

The Cooperative Principle and Politeness in Dialogue

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Bachelor Thesis
2014



Tomas Bata University in Zlín
Faculty of Humanities

Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně
Fakulta humanitních studií
Ústav moderních jazyků a literatur
akademický rok: 2013/2014

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Ivona MICHALČÍKOVÁ**
Osobní číslo: **H10808**
Studijní program: **B7310 Filologie**
Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk pro manažerskou praxi**
Forma studia: **prezenční**

Téma práce: **Kooperace a zdvořilost v dialogu**

Zásady pro vypracování:

Prostudování relevantní literatury (Pragmatics, Cooperative Principle, Politeness)
Výběr korpusu pro praktickou část
Teoretická část BP – vysvětlení klíčových pojmů a modelů
Praktická část BP – analýza korpusu, interpretace
Shrnutí a stanovení závěrů

Rozsah bakalářské práce:

Rozsah příloh:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**

Seznam odborné literatury:

Cruse, Alan. 2004. *Meaning in language: An introduction to semantics and pragmatics*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cutting, Joan. 2002. *Pragmatics and discourse: A resource book for students*. London: Routledge.

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Leech, Geoffrey N. 1983. *Principles of pragmatics*. New York: Longman.

Yule, George. 1996. *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **Mgr. Dagmar Machová**
Ústav moderních jazyků a literatur

Datum zadání bakalářské práce: **29. listopadu 2013**

Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce: **2. května 2014**

Ve Zlíně dne 22. ledna 2014


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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá kooperačním principem a zdvořilostí v dialogu. Cílem této práce je analyzovat použití těchto principů v běžné konverzaci.

Práce je rozdělena na teoretickou a praktickou část. Teoretická část popisuje jednotlivé kooperační principy a definuje, jakými způsoby jsou tyto principy porušovány. V druhé části práce je definována zdvořilost a jednotlivé zdvořilostní principy.

Praktická část analyzuje vybraný korpus, ve kterém jsou uvedeny konkrétní dialogy. Analyzované konverzace prezentují četnost použití a porušování jednotlivých kooperačních principů a zdvořilostních principů.

Klíčová slova: Kooperační princip, Paul Grice, zdvořilost, Geoffrey Leech, porušování principů, pozitivní a negativní zdvořilost, face

ABSTRACT

The bachelor thesis deals with the cooperative principle and politeness in dialogue. Its aim is to analyze the usage of those principles in a regular conversation.

The bachelor thesis is divided into the theoretical and the practical part. The theoretical part describes the cooperative principle and defines in which way are those principles violated. In the second part of the thesis is defined politeness and individual politeness principles.

The practical part analyzes the chosen corpus with concrete dialogues. Analyzed conversations present the frequency of following or breaking The Cooperative principles and Politeness principles.

Keywords: The Cooperative principle, Paul Grice, Politeness, Geoffrey Leech, breaking the maxims, positive and negative politeness, face

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor Mgr. Dagmar Machová for her valuable advice and guidance throughout the process of writing my thesis.

Also, I would like to thank my family and my boyfriend for their supportive attitude during my studies.

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INTRODUCTION

A verbal communication is an everyday activity that is considered to be an inherent part of our lives. For many years linguists studied mostly the written form of the language and it was especially grammar and syntax. In the beginning of the twentieth century linguists focused on the spoken language too. It started with the phonetics first, but later on they also focused on the meaning of the conversation and that was the period when pragmatics has developed.

The focus of this bachelor thesis is to introduce the guidelines created by the linguist Paul Grice, who formulated the Cooperative principle, which is a set of rules that are believed to be crucial for an effective communication between people. The second part of the thesis is dedicated to the Politeness principles formulated by Geoffrey Leech. Both the Cooperative principle and the Politeness principle belong to the discipline of pragmatics and they deal with a creation of the effective and polite conversation.

In the practical part of the thesis the chosen corpus is going to be analyzed. It will consist of ten episodes from the first two series of the sitcom *The Big Bang Theory* and concrete dialogues and excerpts will be used to prove, whether the protagonists of this sitcom follow the rules described in the theoretical part. Analyzed dialogues are going to show the frequency of using or breaking those rules in a regular conversation.

I. THEORY

1 COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE

Communication and human interaction in general have always been difficult to study. The conversation between two people or a group of people differs among the cultures and it was a challenge for many researchers to find out how people communicate in certain situations. The cooperative principle nowadays is still an actual topic for many linguists and they formulate their own approaches to that discipline with regard to the different cultures and other aspects that influence the communication between people.

These are for example the linguists Bethan L. Davies, David Lumsden or Neil Murray. The certain information from their work are also included in the theoretical part, but this part of the thesis is based on the original guidelines created by a British philosopher of language Paul Grice who studied human interaction. He formulated the Cooperative principle, which is a set of rules that are believed to be crucial for an effective communication.

1.1 Definition of the Cooperative principle

The cooperative principle (CP) can be generally described as the way how the speaker and the listener cooperate during the dialog with each other. In the clear and meaningful dialogue collaboration of participants is absolutely vital. (Yule 1996, 35) In following example (1) from Yule (1996), I would like to show what kind of problem could appear when the speaker assumes that he has enough information in the particular situation.

(1) There is a woman sitting on a park bench and a large dog lying on the ground in front of the bench. A man comes along and sits down on the bench.

Man: Does your dog bite?

Woman: No.

(The man reaches down to pet the dog. The dog bites the man's hand.)

Man: Ouch! Hey! You said your dog doesn't bite.

Woman: He doesn't. But that's not my dog.

It is interesting to note that in the example above the man assumed that the dog lying in the park belongs to the woman because she said that her dog does not bite. On the other hand she did not say that the dog lying in front of the bench is hers. In other words she provides important information too late. From this point, it is clearly visible that the collaboration in dialogues is really

important, because when the participants of the conversation do not have enough information, such an unpleasant situation can occur.

1.2 Grice's Cooperative Principle

As Cruse (2004, 367) claims, on the assumption that we have prototypical conversation between the speaker and the listener, this kind of a conversation has some purpose or direction and the speaker and the listener cooperate with each other. It is not a random exchange of views related to the topic. The important fact is that all participants in a conversation take an active part and they know what they are talking about. As Grice states in his book "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. One might label this the Cooperative Principle." (1989, 26) Grice defined four main categories of CP called maxims: the Maxim of Quantity, the Maxim of Quality, the Maxim of Relation and the Maxim of Manner.

According to Levinson, who also studied this field further "these maxims specify what participants have to do in order to converse in a maximally efficient, rational, co-operative way: they should speak sincerely, relevantly and clearly, while providing sufficient information." (1983, 102)

Davies summarized the concept of the cooperative principle by using a statement from a dictionary of linguistic terms and concepts, which says that "Grice's principle assumes that people cooperate in the process of communication in order to reduce misunderstanding." (Davies 2007, 2313)

1.2.1 The Maxim of Quantity

The first category of the cooperative principle can be defined as the amount of information to be provided during the conversation. This maxim is divided into two sub-categories:

- (a) "Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purpose of the exchange in which you are engaged.
- (b) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required." (Cruse 2004, 368)

The maxim of quantity describes that certain conversation should be brief, clear and provide only necessary information that relates to the topic. It is not desirable to provide too short answers, because then the speaker does not explain anything. On the other hand if the answer is too long, the listener can be confused because of the large number of superfluous information. The

speaker should skip the unimportant facts and provide only appropriate information. To illustrate it, here is an example:

(2) A: *What do you think about the dinner which I prepared?*

B: (i) *Good.*

(ii) *I like vegetables a lot, so for me it was very good.*

(iii) *Well, I was very hungry today because I did not have a lunch, so I am glad that you offered me such a big dinner. Especially the fried chicken was amazing and also the small carrots...*

Answer (ii) is a normal answer that you expect, but answer (i) is inadequate, because it is too short and there is not much information in it. Answer (iii) is unnecessarily long and is contrary to the second part of the maxim of quantity.

1.2.2 The Maxim of Quality

The second maxim is connected with the content of information exchanged between the speaker and the listener. In general, according to this maxim you should tell the truth and provide only such information, which you believe in. (Cutting 2002, 35) The maxim of quality is also divided into two sub-categories:

(a) "Do not say what you believe to be false.

(b) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence." (Cruse 2004, 367)

It is advisable to express how much the speaker knows about the discussed topic. The important fact is that the speaker is not telling unsupported statements. According to Yule (1996, 38), the usage of phrases such as: *As far as I know, I may be mistaken, but I thought, I'm not sure if it is right, but I heard, I guess* denotes to what extent is the speaker accurate about the information he provides. The listener can recognize if the information is based on the valid sources or just on the experience of the speaker. The typical dialog may look like:

(3) A: *I will ask John for advice. What do you think?*

B: *As far as I know, John is a diligent student and very educated person, so it may help you.*

It is clear that person B is not sure if John is really clever enough to help person A, so he used the phrase "as far as I know" and "may help you" to protect himself from accusing of lying.

1.2.3 The Maxim of Relation

The third category of CP called the maxim of relation is defined very simply: “Be relevant.” (Cruse 2004, 368) With regard to this principle “speakers are assumed to be saying something that is relevant to what has been said before.” (Cutting 2002, 35) It is illustrated in example (4).

(4) A: *How do you like your steak cooked?*

B: *Medium rare, please.*

C: **I am hungry.*

The person B provided an appropriate answer for the previous statement of the person A, because they are probably in the restaurant and it is clear that they are talking about the food. The irrelevant answer in this particular conversation could be for example the answer of the person C, which is not related to the first question.

It is important to note that there are also some specific expressions that can help the listener to recognize, that the speaker is trying to change the topic of the dialogue or just to turn the purpose of the conversation by using non-relevant comments such as: *Oh, by the way, Anyway* and similar ones. When the listener hears these expressions during the conversation, it may signal that the speaker wants to change the subject of the conversation or just completely stop talking about the previous topic. (Yule 1996, 38)

According to Levinson (1983, 107) sometimes it can be really difficult to assess whether the statements of participants of the conversation are relevant or not. The relevance in the conversation is actually based on the fact that both the speaker and the listener know the background information.

1.2.4 The Maxim of Manner

According to Grice, the maxim of manner “is understood as relating not (like the previous categories) to what is said but, rather, to how what is said is to be said, I include supermaxim - “Be perspicuous”.” (1989, 27) From the definition it is obvious that in previous categories the content of the statement was almost the most important aspect, but in this case, it is more important in which way is the statement is presented by the speaker to the listener. The maxim of manner consists of four sub-categories:

- (a) “Avoid obscurity of expression.
- (b) Avoid ambiguity.

(c) Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).

(d) Be orderly.” (Grice 1989, 27)

It is generally considered that you should use words or statements which are clear for the listener and do not have many meanings, so the listener is not confused. It is also advisable to use shorter and accurate sentences rather than long and complicated ones, which can be difficult to understand. The maxim of manner is considered to be less important than the previous maxims. (Leech 1983, 100)

In example (5) and (6) from Levinson (1983, 108) the speaker describes one action in two ways. In the first case (5) the speaker provides an ordinary statement, which is clear for the listener. On the other hand, in example (6) is the same action described particularly step by step and it seems to be a confusing and too complicated description for the listener.

(5) *Open the door.*

(6) *Walk up to the door, turn the door handle clockwise as far as it will go, and then pull gently towards you.*

In example (7) from Levinson (1983, 108) is shown another situation when the speaker does not follow the maxim of manner properly, more precisely the fourth sub-category of the maxim of manner “be orderly” is not observed here.

(7) (i) *The lone ranger rode into the sunset and jumped on his horse.*

(ii) *The lone ranger jumped on his horse and rode into the sunset.*

In the sentence (i), the order of the situations is changed and the whole sentence has a confusing meaning. The listener has to be more concentrated so he can understand the information, which is provided by the speaker. On the other hand, in the sentence (ii) the speaker follows the sub-maxim of manner “be orderly” and the whole sentence is clear.

Ron White, who explored the cooperative principle across the cultures, claims in his article that according to differences among the cultures it will be useful to add a fifth maxim: “In your contribution, take into account anything you know or can predict about the interlocutor’s communication expectations.” (White 2001, 66)

Generally it can be said, that when the participants of the conversation observe the cooperative principle it could help them with the effective exchange of information and they will create a perfect dialogue. But as Levinson argues “the view may describe a philosopher’s paradise, but no one actually speaks like that the whole time.” (1983, 102) It is worth mentioning,

that these rules are not followed quite often and in the regular conversation it is almost impossible to observe all of those maxims.

Moreover Murray states “crucially though, the way in which we uphold and flout these universal maxims, and the communicative effects achieved, will vary from culture to culture, language to language.” (Murray 2010, 297)

1.3 Flouting and Violating the Cooperative Principle

Bearing in mind the previous points, sometimes the participants of the conversation may fail to fulfil one of the rules of the cooperative principle that were described before. There are two basic ways of non-observance those maxims. The first one is violating the cooperative principle, which means that you do not follow the maxims on purpose with the intention to deceive the listener and “then communication degenerates into lying, obfuscation, or simply breaks down altogether.” (Cook 1990, 31) While the second one called flouting the cooperative principle is the breaking of the rules by the speaker, but with the assumption that the listener can recognize it. (Cutting 2002, 37)

1.3.1 Flouting the maxims

This part focuses on the description of flouting the cooperative principle. Based on what was said before, flouting can be generally seen as a non-observance of the maxims in order to avoid an unpleasant situation or just say negative information in neutral or positive way, but still with the assumption that the listener can recognize it. To illustrate it, I will provide an example.

(8) *The person B is applying for a job in the company. He is not suitable for the position. The person A, who currently works in the company, does not want to tell person B, that he is not good enough for the job he applied for. The person A does not want to offend person B.*

A: I think that you should try it in a different company maybe it will be better for you.

B: Oh, I understand what you mean. Thank you for your time.

In this situation, the person A is flouting the maxim of quality, because he is not saying what is on his mind. But with regards to the fact that the person B is aware that he really does not have enough knowledge or experience, it is not considered as lying. The person B can recognize the message which is hidden behind his words. It is important to note, that if the speaker wants to

provide some information this way, he should consider if he knows the listener good enough. Because if he does not, the speaker cannot recognize whether the listener understands that his answer could have a hidden message and their conversation can degenerate into lying. (Cutting 2002, 36)

The first category is flouting the maxim of quantity. When the speaker breaks this maxim, he gives too much or very little information. As you can see in example (9), mother asked her daughter what did she do last night and she starts to prepare a long list of detailed descriptions what she was doing every single minute, because her mother wants to know all the details. It seems to be a completely inappropriate reaction, because her daughter could just simply say, that she was watching television. (Cruse 2004, 373) (Cutting 2002, 37)

(9) *Mother: What did you do last night?*

Daughter: First of all, I wrote a message to my friend John, because I wanted to go out with him, but John was not at home, so I tried to contact my friend Jane. She did not answer me, because she was already at the cinema with her boyfriend, so I finally stayed at home and watched the television.

Flouting the maxim of quality could be connected with several elements. Firstly, the speaker does not really say, what is in his mind as illustrated in an example (8), because he does not want to insult the listener. The other way of flouting the maxim is using a hyperbole. The hyperbole is generally defined as an exaggeration.

(10) *I have a million things to do*

(11) *He is older than the hills.*

When you consider the content of examples (10) and (11) the speaker does not really mean that he has a list with a million tasks to do or that his friend is a thousand years old. It is clear that these statements are not literal and they are just used to emphasise the current situation. They are also usually used as a humour. (Cutting 2002, 37) A very similar concept for flouting the maxim of quality is using a metaphor.

(12) *You are the light in my life.*

(13) *He has a heart of gold.*

In example (12) and (13) the speaker used a metaphor to emphasise a concrete idea. When the speaker uses any of those sentences, it should be clear for the listener, that those are not literally statements.

The last two elements, used for flouting the maxim of quality are irony and sarcasm. “Irony is an apparently friendly way of being offensive...” (Cutting 2002, 37) The speaker expresses his opinion by using an opposite meaning of what he has said.

(14) *If only you knew how much I love being woken up at 4 am by a fire alarm.*

When you look at example (14) it is clear, that the person is not really excited of getting up at 4 am. On the other hand, sarcasm is a form of irony, where the speaker has an intention to insult the listener. That is the reason why it is also in the category of flouting the maxim of quality.

(15) *This is a lovely undercooked egg you´ve given me here, as usual. Yum!*

In example (15) from Cutting (2002, 38) it is obvious that the statement here is not the truth, actually the speaker is trying to point out to the fact that he is not satisfied with the breakfast he has received.

It might be said that most people generally recognize these figures of speech and understand their function. But the speaker has to consider that there can be exceptions, for example foreigners can have troubles with interpretation of some phrases and especially irony and sarcasm may cause them difficulties. Also children can be confused when they hear sentence like in example (16). To avoid misleading information, the speaker should know as much as possible about the listener. (Cook 1990, 31)

(16) *It is raining cats and dogs.*

Flouting the relation is such a situation, when the speaker uses apparently irrelevant answer, but he expects that the listener can recognize the message within the dialogue. In example (17) it is obvious that the person B does not want to directly answer the question, because he does not like John, so he provided an alternative answer. The hidden message here is that person B does not like John.

(17) *A: What do you think about John?*

B: Well, I really like his wife.

Similar situation is illustrated in example (18). There are two statements where the second one seems to be an irrelevant answer for the first one. Because the man is talking about the food and the woman is talking about behaviour. In fact, the woman is trying to point out the fact that the man´s behaviour is inappropriate and he could appreciate her effort to prepare a good dinner for him.

(18) *Man: I expected a better dinner.*

Woman: I expected a better behaviour.

Flouting the maxim of manner is characterized as using unnecessarily long sentences with the complicated or difficult words that make the sentence ambiguous. Usually, it is done on purpose, for example because the speaker wants to exclude third party. (Cutting 2002, 39)

In example (19) from Cutting (2002, 39) is described a short conversation between husband and wife. The husband uses vague words such as “*some of that funny white stuff*” and “*somebody*”, because he wants to buy an ice-cream for his little daughter and he does not want to say it in front of her, because he does not want to spoil the surprise.

(19) *Wife: Where are you off to?*

*Husband: I was thinking of going out to get some of that funny white stuff
for somebody.*

Wife: OK, but don't be long – dinner's nearly ready.

1.3.2 Violating the maxims

As noted before, violating the cooperative principle means, that the speaker does not follow the maxims on purpose with the intention to deceive the listener. In this situation the speaker provides wrong, irrelevant or ambiguous information and the listener is not able to cooperate with the speaker properly, because he does not know all necessary information.

When the speaker violates the maxim of quantity it means that he provides very little information on purpose, because he wants to confuse the listener for some reason. The speaker only tells part of the information. (Cutting 2002, 40) The violation of the maxim of quantity was shown in example (1). I will use this example again in (20) to illustrate it. There was described a situation where the man was talking to the woman in the park about the dog lying in front of the bench. He asked her if her dog bites and she replied that her dog does not bite. The woman knew that the man was talking about the dog lying in front of her, but she did not tell him, that it is not her dog. It means that she did not tell him everything, but only a part of the information and it led to an unpleasant accident, because the strange dog bit the man.

(20) *There is a woman sitting on a park bench and a large dog lying on the
ground in front of the bench. A man comes along and sits down on the
bench.*

Man: Does your dog bite?

Woman: No.

(The man reaches down to pet the dog. The dog bites the man's hand.)

Man: Ouch! Hey! You said your dog doesn't bite.

Woman: He doesn't. But that's not my dog.

What is concern the violating the maxim of quality, the quality is violated when the speaker does not tell the truth and the listener is not aware of that. As illustrated in example (21) the owner of the company asked question about the innovations in the firm and his employee told him that they do not need to innovate their system instead of telling the truth, because he knew that they need it.

(21) *A: Do we need to invest in new technologies?*

B: No, we are doing well.

It is important to note that violating of the maxim of quality is acceptable in some situations. It is connected for example with the situation, when your dog passed away and you do not want to hurt your children, so you tell them that your dog has gone to live elsewhere. This is called a white lie or in other words a lie with a good intention. (Cutting 2002, 40)

Turning to the violation of the maxim of relation, in example (22) from Cutting (2002, 40) a wife did not provide relevant answer to the question of her husband. She has indicated that she does not want to talk about the money and she is trying to distract her husband by starting to talk about the plans for their evening instead of the price of her new dress. She is intentionally changing the topic of their conversation and thus she is violating the maxim of relation.

(22) *Husband: How much did that new dress cost, darling?*

Wife: I know darling, but let's go out tonight. Where would you like to go?

A similar situation can be illustrated in the example from Cutting (2002, 40) for the violation of the maxim of manner. In this conversation (23) a wife intentionally did not answer what was the exact price of her new dress, but instead of it, she provided a vague and long answer to avoid the argument with her husband. She deliberately violated the maxim of manner by not providing a clear answer to her husband.

(23) *Husband: How much did that new dress cost, darling?*

Wife: A tiny fraction of my salary, thought probably a bigger fraction of the salary of the woman that sold it to me.

1.3.3 Other forms of non-observance the maxims

It is necessary here to mention that there are also two other ways how the speaker can break the cooperative principle. In the first case, the speaker may be faced by the clash, which means, that he is not able to provide a proper answer in accordance with the rules of the cooperative principle. In other words, the speaker cannot observe one maxim without breaking the other one. When you consider the rules for the maxim of quantity, which says: “make your contribution as informative as is required”, you cannot properly observe it in some cases without breaking the maxim of quality, which says: “do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence”. (Grice 1989, 30) In example (24) is described the situation, where the person A wants to know the exact address of his friend John, but the person B does not know all the necessary information, so he is not as specific as he should be. The speaker B cannot provide more accurate information to follow the maxim of quantity without breaking the maxim of quality.

(24) A: *Where does John live?*

B: *He lives in Prague.*

The second way of breaking the cooperative principle is opting out of the maxim. In this case the speaker is not able to cooperate in a dialogue. He cannot or he does not want to follow the rules in the way that he is expected to answer for some important legal or ethical reasons. (Grice 1989, 30) As an example for this type of non-observance the cooperative principle could be a conversation with a priest refusing to provide information given in confidence or the doctor refusing to provide information about his patient. (Cutting 2002, 41)

According to Lumsden “cases of opting out, such as the ‘no comment’ situation, tend to be cases where the speaker and audience have conflicting interests.” (2008, 1904) As an example he describes the situation when a journalist starts to ask a politician many questions and he does not want to reply in order to keep his privacy, so his answer is just simply ‘no comment’. (Lumsden 2008, 1903)

2 POLITENESS

One of the most significant aspects connected with politeness is the way how the speaker reacts in the particular situation. It is important to realize, that politeness in pragmatics is not about the way how the speaker behaves or what kind of gestures are used, but it is connected with the application of particular linguistic expressions. In other words the most crucial point is what kind of effect the speaker creates during the conversation. (Cutting 2002, 45)

The entire discipline of politeness has many approaches and several linguists studied and formulated their own concepts of politeness, for example Robin T. Lakoff, Geoffrey Leech, Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson. This part of the thesis aims to describe the Politeness Principle formulated by an English linguist Geoffrey Leech.

2.1 Defining Politeness

The key aspect of the entire discipline of politeness is the concept of social distance and closeness between the participants of the dialogue. In many cases a debate between the speaker and the listener is influenced by their social relationship. The listener usually draws the attention to not only what is said, but also how it is said. The effect created by the speaker evokes a certain impact in the level of politeness to the listener. (Yule 1996, 59)

Yule also claims “it is possible to treat politeness as a fixed concept, as in the idea of ‘polite social behaviour’, or etiquette within a culture.” (1996, 60) It might be said that in every culture, there is a set of standards or principles of behaviour, which are considered to be polite in particular communications. These standards are usually known within the society. (Yule 1996, 59) On the other hand every person could have a quite different attitude to the level of politeness. What is considered polite for the one speaker could be considered as impolite for the other one. Watts says that “in addition to having our own personal assessments of what constitutes polite behaviour, we also have a tendency to opine on and thereby evaluate the behaviour of others, and sometimes – although much more rarely than might generally be expected -- we classify that behaviour (or aspects of it) as ‘polite’ or ‘impolite’.” (2003, 2)

2.1.1 The notion of “face”

According to Watts “the notion of ‘face’ has been in use as a metaphor for individual qualities and/or abstract entities such as honour, respect, esteem, the self, etc. for a very long time.” (2003, 119) In general, this specific term describes the image of a person and the reactions

that it evokes within the society. The term “face” actually refers to the certain reputation or prestige created by the speaker.

The term politeness is in this sense connected with the knowledge of another person’s face. As already mentioned earlier, politeness is the concept based, besides other factors, on social distance and closeness between the participants of the conversation. The speaker should differentiate whether he is talking to a close friend or for example to his teacher. (Yule 1996, 60) As illustrated in example (25) from Yule (1996, 60), when the speaker is talking with someone, who is not socially close to him, he apparently uses a different language and he provides a certain level of solidarity to a person. On the other hand in example (26), the speaker is talking in a very friendly way, which signals, that he might have a close relationship to a person.

(25) *Excuse me, Mr Buckingham, but can I talk to you for a minute?*

(26) *Hey, Bucky, got a minute?*

Yule also mentioned “the participants in an interaction often have to determine, as they speak, the relative social distance between them, and hence their ‘face wants’.” (1996, 61) It means that people usually act in a common conversation with regards to the fact that they want to have a certain reputation and they want to create a specific impression. Sometimes the speaker might have been far more threatening in a way he speaks to another person. When the speaker behaves this way, it is called a face threatening act. In contrast, in an attempt to make this threat much weaker, the speaker could say something that may redress the possible threat to a more acceptable statement. Such an action is called a face saving act. (Yule 1996, 61) To be more specific, I will illustrate it in example (27) from Yule (1996, 61). An older couple of people are trying to sleep, but their neighbour has a party. The man is really angry, because he is tired and he suggests a face threatening act. On the other hand, his wife is trying to see the whole situation from a different perspective and she proposes a face saving act.

(27) *Him: I’m going to tell him to stop that awful noise right now!*

Her: Perhaps you could just ask him if he is going to stop soon because it’s getting a bit late and people need to get to sleep.

Generally, it is believed to be an appropriate to follow and respect the face wants of other people around us, but every individual has a different approach in particular situations and it can lead to some unpleasant conflicts. (Yule 1996, 61)

2.1.2 Positive and Negative Politeness

Cutting claims, that when the speaker is involved in a particular conversation he has to differentiate between two types of face wants. The first type is called the negative face. The speaker talking to a person with negative face has to respect that this person has a specific behaviour, which is defined as a “need to be independent, have freedom of action and, not to be imposed by others.” (Cutting 2002, 45) It is important to realize that negative face does not mean that the hearer behaves in a bad way or he is impolite, it is just a type of the approach in a conversation. When the speaker talks to a person with a negative face, this person has a tendency to apologise for the interruptions, hesitates or he reacts in a way that he stresses how important the other’s time is, he cares about the speaker and he somehow offers the possibility for the speaker to answer no in a question, this approach is called negative politeness. (Yule 1996, 62) In example (29) from Cruse (2004, 377) is shown a typical statement, which defines negative politeness. Instead of using a common expression as in example (28), the speaker is trying to soften the request by using a modal verb and at the same time he offers the opportunity to answer negatively.

(28) *Help me to move this piano.*

(29) *You couldn’t possibly give me a hand with this piano, could you?*

The second type of face wants is called positive face. In this case the speaker communicates with the person who needs to be seen as a part of a certain community and such a person “need to be accepted, even liked, by others, to be treated as a member of the same group, and to know that his or her wants are shared by others.” (Yule 1996, 62) A person with positive face has a tendency to show the closeness to the people around, stresses that he has a same or similar goal as the speaker and he treats the other people in a very positive way. This kind of approach is called positive politeness. (Cutting 2002, 48) In example (30) from Cutting (2002, 48) is demonstrated that the person with a positive face reacts really positively, he takes into account the interests of the hearer, uses personal information by which he appeals to a friendship and he is trying to achieve a positive response. He also wants be optimistic and avoid a rejection.

(30) *I know you hate parties, Jen, but come anyway. We’ll all be there, and it’ll be cool seeing if Ally is with Andrea! Come on – get a life!*

2.2 Leech's Politeness Principle

A variety of methods and approaches were formulated to assess and describe politeness. Each has its advantages and drawbacks. This part of the theses aims to describe the concept of the Politeness Principle formulated by Geoffrey Leech who studied an efficient interaction in a level of politeness in a conversation. Generally, it is difficult to present politeness in a simple definition, because as Leech claims the whole concept of politeness is highly culturally influenced. That is the reason why he introduced two terms – relative and absolute politeness. Relative politeness is seen as certain standards for a group of people who consider particular behaviour, expressions or norms acceptable within a community. Leech admits that it is really difficult to contrast these norms regarding polite behaviour among different cultures. (1983, 84) Absolute politeness is then seen as a set of particular scales with a negative and a positive pole. In this model of absolute politeness Leech defines that certain illocutions are strictly polite and others are strictly impolite. (1983, 83)

As noted before, politeness is connected with the expressions used by the speaker during the conversation and not with particular beliefs which are seen as polite. Leech formulated a pragmatic principle which deals, similarly as the cooperative principle, with the level of politeness in a conversation. (Cruse 2004, 376)

The Politeness Principle (PP) also consists of several maxims which are further divided and described in particular categories. Leech provides general formulation of politeness principle as: “Minimize (other things being equal) the expression of impolite beliefs”, and there is a corresponding positive version ‘Maximize (other things being equal) the expression of polite beliefs.’ (Leech 1983, 81)

Leech formulated six following maxims: The Tact Maxim, The Generosity Maxim, The Approbation Maxim, The Modesty Maxim, The Agreement Maxim and The Sympathy Maxim. The first and the second maxim as well as the third and the fourth maxim create a potential pair. (Cutting 2002, 49)

2.2.1 The Tact Maxim

According to Leech, the tact maxim is “the most important kind of politeness in English-speaking society.” (1983, 107) This maxim predominantly focuses on the hearer and consists of two sub-maxims:

- (a) "Minimize cost to the hearer.
- (b) Maximize benefit to the hearer." (Cruse 2004, 377)

The tact maxim operates on a cost-benefit scale which consists of certain actions or commands which are ordered on this scale from the more polite one, which is seen as a benefit for the hearer, to the less polite one, which is considered as a cost to the hearer. (Leech 1983, 107) To be more specific, in a following example (32) from Leech (1983, 107) is shown a list of actions arranged from the greatest cost to the hearer, which seems to be less polite, to the benefit to the hearer, which is considered to be more polite.

- (32) *Peel these potatoes.*
- Hand me the newspaper.*
- Sit down.*
- Look at that.*
- Enjoy your holiday.*
- Have another sandwich.*

Cruse claims that if the speaker wants to force the hearer to do something which means a cost to him, as a polite speaker, he should use a statement, which provide the hearer the opportunity to refuse it and it may lead to the fact that a cost to a hearer will be minimized. (2004, 378) In following examples from Cruse (2004, 378) are shown possible suggestions that may be provided by the speaker. In sentence (33) there is a direct command which appears to be rather impolite. On the other hand in examples (34) and (35) the speaker uses modal verbs and thus he softens those requests. At the same time he indirectly offers the opportunity for the hearer to say no and minimize a cost to him.

- (33) *Wash the dishes!*
- (34) *Could you wash the dishes?*
- (35) *I was wondering if you could possibly wash the dishes.*

On the other hand, if the speaker wants to maximize a benefit to the hearer he should use an opposite strategy. Generally it means that the speaker will not provide the opportunity for the hearer to refuse. In example (36) from Leech (1983, 109) the person A provides a direct statement which should maximize a benefit to the hearer. Whereas the person B uses a modal verb and the whole sentence can raise the question whether the sandwich is still good or that the sandwich is already stale.

(36) A: *Have another sandwich.*

B: *Would you mind having another sandwich?*

Similar situation is illustrated in example (37) from Cruse (2004, 378). For the first note, the person A seems to be more polite than the person B, but looking closer to the meaning of those sentences, it is obvious that the speaker A is actually quite offensive because he signals that the hearer is the type of person who is still dissatisfied and depressed.

(37) A: *I was wondering if you could possibly enjoy your holiday.*

B: *Enjoy your holiday!*

2.2.2 The Generosity Maxim

The generosity maxim is in general related to the tact maxim, but it focuses on the speaker. Leech defines the generosity maxim in two sub-categories:

(a) “Minimize benefit to self.

(b) Maximize cost to self.” (Leech 1983, 132)

This maxim operates on the same basis as the tact maxim, but with the opposite effects. In fact if the speaker wants to be polite he should maximize a cost to self and at the same time maximize a benefit to the hearer. (Cruse 2004, 378) In example (38) and (39) from Leech (1983, 133) are described two situations. In both examples the statements of the person B is considered as polite, because it maximizes a cost to the speaker and at the same time maximizes a benefit to the hearer. In both examples (38) and (39) the person A is impolite, because he reverses the maxims and he implies a cost to the hearer and a benefit to the speaker.

(38) A: *You can lend me your car. (impolite)*

B: *I can lend you my car.*

(39) A: *We must come and have dinner with you. (impolite)*

B: *You must come and have dinner with us.*

2.2.3 The Approbation Maxim

Leech defines the approbation maxim as “avoid saying unpleasant things about others, and more particularly, about *h* (hearer).” (1983, 135) This maxim is thus seen as presenting of the speaker’s specific views (positive or negative) focused on the hearer. Leech also divided this maxim into two sub-maxims:

- (a) “Minimize dispraise of other.
- (b) Maximize praise of other.” (Leech 1983, 135)

The crucial point in this concept is that the speaker should reduce the negative or critical comments as much as possible and at the same time highlight the positive ones. This rule is illustrated in following examples (40) and (41) from Cruse (2004, 379). In examples (40) and (41) are described situations where the speaker does not follow the main ideas of the approbation maxim. The speaker directly answers the question regardless to the impact on the hearer. These answers are marked with a star, because they are contrary to the approbation maxim. To be polite, the speaker should minimize negative and critical comments and the appropriate answer is presented in the following sentences.

- (40) A: *Do you like my new dress?*
B: **No.*
B: *Well, yes, but it's not my favourite.*
- (41) A: *Oh! I've been so thoughtless.*
B: ** Yes, haven't you?*
B: *Not at all – think nothing of it.*

2.2.4 The Modesty Maxim

The name of this maxim indicates that the modesty maxim is connected with the modesty of the speaker and his attitude. This maxim is related to the approbation maxim, but with the opposite effects. The modesty maxim focuses on the speaker. Leech defines this maxim as:

- (a) “Minimize praise of self
- (b) Maximize dispraise of self.” (Leech 1983, 136)

The first sub-maxim determines that if the speaker wants to be polite he should eliminate self praise. It is well described in example (42) from Cruse (2004, 379). The first response is marked with a star, because the speaker violated the modesty maxim. In the second answer he follows the rules of this maxim and thus he is more polite.

- (42) A: *You did brilliantly!*
B: **Yes, didn't I?*
B: *Well, I thought I didn't do too badly.*

The second sub-maxim says that the speaker should dispraise himself in front of other people. Cutting points out that people follow this maxim quite often in special conferences when they want to ask a question and they use expressions like in examples (43), (44) and (45). (Cutting 2002, 50)

(43) *A very obvious question from a non-specialist...*

(44) *There is an idiot question I want to ask you...*

(45) *Um, I don't know much about this area but I think that...*

2.2.5 The Agreement Maxim

The agreement maxim is seen as a less important one, but still has a practical function for the whole concept of the politeness principle. This maxim is also based on two basic sub-maxims:

(a) "Minimize disagreement between self and other.

(b) Maximize agreement between self and other." (Leech 1983, 132)

This principle is based on the idea that the participants of the conversation should avoid or eliminate a disagreement as much as possible and try to seek an agreement. Leech says that sometimes it is more preferable to disagree with the hearer only partially rather than disagree with the whole statement. (1983, 138)

As illustrated in examples (46) and (47) from Cruse (2004, 380) and Leech (1983, 138) respectively, the speaker in example (46) tries to follow the agreement maxim and partially disagree with the hearer. The answer with the complete disagreement is marked with the star, because this answer is considered to be impolite. A similar situation is in example (47), where the speaker does not respect the rules of the agreement maxim and thus he is completely impolite.

(46) *A: She should be sacked immediately. We can't tolerate unpunctuality.*

*B: *I disagree.*

B: I agree with the general principle, but in this case there are mitigating circumstances.

(47) *A: It was an interesting exhibition, wasn't it?*

*B: *No, it was very uninteresting.*

2.2.6 The Sympathy Maxim

The last maxim, as the name suggests, is connected with the level of sympathy between the speaker and the hearer. Leech defines this principle in following two sub-maxims:

- (a) “Minimize antipathy between self and other.
- (b) Maximize sympathy between self and other.” (Leech 1983, 132)

Leech claims that “congratulations and condolences are courteous speech acts, even though condolences express beliefs which are negative with regard to the hearer.” (1983, 138) Leech (1936, 138) provides concrete example (49) to show that if the speaker wants to be polite in a way he expresses some negative incident that happened to the hearer, he should not talk about the propositional context X. In the following statements the person B is completely impolite and the answer of the person C appears to be much more polite than the answer of the person A, because the person C does not express the negative proposition in the sentence.

- (48) *A: I'm terribly sorry to hear that your cat died.*
- B: *I'm terribly pleased to hear that your cat died.*
- C: I'm terribly sorry to hear about your cat.*

II. ANALYSIS

3 ANALYSIS OF THE DIALOGUES

This part of the thesis aims to show how the Cooperative principle and the Politeness principle are presented in the TV sitcom *The Big Bang Theory*, which is the corpus chosen for the analysis.

The corpus which will be analysed contains excerpts and dialogues selected from ten episodes from the first two series of the sitcom. In every section of this analysis the certain excerpt will be used to prove whether the participants of the dialogue in *The Big Bang Theory* follow the guidelines which are described in the theoretical part of the thesis.

The structure of the analysis is divided into two main chapters. The first chapter is focused on the Cooperative principle and the second part is dedicated to the Politeness principles. In each section there are three subchapters and every chapter correspond with one main protagonist of the sitcom *The Big Bang Theory*.

3.1 The Corpus

The corpus chosen for the analysis in this bachelor thesis is the TV sitcom *The Big Bang Theory*. The whole story is set in Pasadena, California. There are five main protagonists: Sheldon Cooper, Leonard Hoofstader, Rajesh Koothrappali, Howard Wolowitz and Penny.

Sheldon and Leonard are high-IQ scientists, working at the university as physicists. They are brilliant in science and experiments, but they have troubles with social interaction with other people, especially women. They love playing computer games, going to the comic book store and creating many experiments with their friends and co-workers, Howard Wolowitz and Rajesh Koothrappali.

In contrast, the other main protagonist is Penny, their street-smart neighbour, who works as a waitress and her biggest dream is to become an actress. From the first time Leonard saw her, he fell in love with her. During the episodes, they experience many situations in which Penny proves them how little they know about the social life and that common sense and social skills are necessary for life.

The analysis will be focused on three main protagonists Sheldon Cooper, Leonard Hoofstader and Penny.

3.2 The Cooperative principle

As mentioned in the theoretical part, to participate in an ideal conversation participants should follow all the cooperative principles at once – quantity, quality, relation and manner. The analyzed excerpts from the sitcom *The Big Bang Theory* proved that in a regular conversation it is almost impossible to follow all those rules.

Each character in the sitcom has a different way how to interact with other people. From analyzed dialogs it is clear, that all main protagonists break the rules of the cooperative principle with different frequency.

3.2.1 Leonard Hoofstader

Leonard appeared to have the biggest frequency breaking the cooperative principle. From the analyzed corpus the results showed that he flouted the cooperative principle in 55 situations and he violated the cooperative principle 23 times. Mostly it was because of the fact that he wanted to be polite, especially in conversation with Penny, he wanted to make an impression and save his face. To illustrate it, I will provide several examples.

In example (49) is described a scene, where Leonard and Sheldon are supposed to bring up a big package with furniture for their neighbour Penny. The whole package is really heavy and they are moving it through the three floors to her apartment. When they finally deliver the package into her apartment Penny appears there and she asks them if it was hard to bring it into her place.

(49) *Leonard: Oh, hey Penny, this just arrived, we just brought this up, just now.*

Penny: Great. Was it hard getting it up the stairs?

Sheldon: (sucks in breath)

Leonard: No.

Sheldon: No?

Leonard: No! (S01E02)

In this example, Leonard violates the maxim of quality by saying that it was not hard to bring the heavy package with furniture into her apartment, despite the fact that he knows it was really hard for both of them. It means that he is deliberately lying to Penny in order to be polite and also to save his face.

In example (50) is shown an excerpt from the very first episode, when Penny moves into her new apartment. Leonard and Sheldon welcome her in the building and Leonard really likes her, so he wants to invite her for a dinner into his apartment.

(50) *Penny: Hi.*

Leonard: Anyway um. We brought home Indian food. And, um. I know that moving can be stressful, and I find that when I'm undergoing stress, that good food and company can have a comforting effect. Also, curry is a natural laxative, and I don't have to tell you that, uh, a clean colon is just one less thing to worry about.

Sheldon: Leonard, I'm not the expert here but I believe in the context of a lunch invitation, you might want to skip the reference to bowel movements.

Penny: Oh, you're inviting me over to eat?

Leonard: Uh, yes. (S01E01)

When he finally decided to ask her if she wants to have a dinner with them, he was very nervous, because he wanted to be polite and impress her so he started to talk about non relevant information. Leonard flouted the maxim of relevance here, because he did not provide a clear invitation, but he expected that Penny will understand his proposal.

In another example (51) is described the situation when Penny and Leonard had an argument with each other and now Leonard wants to apologise to Penny.

(51) *Penny: Hi.*

Leonard: Oh.

Penny: What's going on?

Leonard: Um, here's the thing. (Reads from note.) Penny. Just as Oppenheimer came to regret his contributions to the first atomic bomb, so too I regret my participation in what was, at the very least, an error in judgement. The hallmark of the great human experiment is the willingness to recognise one's mistakes. Some mistakes, such as Madame Curie's discovery of Radium turned out to have great scientific potential even though she would later

die a slow, painful death from radiation poisoning. Another example, from the field of ebola research....(S01E02)

In (51), Leonard flouted the maxim of manner, because he wanted to apologise to Penny, but instead of regular excuse, he created a long list with many information. He probably did it, because he wanted to be polite and respectful and at the same time he had difficulties with finding the right words to express his attitude to the controversial situation which happened to them.

3.2.2 Sheldon Cooper

The maxim of quantity appears to be violated quite often by one of the main characters Sheldon Cooper. He has a tendency to explain every topic to a single detail. More precisely he breaks the sub-maxim which says that the statement made by the speaker should not be too long, because the listener can be confused due to the large number of superfluous information. He flouted the maxim of quantity 38 times. Mostly it was because he wanted to make his point. Breaking the maxim of quantity caused that Sheldon Cooper also flouted the maxim of manner, because his long statements were confusing for other participants in conversation. He flouted the maxim of manner 27 times.

In example (49) is described the scene where four friends – Sheldon, Leonard, Howard and Raj are sitting in the living room and they are having dinner. Raj asks for chopsticks and Sheldon provides him with a long monologue in which he starts to explain the history of Thailand and the customs concerning the food as the reason why he does not need them.

(52) *Raj: Are there any chopsticks?*

Sheldon: You don't need chopsticks, this is Thai food.

Leonard: Here we go.

Sheldon: Thailand has had the fork since the latter half of the nineteenth century. Interestingly they don't actually put the fork in their mouth they use it to put the food on a spoon which then goes into their mouth. (S01E02)

In other example (53) is described the situation where Penny, Leonard and Sheldon were sitting in the living room and talking. Penny sits on the sofa, but Sheldon does not like it. He starts to explain her to a single detail, why he needs to sit there.

(53) *Penny: Uh, do you guys mind if I start?*

Sheldon: Um Penny, that 's where I sit.

Penny: So, sit next to me.

Sheldon: No, I sit there.

Penny: What 's the difference?

Sheldon: What 's the difference?

Leonard: Here we go.

Sheldon: In the winter that seat is close enough to the radiator to remain warm, and yet no so close as to cause perspiration. In the summer it 's directly in the path of a cross breeze created by open windows there, and there. It faces the television at an angle that is neither direct, thus discouraging conversation, nor so far wide to create a parallax distortion, I could go on, but I think I made my point. (S01E01)

On the other hand Sheldon appeared to follow the maxim of quality the most of all characters. He is honestly saying everything what is on his mind even if it means that he will not be polite. Sheldon Cooper followed the maxim of quality in analyzed corpus 67 times.

In following example (54) is shown one of the conversations between Penny and Sheldon. She is telling him about her ex-boyfriend and he is following the maxim of quality and telling her the truth instead of trying to be supportive and polite.

(54) Penny: You want to know the most pathetic part? Even though I hate his lying, cheating guts, I still love him. Is that crazy?

Sheldon: Yes. (S01E01)

3.2.3 Penny

The maxim of quality is broken quite often by one of the main characters Penny. It is typical for her that she is using sarcasm, irony or metaphors to make her point and thus flouting the maxim of quality. By using those figures, the whole conversation becomes humorous, because Sheldon does not understand sarcasm and irony.

In example (32) Penny is mad at Sheldon and they are having an argument. He did not understand that she used sarcasm and he realized it when Leonard told him so.

(55) Penny: And what kind of doctor removes shoes from asses?

Sheldon: Depending on the depth, that's either a proctologist or a general surgeon. (Leonard holds up a sign reading "SARCASM") Oh! (S01E02)

In another dialogue (33) Sheldon told Penny that he was fired, Penny uses a metaphor to support him and she is trying to be polite. She assumes that Sheldon understands the metaphor she used.

(56) Penny: Well, maybe it's all for the best, you know I always say, when one door closes, another one opens.

Sheldon: No, it doesn't. Not unless the two doors are connected by relays, or there are motion sensors involved. (S01E04)

Due to the fact that Sheldon did not understand metaphors, many humorous situations, like this in example (33) appear during the series of The Big Bang Theory. As described in the theoretical part, when the speaker wants to use some figure of speech like this in example (33) he has to know the listener enough, because otherwise the listener may not understand the hidden meaning in the message of the speaker.

Penny also uses the irony really often, again especially in conversation with Sheldon. As illustrated in example (34), they were shopping together in the supermarket and Penny was tired because she spent the whole day with Sheldon who explained her everything about the food in the supermarket.

(57) Sheldon: That was fun. Maybe tomorrow we can go to one of those big warehouse stores.

Penny: Oh, I don't know Sheldon, it's going to take me a while to recover from all the fun I had today. (S01E04)

In general, Penny is mostly flouting the maxim of quality by using figures of speech as mentioned above. In analyzed corpus the CP was broken 47 times by Penny.

3.2.4 Summary

The Cooperative principle appeared to be broken really often during the series of the Big Bang Theory. Each character has a different way how to express himself and how to communicate with other people. The results of this analysis proved that none of all characters followed the Cooperative principle all the time as described in the theoretical part. All of them broke this principle with different frequency.

In general, it seems that Sheldon Cooper follows the cooperative principle the most of all characters, because every time he is telling the truth and thus he follows the maxim of quality, even if it means that he is not polite. On the other hand, Penny and Leonard are breaking the cooperative principle more often, due to the fact that they want to be polite or they use some figures of speech as metaphors, irony or sarcasm.

It is interesting to note that breaking the cooperative principle arise many humorous situations in the sitcom, which is probably the aim of the author.

3.3 The Politeness Principle

Politeness principles, as mentioned in the theoretical part, are also important rules that are believed to be crucial for an ideal and polite conversation. The protagonists in the Big Bang Theory should follow all six maxims in order to be polite during the conversation.

Politeness principles appeared to be broken during the episodes of this sitcom as well as the Cooperative principle before. The analyzed corpus proved that those rules are not followed in the dialogues really often. The main protagonists usually broke the Politeness principle in order to follow the rules of the Cooperative principle.

3.3.1 Leonard Hoofstader

The dialogs between Leonard and Penny proved to be really polite. Leonard is following the politeness principle the most of all characters during the episodes of the Big Bang Theory. He broke the politeness principle just rarely, especially in the situations when he spoke to his roommate Sheldon. In general, Leonard appeared to be very polite speaker and very often he is trying to soften his requests, using modal verbs and the way he talks and behaves towards other people, makes him the most polite speaker in the sitcom.

In example (58) is shown the conversation between Penny and Leonard. He knocks on Penny's door and he wants to invite her for a dinner.

(58) *Leonard: Good afternoon Penny, so hi, hey. Uh... I was wondering if you had plans for dinner.*

Penny: Uh, do you mean dinner tonight?

Leonard: There is an inherent ambiguity in the word dinner. Technically it refers to the largest meal of the day whenever it is consumed, so, to clarify here, by dinner I mean supper.

Penny: Supper?

Leonard: Or dinner. I was thinking six thirty, if you can go, or a different time. (S01E01)

In this dialog, Leonard followed the rules of the tact maxim, because he used phrases that soften his request, such as “*I was wondering*” and “*I was thinking*”. He gave the opportunity to Penny to refuse his invitation for a dinner thus he minimized a cost to Penny. On the other hand Leonard broke the cooperative principle, namely the maxim of manner here, because he didn’t ask for a clear and brief question and Penny seemed to be confused.

3.3.2 Sheldon Cooper

In contrast with previous characters, Sheldon Cooper breaks the politeness principle the most of all protagonists. In analyzed corpus he broke the politeness principle 88 times. The analysis showed that Sheldon broke the politeness principle in order to follow the cooperative principle. To illustrate it, several examples will be used.

In example (59) is described the situation where Penny, Leonard and Sheldon were sitting in the living room and talking.

(59) Sheldon: Um Penny, that’s where I sit.

Penny: So, sit next to me.

Sheldon: No, I sit there.

Penny: What’s the difference?

Sheldon: What’s the difference?

Leonard: Here we go.

Sheldon: In the winter that seat is close enough to the radiator to remain warm, and yet no so close as to cause perspiration. In the summer it’s directly in the path of a cross breeze created by open windows there, and there. It faces the television at an angle that is neither direct, thus discouraging conversation, nor so far wide to create a parallax distortion, I could go on, but I think I made my point.

Penny: Do you want me to move? (S01E01)

In this situation, Sheldon did not follow the rules defining the generosity maxim more precisely he broke the sub-maxim “Minimize benefit to self”, because he was directly expressing what he wanted instead of trying to maximize a benefit for Penny. This has led to the fact that Sheldon became an impolite speaker in this dialog. At the same time he followed the maxim of quality, because he said exactly what was in his mind, in other words he told the truth.

In example (60) is shown the excerpt where Sheldon, Leonard and Raj are talking about Leonard’s new attitude to women.

(60) Leonard: Well, I’m done with Penny. I’m going to be more realistic and go after someone my own speed.

Raj: Like who?

Leonard: I don’t know. Olivia Geiger?

Sheldon: The dietician at the cafeteria with the limp and the lazy eye?

Leonard: Yeah.

Sheldon: Well, I don’t think you have a shot there. (S01E03)

This time the approbation maxim was broken by Sheldon, because he followed the cooperative principle. He said his opinion instead of trying to be more polite and support his friend by maximizing the praise to Leonard.

The analysis also proved that Sheldon Cooper broke the modesty maxim the most of all characters. He knows that he is extremely talented and thus he is very self confident. The fact that he is openly telling the truth about himself, he follows the cooperative principle, but at the same time he breaks the rules of the politeness principle.

In example (61), Sheldon is sitting at the university cafeteria with his friend Ramona, who admires him. They are talking about his work in physics.

(61) Ramona: So have you worked out the neutrino issue?

Sheldon: Well, to paraphrase Mozart, all the subatomic particles are there, I just have to put them in the right order.

Ramona: You’re so witty.

Sheldon: Aren’t I? (S02E06)

In this excerpt, Sheldon violated the modesty maxim because he maximized the praise of self. When Ramona expressed praise to him he should try to be more modest and not to praise

himself. A similar situation is shown in another example. In this scene (58) Sheldon is ill and he asked Leonard to swab his throat, so he can do some notes about his illness.

(62) *Leonard: Sheldon, don't you think you're overreacting?*

Sheldon: When I'm lying comatose in a hospital relying on inferior minds to cure me, these jelly cultures and my accompanying notes will give them a fighting chance. (S01E11)

This time Sheldon did not minimize the praise of self but he maximized a praise of self by saying that only from his notes the doctors have a chance to fight with his illness. Again he broke here the politeness principle and instead of that he followed the cooperative principle by providing his sincere opinion about it.

Sheldon Cooper breaks agreement maxim really often too, because he knows he has a high IQ and he has never accepted that someone else could be right. It is shown in excerpt (59), Leonard and Sheldon are at the university and Leonard has a lecture about physics, he asked Sheldon to introduce to his students something from his work.

(63) *Leonard: And now to tell you about the theoretical physics department is Dr. Sheldon Cooper. Dr. Cooper?*

Sheldon (off): Forget it.

Leonard: Excuse me. Sheldon, we both agreed to do this.

Sheldon (off): It's a waste of time. I might as well explain the laws of thermodynamics to a bunch of labradoodles. (S02E06)

In (63), Sheldon does not follow the rules of the agreement maxim, because he is not willing to seek for an agreement with his friend Leonard and help him with the lecture, because he is convinced that it is a wasting of time for him thus he becomes an impolite speaker again.

3.3.3 Penny

Penny, similar as Leonard, appeared to be the polite speaker during the episodes of the sitcom The Big Bang Theory. In general, she is trying to follow the rules of the politeness principle and during the conversation with her neighbor Leonard she follows the maxims of politeness. In several situations she also broke the politeness principle, really often she does not follow those principles in conversations with Howard who is still flirting with her and she does not like it.

Furthermore, in some cases she does not follow the politeness maxims in conversations with Sheldon, because he has a tendency to highlight her weaknesses or mistakes.

In following example (64) is shown the dialog between Penny and Howard. He was still flirting with her, but Penny gets angry and she tells him everything she does not like about him.

(64) *Penny: Yeah, you might be right. But back to you. I know you think you're some sort of smooth-talking ladies' man, but the truth is, you are just pathetic and creepy.*

Howard: Um, so what are you saying?

Penny: I am saying it is not a compliment to call me doable. It's not sexy to stare at my ass and say, "Ooh, it must be jelly 'cause jam don't shake like that." And most important, we are not dancing a tango, we're not to'ing and fro'ing. Nothing is ever going to happen between us. Ever.

Howard: Wait a minute. This isn't flirting, you're serious.

Penny: Flirting? You think I'm flirting with you? I am not flirting with you, no woman is ever gonna flirt with you, you're just gonna grow old and die alone. (S02E12)

In this situation, Penny violated the approbation maxim and she offended her friend Howard, because she maximized dispraise of him instead of trying to minimize it. Because of that Penny became an impolite speaker in this conversation. She violated the politeness principle in order to tell him the true and by that she followed the cooperative principle.

3.3.4 Summary

The analysis of The Big Bang Theory proved that the Politeness principle was also broken really often throughout the episodes of this sitcom. The analysis also showed that politeness principle was usually broken in order to follow the cooperative principle.

The results showed that Sheldon Cooper breaks the politeness principle the most of all characters and thus he is the most impolite speaker in the sitcom. Mostly, he is following the cooperative principle, which means that he is telling everything what is on his mind and then he cannot follow the rules of the politeness principle at the same time.

On the other hand, Leonard appeared to be the most polite speaker during the episode of the Big Bang Theory, due to the fact that he is using modal verbs, he is trying to soften his

requests and in general he follows all the politeness maxims. Penny is somewhere in the middle of the scale of the politeness. She is trying to follow the rules as much as possible, but in some situations, when she gets angry, she becomes an impolite speaker too.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to analyze the dialogues of the sitcom *The Big Bang Theory* and prove, whether it is possible to follow the Cooperative principle and the Politeness principle in a regular conversation.

The bachelor thesis was divided into the theoretical part and the practical part. The theoretical part was dedicated to the description of the Cooperative principle and the ways in which could be this principle broken in a conversation. It was followed by the characterization of politeness and six politeness maxims were introduced.

In the practical part I have analyzed ten episodes from the first two series of the sitcom *The Big bang Theory*. The analysis proved that when the participants of the dialogue want to follow the guidelines of the Cooperative principle they cannot follow the Politeness principle at the same time and vice versa. It means that those two linguistic theories are in a clash. The analysis also showed that none of all characters followed the Cooperative principle and the Politeness principle all the time as described in the theoretical part. All protagonists broke those principles with different frequency. The analysis also confirms the opinion of Levinson, who claims that these rules (CP, PP) are not followed quite often in a regular conversation and that “the view may describe a philosopher’s paradise, but no one actually speaks like that the whole time.”(1983, 102).

The results confirmed also my expectations, because according to the theoretical part I assumed that it is hardly possible to follow all described rules in a regular conversation. It is common that people use many figures of speech like metaphors, irony or sarcasm and thus they do not observe the maxims.

The fact that all those rules were broken during the series of the *Big Bang Theory* arose many humorous situations in the sitcom, which was probably the aim of the author. The analysis also showed the significant difference between the protagonists following the Cooperative principle and protagonists following the Politeness principle.

The analysis proved that the pragmatic principles described in the theoretical part may characterize an ideal conversation, but in a regular communication it is impossible to follow all those rules at the same time.

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