

Anna Šmilauerová:

TV Sitcom Friends: Analysis of character humor strategies based on the violation of Grice's Conversational maxims

Abstract

The purpose of this diploma thesis is the analysis of the humor strategies employed by the characters of Phoebe and Chandler in the TV Sitcom *Friends*. The discovered prevailing strategies were then compared with the personalities of the two characters. The data analyzed were the written script of five exemplary episodes from the Season 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9, in which the utterances eliciting laughter from the audience were thoroughly analyzed from the point of Grice's Cooperative Principle: only those utterances were considered in which the characters violated one or more of the conversational maxims (quality, quantity, relation and manner). Phoebe was found to violate most often the maxim of relation, thus it is her being non-factual and non-conventional that constitutes her most entertaining quality. As she develops and grows more mature as a character, the frequency counts of this humor strategy evince a descending tendency.

Chandler, on the other hand, is mostly being ironic, violating the maxim of quality. His character also gradually changes but his sense of humor remains the same - ironic throughout the show, as follows from the instances of almost fixed frequency.

Keywords: Humor, Cooperative Principle, Conversational maxims of quality, quantity, relation and manner, Conversational Implicature