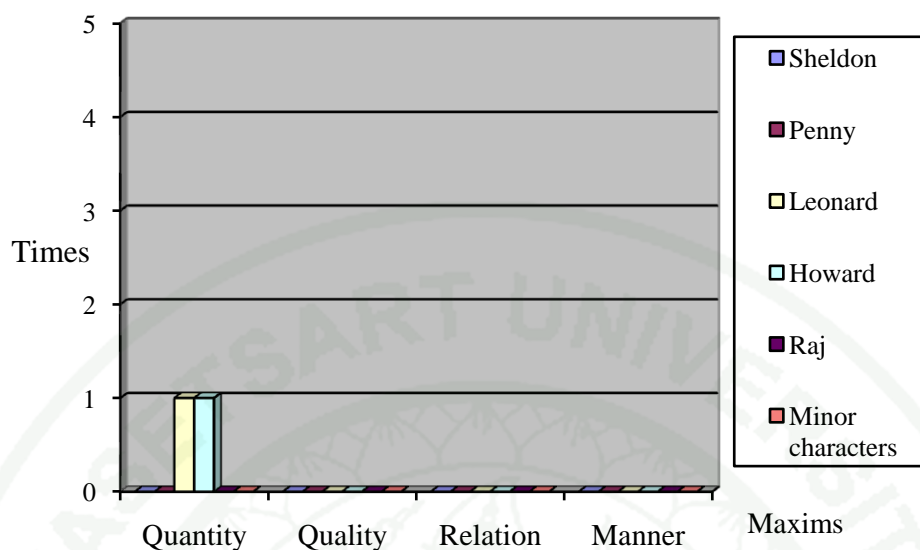
Figure 6 Occurrences of characters suspending the maxims

Humor produced by suspending the maxim of Quantity

Example 14 (Episode 1: The Electric Can Opener Fluctuation)

Context of situation: At the university cafeteria, Leonard, Howard, and Raj are talking about how Sheldon is coping with sadness and anger after learning that the three of them have tampered with his experiment at the North Pole. Suddenly, Howard is the one who changes the topic of the conversation.

Data description:

Howard: If I may abruptly change the subject, did you and Penny finally**…you know.**

Leonard: Howard…

Howard: Personally, I don't care, but my genitals wanted me to ask.

Leonard: Well, tell your genitals **what I do with Penny** is none of their business.

Both Howard and Leonard are suspending the maxim of Quantity by providing less information than is required, though they are mentioning the necessary information. From Howard's utterance, *"did you and Penny finally…you know,"* they are talking about Leonard and Penny sexual affair since the two have recently decided to be in a relationship. The suspension of the maxim in this situation happens when the conversational partner is referring to a sensitive issue which is an intercourse; apart from that, it directly involves the person to whom the speaker is talking; therefore, it may be considered as impolite and inappropriate to frankly speaking about sex life of Leonard, the conversational partner, who wants to keep his affair with Penny as privacy, thereby suspending the maxim is the most suitable way for Howard to communicate the message.

While Leonard, who is unexpectedly shocked and later offended by Howard's question about his relationship with Penny, responds back by employing the same strategy as Howard does; that is, suspending the maxim of Quantity, by using a vague phrase *'what I do with Penny'* instead of telling the whole truth to Howard. The implicature cannot be found in both Howard and Leonard's utterances since they are aware that it is suspended.

The audience enjoys the suspension of the maxim since mentioning about the taboo issue openly may harass some of them and may not be an efficient technique to gain laughter. Hence, withholding some information regarded as taboo topic, particularly about sex, seems plausible and somehow funny.

According to the analyzed data, it can be summarized that suspending is the maxim being suspended by merely the maxim of Quantity.

In conclusion, the five types of non-observance of the conversational maxims which include flouting, violating, opting out, infringing, and suspending the maxims are all found in the series. Though, only flouting and violating techniques cover the four criteria for co-operative communication proposed by Grice; that is, the maxims

of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner, whereas infringing includes the maxims of Quantity, Relation, and Manner. The other two strategies which are opting out and suspending barely involve the maxim of Quantity. These five ways of breaching the conversational maxims contribute to the funniness and call for a burst of laughter from the third party or the viewers.

The aforementioned paragraph has been true that the non-observance types can generate humor; however, quite many instances found in the series can be thoroughly explained through another method apart from the non-observance type technique in order for a broad understanding of the humor production. With this reason, Berger's (1990) inventory of rhetorical techniques of humor will be attached to Thomas's (1995) non-observance types in the following analysis.

In the next section, the second research question "what are the rhetorical techniques in the series that are employed to help non-observance of the Cooperative Principle reflect the sense of humor" will be answered.

2. What are the rhetorical techniques in *The Big Bang Theory* series that are used to help non-observance of the Cooperative Principle provoke the sense of humor?

This research question is designed to examine how the script of this series is found funny in order to clarify the five ways of breaching the maxims in humor context which have already been mentioned in the previous section. To answer the second question, the rhetorical techniques of humor (Berger, 1990) are employed. Since the non-observance types of conversational maxims have been answered and illustrated in the first research question; therefore, this section will pay attention to Berger's techniques of humor with a slight mention of the non-observance.

According to Berger (1990), there are 15 language-based techniques of humor; that is, (1) allusion; (2) bombast; (3) definition; (4) exaggeration; (5) facetiousness;

(6) insult; (7) infantilism; (8) irony; (9) misunderstanding; (10) literalness; (11) puns and wordplay; (12) repartee; (13) ridicule; (14) sarcasm; and (15) satire. In this study, most of the techniques are found in the series, except for definition, infantilism, and satire. Apart from that, there is only one technique that is found in this study, not included in Berger's language based categories of humor; but it is under the heading of the logic based technique, absurdity. The analysis will be presented from the most frequently found to the least used techniques respectively, noted that some techniques can be co-occurred in the same utterances.

Table 2 Occurrences of characters employing the rhetorical techniques

Rhetorical Techniques	Characters						Total
	Sheldon	Penny	Leonard	Howard	Raj	Minor Char.	
Allusion	5	1	1	1	0	0	8
Bombast	4	0	0	0	0	0	4
Definition	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Exaggeration	5	1	5	2	3	0	16
Facetious-ness	2	1	0	1	0	0	4
Insults	9	0	1	0	0	2	12
Infantilism	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Irony	4	9	4	2	0	1	20
Misunder-standing	10	1	1	0	1	1	14
Literalness	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Puns	3	0	1	0	0	0	4

Table 2 (Continued)

Rhetorical Techniques	Characters						Total
	Sheldon	**Penny**	**Leonard**	**Howard**	**Raj**	**Minor Char.**	
Repartee	9	6	2	4	0	3	24
Ridicule	5	3	2	2	1	1	14
Sarcasm	1	4	2	1	2	2	12
Satire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Absurdity	7	0	2	1	1	2	13

The Rhetorical Techniques of Humor Found in the Study

Based on the findings, the total number of the rhetorical techniques found in the series is 148 times. The most language-based technique that is employed the most is **repartee**; it is used 24 times (16.22%) throughout the series by most characters, except Raj, to exchange humorous and witty retorts with the conversational partners.

Example 15 (Episode 9: The Vengeance Formulation)

Context of situation: Howard has just arrived from his dinner with Bernadette. As he is walking through the door of Sheldon and Leonard's apartment, Penny asks him a question.

Data description:

Penny: Why are you back from your date so early?

Howard: In romances, as in show business, always leave them wanting more.

Penny: What exactly does that mean?

Howard is overtly flouting the maxim of manner by replying in a convoluted way to Penny. The rhetorical technique that Howard applies is **repartee**. His intricate answer regarded as a quick clever response suggests that he is playing hard to get with Bernadette so that he will be at the advantage point of the relationship, and that is the reason why he does not stay at Bernadette's place after dinner, and then comes back early. Howard's hidden message is that he wants to show off his success in impressing a woman in the courting game. However, his answer is so complicated that Penny cannot understand.

The second technique found regularly in the series is **irony**. It is used 20 times (13.51%) by most characters, particularly Penny, to utter a deliberate contrast between what is saying and what is intended; this technique is always funnier if the conversational partner does not grasp the speaker's real meaning of the utterance.

Example 16 (Episode 11: The Maternal Congruence)

Context of situation: Leonard is upset with his mother who has visited him at the apartment. Due to his unresolved childhood problem, Leonard does not quite get along well with his own mother; and therefore, is angry with her lack of updated about her life while his roommate, Sheldon, seems to know every thing about his mother's current affair. With this reason, Leonard has been locking himself in his room while Sheldon tries to comfort him.

Data description:

Leonard: Why are you here?

Sheldon: To comfort you, of course. No, that's not going to work at all, I'll comfort you from over here. Leonard, what you're experiencing is a classic Jungian crisis in which the aging individual mourns the loss of the never-to-be realized ideal family unit.

Leonard: Thank you, that's very comforting.

Sheldon: That's not the comforting part. The comforting part is that the Germans have a term for what you're feeling. Weltschmerz. It means the depression that arises from comparing the world as it is to a hypothetical, idealized world.

Leonard: You're right, I do feel better.

Sheldon: Well, the Germans have always been a comforting people. Just remember, Leonard, where your biological family has failed you, you always have me, your surrogate family.

Leonard flouts the maxim of Quality by uttering an untrue statement; that is, the opposite from what he intends to convey, but he does not tell a lie to Sheldon since there is an indicator hidden in his utterance such as his tiresome voice and his stressful facial expression. The rhetorical technique employed is **irony** because his spoken expression contrasts to what he is thinking by using the tone of voice or some gestures to signal his real meaning. Leonard uses an irony as a way to make Sheldon aware of his being unhelpful.

According to Sheldon's comforting utterance, which in fact is not considered as a consolation from the general point of view, he refers to the psychological theory describing the symptom that Leonard is encountering with in a more academic style by using technical terms. Consequently, it is funny that Leonard uses irony as a reaction toward Sheldon's 'soothing' statement. The audience can notice Leonard's body language and facial feature during his answer to Sheldon that he is placing his hands on top of his forehead, and his eyebrows are drawn together. Apart from that, his tone of voice seems fatigued; he even highlighted the sentence *"I do feel better."* as his implicature. However, all of Leonard's effort is in vain since Sheldon is not aware of the simple signs and therefore misinterpret Leonard's reply by expressing his

delight toward the German term which causing the audience to laugh again toward the unexpected feedback that Leonard gets from Sheldon.

The third rhetorical technique which is employed the most is **exaggeration** with 16 times (10.81%). It is used by all major characters to describe the fact as greater than it really is. The overstatement uttered by the characters contributes to the funniness in the series.

Example 17 (Episode 15: The Large Hadron Collision)

Context of situation: Leonard has been chosen from his university to attend a conference in Switzerland on 14th, February. He intends to take Penny to Switzerland with him. Yet, during the night before their departure, Penny suddenly starts to vomit in the bathroom causing Leonard to worry about their tomorrow plan.

Data description:

Leonard: What's going on?
Penny: I'm having a tea party. What do you think's going on? **I think I might have the flu. Or the plague.**
Leonard: Well, our plane leaves at 9 a.m. Do you think you'll feel better by then?
Penny: Yep. 'Cause I'm gonna be dead.

Penny is flouting the maxim of Quality by employing **exaggeration** as the rhetorical technique. As in case of flouting the maxim, the implicature can be found in the speaker's utterance. In this situation, Penny is very ill that she continues to vomit; the loud sound of Penny retching in the toilet indicates that her illness is extremely terrible. However, her symptom could not possibly be severe as in the case of the plague which is considered as an epidemic with high rate of fatality, and most importantly, it is a rare disease to be found in these present days owing to efficient

vaccine. The audience is amused by her overstatement that she has a plague and will die, which in fact, she is still alive the next morning, though cannot go to Switzerland with Leonard due to her sickness.

Misunderstanding and **ridicule** are another two rhetorical strategies commonly employed in this series. They both rank as the fourth techniques that are mostly found with 14 times (9.46%) throughout the show. Misunderstanding happens when the interlocutors fail to understand the utterance correctly; it may be due to the speaker's unclear statement, or the hearer's inability to perceive the spoken words in the right way the latter case is the main reason that causes the audience to laugh in this series, while the characters use ridicule to mock the other characters in order to make them appear ridiculous.

Example 18 (Episode 3: The Gothowitz Deviation)

Context of situation: Howard and Raj go to the Goth club and meet two ladies. The ladies take them to a new place where Howard and Raj think that this place may be more privacy than the pub in order to have their intimate moment. It turns out that the ladies take them to the tattoo parlor. Unavoidably, Howard is laying down, preparing to have a tattoo on his lower back while the other lady is asking Raj the picture of the tattoo that he would like to have.

Data description:

Sarah: What are you going to get, Raj?
Raj: With my luck, hepatitis. (Raj is responding in his agitated state.)

Raj infringes the maxim of Relation since he does not intend to produce an implicature nor does he deceive Sarah by not answering to the point. His reply stems from nervous condition because he is afraid of the diseases that can be transmitted through the tattooing process. Apart from that, the rhetorical technique that can

illustrate this situation is **misunderstanding.** Raj fails to understand Sarah's utterance correctly since, at that moment, he is concerning about his safety and hygienic condition of the needle, and thinking that if he is fortunate enough, he will not be infected with drastic diseases such as HIV and AIDS through tattoo and piecing tools, but just hepatitis. With this reason, the idea of selecting a tattooed picture to be on his body does not occur in his mind. Apart from that, it is also Sarah's fault who does not ask clearly which leading to Raj's misunderstanding. The clarifying question should be *"Which tattoo design would you consider?"* that can prevent misunderstanding on the hearer part.

Since the rhetorical techniques can be co-occurred with more than one technique within the same utterances, the example of such case can be seen as follows.

Example 19 (Episode 13: The Bozeman Reaction)

Context of situation: Sheldon and Leonard's apartment room has been robbed. The police officers come to their room to record their stolen possessions. Sheldon's nature of rambling starts to annoy one policeman. Sheldon then asks for the arrival of the CSI team which irritates and surprises the policeman since it is a case of robbery, not a murder. Therefore, Leonard makes a joke of Sheldon's annoying habit to the policeman.

Data description:

Leonard: Would I be completely out of line to ask you to shoot him?
Policeman: I'd be happy to put him under a 72-hour psychiatric hold.
Sheldon: I'm not crazy. My mother had me tested.

Leonard flouts the maxim of Quality by saying something that is untrue since it is clearly evident that he, in no way, wants Sheldon to die. The rhetorical technique

used here is **ridicule**. Leonard ridicules Sheldon that his rambling behavior mixed with his bizarre idea of expecting the CSI team to come is laughable and annoying; therefore, it is a good idea to shoot him in order that his mouth will be shut.

The policeman also flouts the maxim of Quality by saying that he is willing to detain Sheldon for psychiatric hold which is definitely not his real intention, but to ridicule or mock Sheldon. The policeman cannot put Sheldon into psychiatric hold since there is no evidence to prove that Sheldon has any mental symptom and he is not literally mad; therefore, it can be suggested that the policeman's real intention is to mock Sheldon. The rhetorical techniques used here are **repartee** and **ridicule**. The policeman replies in a quick and clever answer that he will not shoot him, but rather put him in a 72-hour psychiatric hold which can be implied that he teases Sheldon of having gone through a mental problem. Due to his characteristic of talking too much which causing him to look like a crazy person in the eyes of others, Sheldon is always an object of ridicule by everyone.

The fifth rhetorical technique frequently found in the series is **absurdity**. It is used 13 times (8.78%) by almost characters, particularly Sheldon, to convey unreasonable remarks. This strategy is the only strategy that is not included in the language-based technique, but logic-based technique. The reason of the inclusion of this technique into the study, even though it is not involved in Berger's language-based technique, is because it also provides another technique that can describe humor generation found in the series' script.

Example 20 (Episode 8: The Adhesive Duck Deficiency)

Context of situation: Leonard, Howard, and Raj are camping in the desert to observe the meteor shower. Howard receives cookies from two women who have their camp nearby. The three guys eat the cookies without being aware of the fact that they are harsh cookies (Cannabis foods), causing them to be hallucinated.

Data description:

> **Raj: If I could speak the language of rabbits, they would be amazed, and I would be their king.**
>
> **Leonard: I hate my name. It has nerd in it. Len nerd.**
>
> **Howard: I lost my virginity to my cousin Jeanie.**
>
> **Raj: I would be kind to my rabbit subjects. At first.**
>
> **Leonard: You know what's a cool name? Angelo. That has angel and jell-o in it.**
>
> **Howard: It was my Uncle Murray's funeral. We were all back at my Aunt Barbara's house. Our eyes locked over the pickled herring. We never meant for it to happen.**

The three of them infringe the maxim of Relation since each person's contribution is irrelevant to the topic being introduced due to the effect of the harsh cookies which contain cannabis and are consumed as an alternate delivery means to experience the effects of cannabinoids without smoking marijuana. It is regarded as funny that the subjects mentioned by each character sound senseless and ridiculous; consequently, the rhetorical technique used here is **absurdity**. Raj firstly starts the silly conversation by telling his friends that he could be the king of all rabbits if he could speak in a rabbit tongue. Instead of answering to Raj's point, Leonard and Howard's minds are buried to their own thoughts and they are saying foolish words that reflect their suffering from mental complexes which the audience finds them amusing and ridiculous.

The technique of **insult** is used frequently as the technique of **sarcasm**. They are the sixth most used techniques, and are employed by 12 times (8.11%) by Sheldon, Leonard, and minor characters as in the case of insult, while by all main and unimportant characters as in the case of sarcasm. It is interesting that Sheldon is the character who employs insult technique the most by 9 times owing to his own superior intellect that always causes him to disparage those around him. In contrast to insult, sarcasm is equally used by every character appeared in the series.

The characters use insult to hurt the feeling or pride of other people and the targets of insult are diverse groups such as citizens of different countries, public figures, professional, and mothers-in-law etc., while the characters manipulate satirical remarks to hint the opposite of the words they are uttering, with the intention to upset or mock the hearer. The revelation of anger can be seen through this technique. Both techniques are similar in a way that they yield negative emotional effect toward the one whose insult and sarcasm is aimed.

Example 21 (Episode 1: The Electric Can Opener Fluctuation)

Context of situation: After the four guys (Sheldon, Leonard, Howard, and Raj) had returned from the North Pole, Sheldon were told that when staying at the North Pole, his experiment was tampered by his three friends. Consequently, Sheldon was very angry with his friends causing him to leave California and went back to Texas, his homeland, where he was staying with his mother, Mrs. Cooper. At the kitchen, Mrs. Cooper made a breakfast for him.

Data description:

Sheldon: Thank you for carving a smiley face in my grilled cheese sandwich.
Mrs. Cooper: Oh, I know how to take care of my baby. His eyes came out a little thin, but you can just pretend he's Chinese. So, do you want to talk about what happened with you and your little friends?

Mrs. Cooper flouts the maxim of Quantity by saying too much information than the situation requires. She could have said: *"You're welcome."* or *"Oh, I know how to take care of my baby."* without another sentence: *"His eyes came out a little thin, but you can just pretend he's Chinese."* The humorous effect from the last utterance stems from **insult** technique. The reason that Mrs. Cooper flouts the Quantity maxim is to affront the Chinese since her negative attitude toward Asian

races is prevalent; she once mentions about Raj's selective mutism which is a symptom that prevents him from talking to women outside his family as *'Third World demon is running around inside of him'* (from Episode 1: The Electric Can Opener Fluctuation).

According to Berger (1995: 61-63), the targets of insults often consist of different kinds of groups and one of these targets includes citizens of different countries. Since the series was produced by Americans, it becomes obvious that the target of an insult is always the citizens from different countries, especially the countries that are less developed or countries from the East. From her utterance, she jokes about the unique attribute of the Chinese which is slanted eyes and that causes the Western audience laughs.

Example 22 (Episode 19: The Wheaton Recurrence)

Context of situation: Leonard upsets with Penny who starts to act strangely after he confesses his love toward her last night. The scene takes place in the bowling alley. Leonard offers her chilli cheese fries, and Penny eats them happily. Leonard is disturbed by Penny's reply *"I love chilli cheese fries,"* since she pretends to ignore his love confession and does not return her affection toward him, but outspokenly expresses her fondness to chilli cheese fries.

Data description:

Penny: Yes. I love chilli cheese fries.
Leonard: Really? You love them?
Penny: Yeah, why?
Leonard: No reason. I'm just glad to hear you're comfortable saying you love something.
Penny: Do you really want to get into this right now?

Leonard: Get into what? Why wouldn't you love the chilli cheese fries? They've been in your life a long time. They make you happy. They deserve to know.

Leonard is flouting the maxim of Quality by blatantly saying fault statements in order to hurt Penny because he is still bothered by her ignorance toward his love revelation. With this reason, the rhetorical technique used here is **sarcasm** judged by his facial feature and tone of voice. Even though, he says that he is glad to hear Penny loving something, Leonard's face looks stressful mixed with tone of voice that indicates his hidden anger toward her; therefore, the expressed utterances are opposite to his real intention. Penny herself understands Leonard's implicature very well causing her to ask him: *"Do you really want to get into this right now?"* Again, sarcasm is used to make Penny even more irritated, but please the audience since the laughter effect occurs during Leonard's utterances.

Allusion is another humorous technique used 8 times (5.41%) throughout the series and is ranked as the seventh most used category. It is used by nearly characters, especially Sheldon, to refer to an indirect mention of someone or something mostly from famous persons, literature, bible, and drama etc.

Example 23 (Episode 6: The Cornhusker Vortex)

Context of situation: The four guys including Sheldon, Leonard, Howard, and Raj are in the middle of kite fighting game. Sheldon and Leonard plays against Howard and Raj. They have to cut the line of the other team's kites in order to win the game. During their kite fighting at the park, Leonard starts to worry the reason why Penny will not let him meet her friends.

Data description:

   Sheldon: Wolowitz is trying to outflank us. Let out some string, add altitude and I'll go under and cut his line.

   Leonard: Why wouldn't Penny want her friends to meet me?

   Sheldon: Focus, Leonard, focus! **The heat of the battle is upon us, the dogs of war are unleashed.**

   Sheldon is flouting the maxim of Relation by clearly not answering toward Leonard's question and abruptly bring up another topic. Sheldon's implicature is to remind, or more likely, warn Leonard that they are playing kites and there is a chance to outwit the opposite team while Leonard is still concerned about nonsensical thing. Sheldon's caution contains the rhetorical techniques of **allusion** and **exaggeration**. Based on the phrase, "*The heat of the battle is upon us, the dogs of war are unleashed,*" Sheldon is alluding to William Shakespeare's work titled Julius Caesar from Act 3, Scene 1, line 270: *"Cry, 'Havoc!', and let slip the dogs of war"* (Shakespeare, 1599). Apart from that, the exaggeration technique is included since their kite fighting between intimate friends is overstated to equal with a destructive battle in order to take revenge upon the enemies in the ancient time. This extreme comparison regards as amusing because it receives audience's laugh track.

   The next rhetorical strategies are **bombast**, **facetiousness**, and **puns and wordplay**. Each technique appears in the series 4 times (2.70%). It is interesting to note that Sheldon is the only character that uses bombast technique while facetiousness is used by Howard, Penny, and Sheldon; each of them employs 1 times, except Sheldon who utilizes this technique for 2 times. In case of puns and wordplay, Sheldon is still the character who employs this technique the most with 3 times, and Leonard uses only 1 time.

   Bombast is words without meaning used to impress other people and sound important. In this study, bombast can be the form of technical terms used in the specific field expressed with formal sentence structure used to show off the speaker's

brain. General hearers may not thoroughly understand the utterance containing the bombast technique.

Example 24 (Episode 14: The Einstein Approximation)

Context of situation: At the living room of the apartment, Sheldon is standing in the middle of the room. His whiteboard is behind him. Every few moments he turns round suddenly until Penny enters the room.

Data description:

Penny: Whatcha doing?
Sheldon: I'm attempting to view my work as a fleeting peripheral; image so as to engage the superior colliculus of my brain.
Penny: Interesting. I usually just have coffee. You've been up all night?

Sheldon is infringing the maxim of Manner since his utterance is difficult to understand, though he does not intend to produce an implicature or to mislead Penny. It is his characteristic to speak academic terms in science field in a long and complex sentence due to his superior complex by regarding himself as more intelligent than others; thereby expressing his deep knowledge through formal language found in the scholar areas can earn him a good status from those around him. Therefore, the technique that is suitable to this situation is **bombast**. Normally, what Sheldon is uttering is specific topics in science consisted of technical terms which Penny or general audience cannot truly comprehend. However, instead of gaining an admiration toward his cleverness, Sheldon always receives the hearer's irritation and neglect in the series while earns the laughter from the audience or the viewers.

Facetiousness is another technique used by a speaker who tries to make a joke, but in a way or at a time that is considered improper; thereby always resulting in unpleasant rejection or glaring from the hearers.

Example 25 (Episode 3: The Gothowitz Deviation)

Context of situation: At the apartment, Sheldon, Leonard, and Penny are watching a Japanese animation in the living room. Since Penny does not like to watch animation, she begins to feel bored, which is in contrast to the two guys who enjoy it very much. They are quietly watching the animation until Penny breaks the silence.

Data description:

Penny: What's this cartoon called again?

Leonard: Oshikuru: Demon Samurai.

Sheldon: And it's not a cartoon, it's anime.

Penny: Anime. You know, I knew a girl in high school named Anna May. Anna May Fletcher. She was born with one nostril. Then she had this bad nose job and basically wound up with three.

Sheldon: You're here a lot now. (glaring at Penny with criticizing expression)

Penny is flouting the maxim of Relation by clearly changing the subject being mentioned about. Even though she refers to 'anime,' the same word that they are previously talking about, 'anime' in her sense is completely different from the prior topic with an intention to turn their attention from the uninteresting cartoon to a new topic. The implicature is that she does not want to silently watch the animation. The rhetorical technique that Penny produces is **facetiousness** as Penny tries to amuse Sheldon and Leonard, but at the time that is not appropriate. In other words, Sheldon and Leonard has been watching the animation when Penny interrupts their watch with her nonsensical joke, causing Sheldon to feel annoyed with her presence. Surprisingly, the viewers who are the third party regards Penny's unsuitable joke as entertaining.

Puns and wordplay is the humor technique that plays with the sound of the words. This category can create laughter by using a word that has two meanings or of different words that has similar sound.

Example 26 (Episode 1: The Electric Can Opener Fluctuation)

Context of situation: Sheldon is upset with his three closed friends who have tampered with his experience at the North Pole. Consequently, he has been locking himself in his bedroom until Penny pays a visit and tries to console him. She comforts him by comparing Sheldon's circumstance to her disappointing past when she has not been named as Head Cheerleader.

Data description:

Penny: Well, no, but when I was a senior in high school, one of my friends heard I was going to be named head cheerleader. Oh, I was so excited. My mom even made me a celebration pie. Then they named stupid Valerie Mossbacher head cheerleader. Big ol' stlutbag.

Sheldon: And on a different, but not unrelated topic, based on your current efforts to buoy my spirits, **do you truly believe that you were ever fit to be a cheer leader?**

Sheldon is flouting the maxim of Manner by producing a convoluted utterance that confuses Penny. This way of breaking the maxim suggests that Penny's effort of comforting him has been in vain. The rhetorical technique used in this context that makes audience laugh is **puns and wordplay** by the two words which possess the same sound, but different in meanings; that is, Cheerleader and cheer leader. The first word refers to women who support a sports team with chants and movements. Most of the young women, as well as, Penny always want to be named in this position since they can gain public fame and attention through this opportunity. In contrast to Sheldon's reference, the word 'cheer leader' in his sense is a person who comforts and supports another person who is in the state of sorrow. According to his utterance, "*do you truly believe that you were ever fit to be a cheer leader?*" implies that Penny has failed to cheer him up from his sad condition. However, the ambiguity of Sheldon's sentence confuses Penny, but humorously affects the viewers.

The least used technique found in the series is **literalness** with merely 3 times (2.03%). Sheldon is the only character who employs literalness as a result of his idiosyncrasy nature. To be more specific, Sheldon is rigidly logical to everything, particularly with words attached to the literal meaning. With this reason, his bluntness always upsets other characters. Literalness is the way the speaker takes words in their most ordinary sense by freeing from exaggeration or distortion.

Example 27 (Episode 20: The Spaghetti Catalyst)

Context of situation: Penny has recently broken up with Leonard. She accidentally meets Sheldon at the lobby for his mail letters and has a conversation with him. Sheldon talks about the relationship between Penny and Leonard by referring to the word 'no longer having coitus.'

Data description:

Penny: God, can we please just say no longer seeing each other?
Sheldon: Well, we could if it were true. But as you live in the same building, you see each other all the time. The variable which has changed is the coitus.

Sheldon infringes the maxim of Manner by saying long and complicated sentence instead of answering *'No.'* He does not generate an implicature since it is his unique nature to speak long and hard to understand sentences which always confuse or perhaps irritate the hearers. The rhetorical techniques used here are **misunderstanding** and **literalness.** The misunderstanding occurs when Sheldon incorrectly interprets the phrase *'no longer seeing each other'* as is attached to its literal meaning, not in the sense that the relationship of the couple has reached an end or in a more general terms 'break up with each other.' Due to his lack of social skill, since he is so intelligent that the school allowed him to upgrade the class levels in school; therefore, graduating in such an early ages, and his likeliness to be reclusive,

Sheldon does not have a chance to mix with other people causing him to have a low interaction skill and lack of ability to correctly perceive what general people seem normal.

In this case, he substitutes the phrase *'no longer seeing each other'* by the phrase *'no longer having coitus'* to refer to sexual intercourse which is a direct term to describe sexual act based solely on his literal interpretation. The phrase *'no longer seeing each other'* in Sheldon's understanding is that both Leonard and Penny do not have a chance to meet each other again. Thus, his literalness causes the hearer, who is Penny, find it shocking or embarrassing toward Sheldon's blunt utterance, in contrast to the audience who enjoys his outspokenness.

In respond to the research question on the rhetorical techniques, it can be summarized that the most popular type is repartee, followed by irony, exaggeration, and misunderstanding as well as ridicule respectively. The least frequently occurred type is literalness.

In the next section, the conclusion of the findings in this study and the recommendation for further studies will be presented.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter represents the conclusion of the findings in this study and discussion on the findings of previous research on the pragmatic-based of verbal humor in the comedy series and those of the present study. The conclusion concerns the types of non-observance of Grice's Cooperative Principle and the application of the rhetorical techniques of humor. The comparison between the present findings and the findings in previous studies is illustrated next in the discussion. Implications and recommendations for further studies on humor discourse are proposed in the last section.

Conclusion

The present study examines verbal humor appeared in the American comedy series *The Big Bang Theory* in terms of the non-observance types of the Cooperative Principle based on Thomas (1995) and the inventories of rhetorical techniques of humor introduced by Berger (1990). The study contributes to pragmatics-based humor research by exploring the Gricean maxims that has influenced on humor production found in the TV script by answering the subsequent research questions.

1. What types of non-observance of the Cooperative Principle are employed in humor discourse of the *Big Bang Theory* series?

2. What are the rhetorical techniques in the *Big Bang Theory* series that are used to help non-observance of the Cooperative Principle provoke the sense of humor?

The data, containing 23 episodes of the comedy series *The Big Bang Theory* from the third season, is initially analyzed by employing Thomas's theoretical framework in which she adapts it from Grice's notable work (1975) in the first research question whereas both Thomas and Berger's methods are secondly analyzed in the latter research question, paying more attention to Berger's lists of rhetorical strategies of humor. The two findings are separately concluded in the following part.

The types of non-observance of the Cooperative Principle

The findings of this part cover the first research question. The framework provided by Thomas (1995) was applied to achieve the strategies in breaking the conversational maxims appeared in humorous conversations in *The Big Bang Theory*. There are five different forms of the non-observance of the Cooperative Principle maxims including flouting, violating, opting out, infringing, and suspending, that accounts for humor generation in the series. However, the type most frequently used is flouting the maxims; it occurs 117 times (66.86%) throughout the series. The second most repeated type is infringing the maxims; it appears in the dialogue 29 times (16.57%), followed by violating the maxims which receives 24 times (13.71%), and opting out the maxim which appears only 3 times (1.71%) respectively. The least frequently employed type is suspending. It occurs only 2 times (1.14%). All of the five types of non-observance lead to audience's amusement and comicality, yet humorous outcomes frequently arise from flouting the maxims.

In regards to flouting and violating, these two forms cover all of the four conversation maxims; that is, the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner whereas infringing includes Quantity, Relation, and Manner maxims. Additionally, opting out and suspending are merely found with the maxim of Quantity.

Based on the results, the major character, Sheldon, is the one who employs the types of non-observance the most in terms of flouting, violating, and infringing the

conversational maxims. It may be because his being the center character of the show, with his bizarre personality which often bars him from getting along and socializing with others; therefore, Sheldon's utterances are regarded as uncooperative according to Grice's maxims. It is likely that he produces the three types of non-observance the most because his superiority complex of high IQ, talkativeness, and extreme lack of social interaction along with being unable to discern simple jokes and ironic comments, cause him to create utterances that are exaggerated more than required, not based on the truth, irrelevant, and perplexed. Consequently, Sheldon always unintentionally annoys conversational interactants; and therefore, being the target of ridicule from those around him. Though the other characters find it difficult to deal with Sheldon's unusual behavior, the viewers, on the contrary, well embrace his eccentricities against social norms which are mainly caused by his gifted intelligence, and reckon his peculiarities as amusing. It is not only Sheldon's characteristics dedicates to laughter of the show, but also his strange trait that contributes to the tone of the story. Its sense of humor and whimsy is conveyed through the geekiness of major male characters.

The rhetorical techniques of humor

Since the five types of non-observance of the Cooperative Principle are found extremely useful toward the pragmatics analysis on humor generation appeared in the texts of subtitle collected from the comedy series *The Big Bang Theory*, the addition of the rhetorical strategies of humor is undoubtedly beneficial to the study as the latter approach is able to explain the phenomenon more comprehensively than used with only one method.

Repartee is a technique that occurs the most by 24 times (16.22%) and it is employed by most characters to interchange a clever reply during conversation. Therefore, it can be inferred that the characters' repartee remarks are likely to cause humor and can be considered to be the best choice of strategy employed in the

situation comedy. The secondly occurring technique is irony. The characters use irony 20 times (13.51%) to obviously express the utterance which is opposite to the intended meaning. With this reason, irony usually patches up with the non-observance type 'flouting the maxim of Quality.' Exaggeration is the third humorous strategy that is used by all main characters with16 times (10.81%) to enlarge the matter being talking about beyond the truth. Another technique fourthly utilized are misunderstanding and ridicule. They are appeared in the humorous dialogue by 14 times (9.46%). Misunderstanding happens when the characters misinterpret the spoken utterances while ridicule is used to express contempt or mockery towards the others. The least frequently found technique is literalness which occurs only 3 times (2.03%) in the series. Sheldon is the only character who employs literalness since he strictly adheres to the primary meaning of a word or expression.

In conclusion, the rhetorical techniques of humor are used to complement the types of non-observance to the study by rendering a reason for the cause of humor in a way that the non-fulfillment types of Gricean maxims cannot.

The findings of the present study reveal the similarity to that of Dornerus (2005) in terms of the type of non-observance that is mostly employed. Both the characters from the two situation comedies from the present and previous study employ flouting. It is the most frequently appeared category than any other types of non-observance. In respect to the result of the present study, flouting occurs 117 times (66.86%) in *The Big Bang Theory* and that of Dornerus (2005) occurs 111 times (86%) in *That 70's Show*.

Nonetheless, only two forms of non-fulfillment are analyzed in Dornerus (2005) which are flouting and violating the four conversational maxims. The other aspects of the non-observance; that is, opting out, infringing, and suspending the maxims are excluded from the study. Another difference between the present study and that of Dornerus is that, this study aims to compare between difference genre which is, the situation comedy (*That 70's Show*) and drama series (*Desperate*

Housewives) while the present study does not make a comparison to other series. With this reason, Dornerus's study does not make an attempt to study the other three types of non-observance since its attention is aimed to focus on how the characters between the two series, in which its theme and genre is significantly dissimilar, employ flouting and violating the maxims for different purposes while the current study focuses on one comedy series in terms of humor generation.

In contrast to Dornerus's study, Li (2009) mainly concentrates on the four forms of non-observance in the American comedy series *Friends*, since suspension of the maxim is excluded due to its difficulty in finding appropriate instances. On the other hand, Li (2009) provides two example conversations for each non-observance type without representing the number of occurrence which is different from that of Dornerus and the present study. It may be because the researcher does not merely concentrate on Grice's Cooperative Principle, but many frameworks including Politeness Principle, the Irony Principle, the Banter Principle, the Interest Principle, and the Pollyanna Principle. Some dialogues from *Friends* are quoted and analyzed based on the aforementioned concepts to show how these theoretical frames work in the series. The percentages of occurrences therefore are not shown since Li's study involves various approaches. Though, according to the result of the study, flouting is the most frequent form appearing in the dialogue in *Friends*.

Despite the difference in the number of applications concerning non-observance types (flouting and violating in Dornerus (2005); flouting, violating, opting out, and infringing in Li (2009); and all five forms in the present study), the previous studies and the present studies coherently agree in terms of flouting in which is mostly employed in the three American situation comedy series as a popular technique in engendering humor.

However, the findings of another study to be compared with do not align with the above statement. Since the study of Kalliomaki (2005) mainly focuses on non-observance in terms of violation the maxims in the British comedy series *Blackadder*.

Kalliomaki's study is different from the other two previous studies and the present study in the way that it uses the term 'violating' to cover all types of non-observance without clarifying the distinctions of each type. Hence, the findings from Kalliomaki (2005) cannot be compared to the previous studies and the present study.

Apart from the difference, there is a similarity that the present study shares with that of Kalliomaki (2005). Regarding the rhetorical strategies of humor complied by Berger (1990), the finding of the most frequent strategy of humor in the present study confirms Kalliomaki's finding that repartee is the most repeated strategy in the two series with 24 times (16.22%) in the present study and with approximately 10 times per episode in Kalliomaki's study. Nevertheless, based on the present study, the second rhetorical technique employed the most is irony, followed by exaggeration while insult is ranked as secondly used technique, followed by sarcasm respectively in Kalliomaki's study. The dissimilarity can be stemmed from a varying theme of the two series; even though they both are situation comedies, *The Big Bang Theory* concerns with the relationship between close-friends living in the United States at the present century whereas *Blackadder* portrays the life of the two protagonists whose relationship is between master and servant set in English historical period starting in the fifteenth century. With this reason, the main character in *Blackadder* employs insult and sarcasm toward the other character whose position is inferior to suppress not only the other leading character, but also minor characters. Due to different concerns in the area of the study, the previous studies from Dornerus (2005) and Li (2009) do not include the rhetorical strategies of humor to their analysis.

In conclusion, this chapter presents the conclusion of the current findings and a comparison of those with the findings in the previous studies on non-observance of the Cooperative Principle. The similarities and differences between the present findings and the previous works manifest the importance of non-observance towards humor creation in today's popular culture, particularly through situation comedy. The findings derived from the present and previous studies reveal that the violation of Grice's conversational maxims, which in this case are implied to the five types of

non-observance, is commonly employed by playwrights of both American and British situation comedies.

Implications and Recommendations for Further Studies

The present study contributes to pragmatics approach to examine the types of non-observance in respect to Grice's Cooperative Principle and the rhetorical strategies in generating humor. The result of the study allows the researcher to reveal how the humor is produced in the situation comedy *The Big Bang Theory* which is highly achieved in the United States and across the countries. Not only the current study offers the knowledge on pragmatics-based humor research, it also provides guidelines of various humorous strategies for playwrights to include in their manuscripts whose areas are not restricted to comedy series, but diverse ranges of media channels such as talk shows, radio broadcasting, commercial programs, and movies etc. which are widely seen in popular culture.

Although the research has reached its aims, there was an unavoidable limitation. The fact that two experts who validate the data have never watched *The Big Bang Theory* series, to some extent, it might affect the results of the study because if they had watched the series, they might have thoroughly grasped the whole concept of the series better.

For further studies, the present study may contribute to humor studies in the field of English for Specific Purposes with a current choice of data. Alternatively, the data conducted in the previous studies are somewhat obsolete since all of the three situation comedy series have been originally produced over the past ten years. Additionally, the methods employed in the present study are considered as more thorough and comprehensive than those of the previous studies in terms of non-observance types. Nonetheless, it would also be useful to observe the data of this study analyzed with other methods regarding humor generation such as the Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH) and the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH),

or the data from various sources such as other situation comedy series, novels, and movies are conversely applied to the above mentioned methods. Lastly, owing to the fact that the data in this study is limited to the situation comedy *The Big Bang Theory*, in which the dialogues and circumstances in the series are mainly concerned with close-friend theme. With this reason, it will be of great benefit to see the data conducted in real-life conversations among various groups in different contexts such as between teachers and students at school, boss and colleagues at workplace, intimate friends at university etc. by applying the same theoretical frameworks as this present study.

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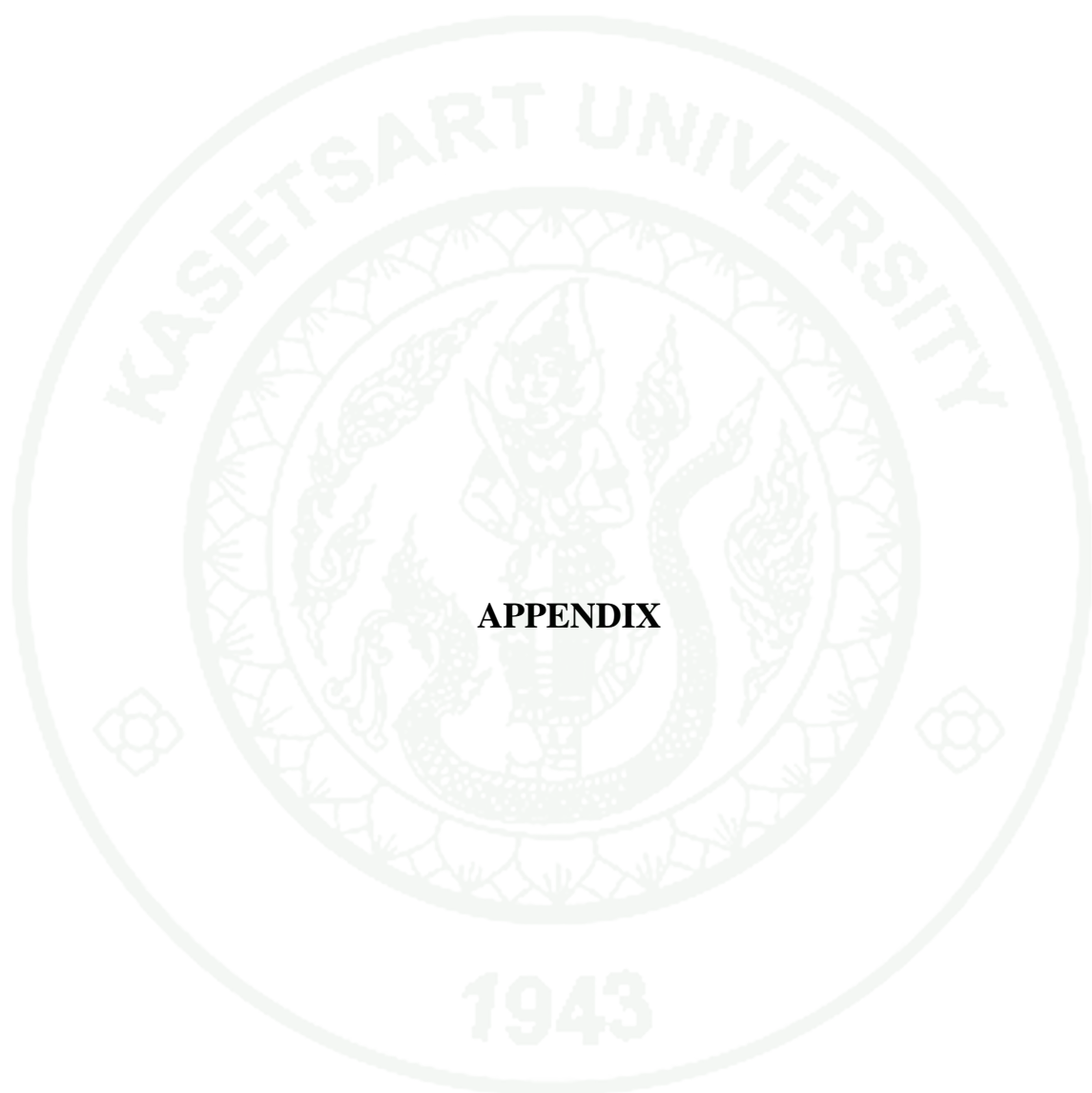
APPENDIX

An Example of How to Analyze the Script

Noted that, the underlined utterances are received laughter effect. The italic words indicate the utterances that are categorized into five types of non-observance with the rhetorical techniques in the parentheses.

Episode 3: The Gothowitz Deviation

Scene: The apartment kitchen. Penny is cooking breakfast while singing and dancing along to "Man I Feel Like A Woman" by Shenia Twain. Sheldon enters.

Penny: Morning, Sheldon. Come dance with me.

Sheldon: No.

Penny: Why not?

Sheldon: Penny, while I subscribe to the many worlds theory which posits the existence of an infinite number of Sheldons in an infinite number of universes, I assure you that in none of them am I dancing. *Flout: Manner (Absurdity)*

Penny: Are you fun in any of them?

Sheldon: The math would suggest that in a few I'm a clown made of candy. But I don't dance. *Flout: Manner (Absurdity)*

Penny: All right, want some French toast?

Sheldon: It's Oatmeal Day.

Penny: Tell you what, next French Toast Day, I will make you oatmeal.

Sheldon: Dear Lord, are you still going to be here on French Toast Day?

Leonard: Morning.

Sheldon: Look, Leonard, Penny made French toast.

Leonard: Sorry. I haven't given her your schedule yet.

Sheldon: It's an iCal download, she can put it right in her phone. And I thought we agreed that you'd have your conjugal visits in her apartment.

Leonard: We did, but there were extenuating circumstances.

Sheldon: I see. Did her abysmal housekeeping skills finally trump her perkiness?

Leonard: No, her bed kind of… broke.

Sheldon: That doesn't seem likely. Her bed's of sturdy construction. Even the addition of a second normal size human being wouldn't cause a structural failure, much less a homunculus such as yourself.

Penny: A homunculus?

Leonard: Perfectly formed miniature human being.

Penny: Oh, you're my little homunculus.

Leonard: Don't do that.

Penny: Sorry. Okay, who wants syrup and who wants cinnamon sugar?

Sheldon: I want oatmeal.

Penny: Yes, well, I want a boyfriend whose roommate isn't a giant pain in the ass.

Sheldon: I'm sure that will happen soon enough. But in the meantime, I still want oatmeal.

Penny: You know what, I give up. He's impossible.

Sheldon: I can't be impossible. I exist. I believe what you meant to say is, "I give up, he's improbable."

Leonard: Sheldon, you really need to find a better way of dealing with Penny.

Sheldon: What am I supposed to do, eat French toast on a Monday? Now, that would be impossible.

Leonard: I'm just saying, you can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.

Sheldon: You can catch even more flies with manure. What's your point?

Leonard: It's a… *(gives up)*

Sheldon: Boy, that does smell good. Too bad it's Monday.

Credits sequence.

Scene: The apartment.

Penny: Okay, so Kim the night manager went on maternity leave, and her husband's name is Sandy, right? So get this, her replacement is a woman named Sandy whose husband's name is Kim.

Leonard: Wow!

Penny: I know. What are the odds?

Sheldon: Easily calculable, we begin by identifying the set of married couples with unisex names. We then eliminate those unqualified for restaurant work, the aged, the imprisoned and the limbless, for example. Next we look at…

Leonard: Sheldon! it's an amazing coincidence, can we leave it at that?

Sheldon: I'm sorry. Ooh, Penny, it's as if the Cheesecake Factory is run by witches.

Flout: Quality (Ridicule)

Penny: Ooh, Sheldon, it's as if you don't think I'll punch you.

Leonard: Come on, you guys, let it go.

Penny: Fine, whatever. Are you finished?

Sheldon: Well, thank you. How thoughtful. Would you like a chocolate?

Penny: Um, yeah, sure, thanks.

Leonard: What was that?

Sheldon: You said be nice to Penny. I believe offering chocolate to someone falls within the definition of nice.

Leonard: It does. But in my experience, you don't.

Sheldon: There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

Leonard: Yeah, yeah, now that's you, obnoxious and insufferable.

Howard *(arriving, in goth gear)*: What's going on, day dwellers?

Penny: Oh, man, did the Kiss Army repeal don't ask, don't tell?

Howard: No. Raj and I are going a goth club in Hollywood to hang with the night people. Anybody want to come along?

Penny: Oh, wow, you're actually going out like that?

Howard: No, no. I'm going out like this. *(Whips off jacket to reveal tattoos up both arms)*

Leonard: Howard, what did you do?

Howard: They're called tattoo sleeves. Look. I bought them online, Raj got a set, too. Fantastic, right? Put them on, have hot sex with some freaky girl with her business pierced, take them off, and I can still be buried in a Jewish cemetery.

Sheldon: You know, I've always wanted to go to a goth nighclub.

Howard: Really?

Sheldon: Bazinga! None of you ever see my practical jokes coming, do you?

Howard: Okay, how about you two? Look, I've got some extra tat sleeves.

Leonard: Why are you carrying extras?

Howard: Well, In case I snag one on someone's nipple ring.

Penny: Uh, yeah, I think we'll pass.

Howard: Oh, is the missus speaking for the couple now?

Leonard: In this case, you bet she is.

Howard *(after Raj whispers)*: Yes, she's pushy and yes, he's whipped, but that's not the expression. Come on, I want to stop at Walgreens and pick up some more eyeliner.

Leonard: They're gonna get beaten up at that club.

Penny: They're gonna get beaten up at Walgreens. Oh, sorry, Sheldon, I almost sat in your spot.

Sheldon: Did you? I didn't notice. Have a chocolate.

Penny: Thank you.

Scene: The goth club.

Raj: I think we're fitting in quite nicely.

Howard: It'd help if you weren't drinking light beer.

Raj: Oh, what's so gothic about vodka and cranberry juice?

Howard: Hello, it looks like blood. Did you even read the Wiki How link I sent you on being goth?

Raj: No, I'm behind on my wiki-reading I'm kind of on a John Grisham kick right now.

Howard: What?

Raj: Well, I finished reading The Pelican Brief and loved it so much, I dived right into The Client. He was a lawyer himself so his novels are accurate as well as entertaining.

Howard: Just remember we are lost boys, children of the night.

Raj: Great. Lost boys, children of the night. Got it. Can you pass the Chex mix, please. Thank you. We are lost boys.

Girl: Good for you.

Howard: I'm actually much more lost than he is.

Girl: Nice ink.

Howard: Thanks. Can we buy you ladies a drink?

Girl: Two light beers.

Raj: Light beers? Well, Wiki-how about that?

Second girl: What's your name?

Howard: I'm Howard.

Raj: Raj.

Girl: I'm Bethany.

Howard: Nice to meet you, Bethany.

Raj: Yes, very nice.

Bethany: Nice to meet you too.

Second girl: I'm Sarah. Not that anyone cares.

Raj: Do either of you ladies enjoy the novels of John Grisham?

Scene: The apartment.

Penny: What's this cartoon called again?

Leonard: Oshikuru: Demon Samurai.

Sheldon: And it's not a cartoon, it's anime.

Penny: Anime. You know, I knew a girl in high school named Anna May. Anna May Fletcher. She was born with one nostril. Then she had this bad nose job and basically wound up with three.   ***Flout: Relation (Facetiousness)***

Sheldon: You're here a lot now.   ***Flout: Relation (Repartee)***

Penny: Oh, am I talking too much? I'm sorry. Zip.

Sheldon: Thank you. Chocolate?

Penny: Yes please. *(Her phone rings)* Oh. Hey, Kim. Yeah, I… *(sees Sheldon looking disapprovingly)* You know what, hold on, let me take this in the hall. *(Sheldon silently offers her another chocolate. She takes it.)* You'll never guess who they got to replace you at work…

Leonard: Okay, I know what you're doing.

Sheldon: Really?

Leonard: Yes, you're using chocolates as positive reinforcement for what you consider correct behaviour.

Sheldon: Very good. Chocolate?

Leonard: No, I don't want any chocolate! Sheldon, you can't train my girlfriend like a lab rat.

Sheldon: Actually, it turns out I can.

Leonard: Well, you shouldn't.

Sheldon: There's just no pleasing you, is there, Leonard? You weren't happy with my previous approach to dealing with her, so I decided to employ operant conditioning techniques, building on the work of Thorndike and B.F. Skinner. By this time next week, I believe I can have her jumping out of a pool, balancing a beach ball on her nose. **Flout: Quality (Exaggeration)**

Leonard: No, this has to stop now.

Sheldon: I'm not suggesting we really make her jump out of a pool. I thought the "bazinga" was implied. I'm just tweaking her personality, sanding off the rough edges if you will.

Leonard: No, you're not sanding Penny.

Sheldon: Are you saying that I'm forbidden from applying a harmless, scientifically valid protocol that will make our lives better?

Leonard: Yes, you're forbidden.

Sheldon *(Squirting him with a water spray)*: Bad Leonard.

Scene: The goth club.

Bethany: So what do you guys do?

Howard: Oh, you know, goth stuff. Goth magazines, goth music.

Raj: Goth food.

Sarah: What's goth food?

Raj: Uh… blackened salmon?

Bethany: No, I meant what do you do for jobs?

Raj: Oh, we're scientists.

Howard: Yeah, you know, the dark sciences.

Bethany: What are the dark sciences

Raj: Well, I am an astrophysicist and a lot of that takes place at night. When there are vampires and miscellaneous undead out and about.

Howard: Oy vay.

Sarah: That sounds really cool.

Howard: Does it? Okay, if you like space stuff, I design components for the international space station. Which is in space. Where, as I'm sure you know, no one can hear you scream.

Raj: So what do you gals do?

Bethany: I work at the Gap.

Howard: Really? How about that? I've been to the Gap.

Raj: Yeah, I've been there as well. I like your tee-shirts with the little pocket.

Sarah: I work there too. Not that anyone cares. You know, this place is boring.

Bethany: Yeah. Why don't we go somewhere else and have some fun?

Howard: Okay.

Raj: Sure, we like fun.

Howard: We are fun people.

Raj: Dark and fun.

Bethany: Come on, I know a place you'll really dig.

Howard: Did you bring the black condoms?

Raj: In my fanny pack.

Howard: Let's go.

Scene: A tattoo parlour. Bethany is getting a tattoo.

Raj: Are you happy now?

Howard: Not particularly.

Scene: The apartment.

Penny *(voice outside door)*: Oh' my God, she didn't!

Leonard: What could she possibly be talking about for so long?

Sheldon: Obviously, waitressing at the Cheesecake Factory is a complex socioeconomic activity, that requires a great deal of analysis and planning. Bazinga! You know, using positive reinforcement techniques, I could train that behaviour out of her in a week.   *Flout: Quality (Irony)*

Leonard: No.

Sheldon: If you let me use negative reinforcement, I can get it done before we go to bed.

Leonard: You're not squirting her in the face with water.

Sheldon: No, of course not. We're talking very mild electric shocks. No tissue damage whatsoever.

Leonard: Forget it.

Sheldon: Oh, come on, you can't tell me that you're not intrigued about the possibility of building a better girlfriend.

Leonard: I'm not. And Penny's qualities, both good and bad, are what make her who she is.

Sheldon: You mean, like that high-pitched, irritating laugh?

Leonard: Yes.

Sheldon You wouldn't prefer a throaty chuckle?

Leonard: You're not changing how Penny laughs.

Sheldon: No, that would be incongruous, I was going to lower the whole voice to a more pleasing register.

Penny *(entering)*: Uh, sorry guys, that girl is *(high pitched)* freaky!

Sheldon: Come again?

Penny *(normal voice)*: Freaky.

Sheldon *(lower voice)*: Freaky?

Penny *(lower voice)*: Yeah, freaky.

Sheldon: Have a chocolate.

Penny: Thank you.

Scene: The tattoo parlour. Howard is laying down, preparing to have a tattoo on his lower back.

Raj: Are you seriously going to deface your body just for the possibility you could have cheap sex with a strange girl you met in a bar?

Howard: Uh, yeah!

Raj: What is your mother going to say?

Howard: She's not going to see it. She takes my temperature orally now.

Bethany: What are you going to get, Howard?

Howard: Well, I can't really decide between a screaming devil, this mean little skull or Kermit the Frog.

Bethany: Kermit the Frog?

Howard: You know *(Kermit voice)* Hi ho, I'm on Howard's butt!

Bethany: Get the mean little skull, and I'll see if I can make him smile.

Howard: Yeah, I'd like the mean little skull, please.

Sarah: What are you going to get, Raj?

Raj: With my luck, hepatitis.   *Infringe: Relation (Misunderstanding)*

Tattooist: Okay, here we go.

Howard: Ow, ow, ow, ow, ow!

Tattooist: That's just rubbing alcohol.

Howard: I know, but it was cold. Ow, ow, ow!

Tattooist: I'm putting on the stencil.

Howard: What comes after the stencil?

Tattooist: This.

Howard: Aaaaaargh! Okay, that's it, no needle, no pain, no tattoo.

Bethany: What's the big deal, you've done this before.

Howard: No, I haven't, look. *(Rips off tattoo sleeves)* I'm sorry, I'm a fraud, he's a fraud.

Raj: We're both frauds.

Howard: Yeah, I think I covered that.

Raj: But I was summing up.

Howard: We're not goth, we're just guys.

Raj: Very, very smart guys.

Bethany: So you were totally scamming us?

Howard: Yes. And I wouldn't blame you if you walked out of here and never wanted to see us again. Unless of course our bold honesty has suddenly made us attractive.

Bethany: I'm leaving.

Sarah: I'm leaving too. Not that anyone cares.

Raj: When we tell this story, let's end it differently.

Howard: What are you thinking? Maybe a big musical number?

Scene: The apartment.

Sheldon: Well, I'm going to make some warm milk and then turn in. I trust if you two are planning in engaging in amorous activites, you'll keep the decibel level to a minimum.

Penny: Of course.

Sheldon: Thank you. *(Throws a chocolate. Penny catches it in her mouth)*

Penny: Mmm, these are so good

Leonard: Unbelievable.

Penny: What?

Leonard: I was just thinking, we should probably turn in too.

Penny: well, my new bed got delivered, if you come over and put it together, you can stay at my place.

Leonard: Really, that's a lot of work, and it's kind of late.

Penny: Yeah, but if we stay there, we won't have to be quiet.

Leonard: Let's go.

Sheldon: Interesting. Sex works even better than chocolate to modify behaviour. I wonder if anyone else has stumbled on to that.

Scene: Raj's car.

Howard: Okay, wait, how about this? We say there were four goth girls, the two girls in the club had two friends.

Raj: I like it, I like it. Did they smell good despite their gothlike nature?

Howard: What's that got to do with the story?

Raj: Engaging my olfactory sense helps make it real for me.

Howard: Fine, they smelled good.

Raj: Oh, they did. Like jasmine and honeysuckle.

Howard: Whatever.

Raj: And then they held hands and did a sexy, demonic hokey-pokey for us.

Howard: No, no. Look, let me say my story all the way through, and then you can say yours, and then we'll pick.

Raj: I'm sorry. Go on.

Howard: Okay. We got tattoos, and then the four girls took us to their place.

Raj: But we don't have tattoos. What if someone asks to see our tattoos?

Howard: We say they're in a very intimate area.

Raj: Oh, we are bad boys, aren't we?

Howard: Right, right, so we go back to their place, and then the six of us end up in a hot tub.

Raj: But we just got tattoos. Wouldn't we be concerned about bacterial infection?

Howard: True. Okay, forget the hot tub. The point is, we each have a ménage with sexy goth girls.

Raj: Wow. What a great night.

Howard: Yeah. Hey, want to try a country bar tomorrow night.

Raj: Yeah, maybe we'll get lucky with some sexy cowgirls.

Howard: Could happen.

Raj: I wonder how they smell.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

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