

AN ANALYSIS OF HUMOR SPEECH ACT OF *THE BIG BANG THEORY* AT CBS TELEVISION SERIES

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Abstract

Some of the problems faced by students in learning English are speech acts. This research focused on finding the speech acts. This study aims to get an overview of humor speech acts of the big bang theory. The qualitative descriptive approach will be used along with the content analysis technique. The result shows that: (1) there are three parts of speech acts used, including locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts, (2) there is a violation of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner maxim. However, the most violation maxim was at the quantity maxim, (3) the screenwriters intentionally create a dialogue with several principles' violations of speech acts, team-works, and humor categories. It can be concluded that the speech acts humor of the big bang theory screenwriters intentionally made some mistakes to create humor to raise up the jocularity atmosphere that can be enjoyed by the viewers. It is expected that this research can enrich the knowledge as regard the linguistic phenomena especially those which are related to speech acts.

Keywords: *big bang, humor, speech acts, theory*

INTRODUCTION

The Big Bang Theory is an American TV show directed by Chuck Lorre dan Bill Prady, where both are the executive producers of the show, with Steven Molaro. Those three persons are the primary screenwriters of the show. The TV show series had shown for the first time on CBS on September 24th, 2007. The series is acted by five leading roles, namely: Leonard and Hofstadter and his roommate in the apartment; they are physicists worked in California Institute of Technology (Caltech); Penny, a blonde waitress who dreams of being an actress, lived the opposite side of their apartment; other friends are Howard Wolowitz, an aeronautical and aerospace engineer and Rajesh Koothrappali, an astrophysicist.

Six underlying reasons to research

The Big Bang Theory in CBS TV stations which produced by Warner Bros Television and Chuck Lorre production are; (1) the show has been awarded as the best comedy series in many events; (2) the main roles are educated characters; (3) the vocabulary used tend to be used only in the higher education level; (4) the duration of the show is moderate long; (5) the topic is all about social and education; (6) the main character tends to difficult to understand when they communicate each other.

This show can be analyzed from the speech acts of the characters. This statement is based on Corredor's opinion that "the movie can be analyzed based on the speech acts of the roles or characteristics of the movie to find meaning in each movement (Corredor, 2020).

The reason for conducting a Speech acts study is simple: all linguistics communication which involves linguistics acts. A speech act is a fundamental communication unit that raises together with the disclosure principles, which shows an analytical connection between ideas and speech acts. The process of doing something during the conversation between the listener and the speaker takes place; in this case, what the speakers mean, the meaning of the sentences used, the listeners received, and how the linguistics components rules.

According to Kiuk and Ghozali, “speech acts which involve idea “word” has meaning. This thing is used widely in linguistics to references a theory that analyzes the role of speech concerning the behavior of the speakers and listeners in interpersonal communication” (Kiuk & Ghozali, 2012).

Speech acts is a part of speech study or pronunciation. This can be defined as an action done by speech. (Wicaksono, 2018). Speech acts need cognitive process such as executive functions, thinking theory, and empathy (Licea, Velásquez, Holtgraves, & Giordano, 2019). Speech act is identified as features of communication content because it can reflect the character of actors (Park & Kim, 2018).

Speech acts also include informing, responding, and giving statements that show conversation roles from speech results (Kim & Kim, 2018). Speech acts play a role in

ensuring the credibility of speech and the storyline in order to give meaning (Van Lente, Boon, & Klerkx, 2020). Speech acts contribute to dialogue so that every movement and speech has meaning (Ludwig, 2020).

Austin (1962) in Tutuarima, Nuraeningsih, & Rusiana explains that “speech acts was divided into three parts, they are locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts” (Tutuarima, Nuraeningsih, & Rusiana, 2018). Locutionary, an act where the speakers talk about something inaccurate orders so the speech has meaning and can be understood or pronouncing specific sentences that have meaning and references. Illocutionary, a responsibility to inform, to send messages and, to warn by using sentences with a definite purpose. Perlocutionary, an influence caused by sentences or words such as convincing, persuading, preventing, and saying or surprising (Kiuk & Ghozali, 2012).

This is in line with the opinion above, which says that a locution is an act of saying something, and illocution is an action when saying something. Perlocution is an action taken as a result of words (Tri Budiasih, 2018).

Other than speech acts, maxim also needs to be taken into. This is because every utterance delivered must be clear, concise, and be characterized directly so that it is easy to understand. The conversation between the speakers and viewers often violate the maxim in the Grice’s principles.

Grice accounts that “there are four

kinds of maxim violations, namely: breaking up (violate), neglect or allowance (opt-out), clash or mismatch (clash), and game or scoff (flout). The framework of Grice's cooperative maxims includes four maxims of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner" (Grice, 1975); (1) Maxim of quantity: (a) be truthful, (b) only say that for which you have adequate evidence; (2) Maxim of quality: (a) provide as much information as required, (b) do not provide more information than is required; (3) maxim of relevance: (a) be relevant; (4) maxim of manner: (a) avoid obscurity of expression, (b) avoid unnecessary ambiguity, (c) be brief, (d) be orderly.

Maxim as a rule in communication was divided by Grice into four categories; in a dialog, the maxim is still violated. In verbal communication, communication is based on the use of word standard. However, there is also a violation of quantities, qualities, relevance, and manner (Ephratt, 2012).

Research about the same themes have been done as follows; integrated neural network model for identifying speech acts (Kim & Kim, 2018), positioning of systemic intermediaries in sustainability transitions (Van Lente et al., 2020). Also, Maxim has been studied in several contexts, for instance, analysis of the advertising language (Pop, 2010), advertising language (Liu, 2012), investigating four maxims in psychological consulting (Li, 2008), analyzing the maxims in movies (Khosravizadeh & Sadehvandi, 2011).

From several related studies above,

state of the art, in this research, is the act of humor of the big bang theory; the scriptwriter deliberately makes a dialogue with several violations intended to create a humorous situation that produces jokes that can be enjoyed by the viewers.

It is expected that this research can enrich the knowledge as regard the linguistic phenomena especially those which are related to speech acts.

METHODS

This study is a qualitative descriptive approach with content analysis technique (content analysis) and uses Speech acts theory in linguistics as the fundamental analysis. Speech acts theory is used to analyze words, sentences, and dialog in The Big Bang Theory showed on CBS TV. All data was analyzed based on the theories, then grouped in specific predefined categories. The categories can be revised and verified, along with the course of the analysis process.

The data in this study are in the form of words, phrases, and sentences collected from the characters' conversation in the program. The data source in this study is a video transcript of the Big Bang Theory program that showed on CBS under the episode of The Matrimonial Momentum, which downloaded from the CBS television station webpage.

Data collection technique was documentation and observation based on the video record, which documented from The

Big Bang Theory TV program. The data collection conducted by downloading transcribing The Big Bang Theory shows in a specified duration. The data analyzes was a transcription gained through a recording from The Big Bang Theory comedy shows.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Elements of Speech Acts

Each time the speakers deliver their speech, they act three actions at the same time, namely (a) locutionary acts, (b) illocutionary acts, and (c) perlocutionary acts. If the actors intentionally talk somethings directly, without any requirements for the speaker to carry out the contents of his speech, his intention is called the illocutionary act. If the speaker intends to express something directly, by using a distinctive power, which makes the speaker act according to what he is speaking, the intention is called illocutionary act. Meanwhile, if the speaker intends to cause an appropriate response or effect to the speech partner, the purpose is called the perlocutionary act.

Situation. This happens at the minutes of 13.33 at the Howard and Shelton apartment setting. The participants in this event are Sheldon and Sheldon's mother, Mrs. Cooper.

Events. Sheldon called his mother to inform that he has already separated with Amy. At 'The apartment scene, the participant is Sheldon and Sheldon's mother, Mrs. Cooper.

When they were interacting, Sheldon's goal is to inform directly to Sheldon's mother, Mrs. Cooper, that the relationship between Amy and Sheldon already ended. The spontaneous reaction of Sheldon's mother was shocked and asking about the fact of news. The way to interact is by being friendly and full of guidance. They used English orally to communicate with each other. The interaction occurred in two directions in the form of question-and-answer interaction.

Acts. Communication occurred between Sheldon and his mother, Mrs. Cooper. At the speech, Sheldon talked directly with appropriate sentences that explain about his relationship with Amy. His goal is to inform the news immediately to his, Mrs. Cooper. Sheldon's mother, Mrs. Cooper, as a speech participant, responded by saying that she was shocked and never imagine that could ever happen, but still, she soothed Sheldon to think deeply. The goal of Sheldon's mother, Mrs. Cooper is to make Sheldon feel not too bad with the fact that his relationship status with Amy has changed at this time.

Speech acts in scene interactions of 'The Apartment'. Locutionary acts from the statement were questions and answers from the dialog. Illocutionary acts which found were Sheldon's mother, Mrs. Cooper, who suggested Sheldon no to in a hurry to decide on something and ask if Sheldon was sure that this was over. Perlocutionary acts hoped from Sheldon's mother, Mrs. Cooper Sheldon

is to consider and think back his decision to separate with Amy. Sheldon chimed by stating that he would stop dealing with women as the way he stopped consuming Pop Rock because both women and Pop Rock candy had hurt him. The perlocutionary acts were that Mrs. Cooper believed that his decision was final.

Each person has a different ability on speech acts, although they are in the same situations and events. The person's soul itself influences the understanding of the speech acts. The ability to adapt and to speak of the speakers determined the sustainability of a speech actions. If there is a different meaning between speech acts and the opposite speakers' understandings, it means the sense of the speech was not correctly delivered. The fact fitted to the result of the study which stated that "the study about speech acts is significant to be learned and understood to get the messages of the speech" (Tutuarima et al., 2018).

Violation Forms of the Cooperation Principles

The interaction at The Big Bang Theory series, there was a maxim that applied and violated to create humor. The Big Bang Theory interaction used quantities, qualities, relevance, and manner maxim. Violating maxim also happens to support the success of the production process of a comedy series.

Quantities maxim, kind of violation of quantities maxim is sentences from speech

acts in interaction between Amy and Stuart. On that interaction, there is a violation toward quantities maxim because the speech acts which delivered by Amy and Stuart contain clear information. Dialog between Amy and Stuart;

Amy : Oh. What was her name?

Stuart : Hey, it's a true story. I don't need the third degree

There is a violation of quantities maxim at the dialog above because containing unclear information. The theory of speech acts can be found in the speech act interaction role at the 'Howard and Bernadette's House.' Respond's sentences found from Amy is that Amy asked about Stuart ex-couple. But Stuart only replied that this was only a past story without answering the essence of Amy's question.

Qualities maxim, the description and analyzes of qualities maxim in the interaction between Sheldon and Amy related to true information which delivered by the speakers matched with the clear, concrete and measurable evidence.

The dialog between Sheldon dan Amy:

Sheldon : Boy, I'm glad we're going out again

Amy : We're not back together

At the dialog above, there is a violation of quality maxim because of the information is only an assumption that is not real. Based on that speech acts can be

concluded that the speakers gave dishonest and unproven information.

Relevance maxim, there was a violation toward relevance maxim at the situational speech acts. The violation occurred because the speakers give speech contribution which is not suitable to the topic. The speech acts which is irrelevant to the topic at the dialog between Penny and Leonard, as follows:

Penny : Did you feel guilty after kissing her?
Leonard : Yes. I felt guilty as soon as it happened.
I feel guilty every time I see her.

At the dialog above occurred violation of relevance maxim because Leonard did not answer based on the Penny's question.

Manner maxim, manner maxim violation happened because the speakers give information in an emotionally and uneasy tone. Listening to the speakers' anger, the interlocutors provoked emotions so that they also speak uneasily or with sentiments. Violating the manner maxim can cause chaos.

Dialog below is the example of manner maxim:

Penny : What do you mean, every time you see her?
Leonard : What do I mean? Boy, that's a toughie.

There was a violation of the manner maxim above caused by Leonard answered Penny's question ambiguously and wordy. Relevance Maxim is a maxim that hopes the speakers have clear, understandable,

unambiguous, and consecutive responses.

If, in a conversation, there is a deviation, it means there are some specific implications that the speakers would like to achieve. On the other hand, if there is not an implication, it means the speakers not cooperate. Shortly, it can be assumed that there will always principle work that speakers and interlocutors should do so that the communication runs smoothly. This statement is fit to the results of the study which explains that "at the pragmatical fields, it is suggested that to create success conversation, the speakers should involve cooperatively" (Tajabadi, Dowlatabadi, & Mehri, 2014).

Verbal Humor Categories

To create humor at The Big Bang Theory serial comedy, the scriptwriters intentionally generate a violation of speech acts principles, cooperative principles, and humor categories. The violations were due to create humor that can be enjoyed by the viewers. Dialogs below have the humor categories:

The wedding chapel scene

Leonard : They're running a little behind. Should be pretty soon.

Penny : Okay.

Leonard : **Hey, if you're hungry, there's a breakfast buffet at the strip club next door.**

Penny : **Thanks, but I don't like glitter on my scrambled**

eggs.

Leonard : I don't think the strippers prepare the meal, but okay. Look, it's not how I pictured it either, but I'm still glad we're doing it.

Penny : Me, too.

Leonard : You sure?

Penny : Yes.

Leonard : And you promise you're okay with everything from the car?

Penny : Oh, my God, would you stop bringing it up?

Leonard : You're right. I'm sorry. We have the rest of our lives to dredge stuff up from the past and fight about it. So what do you think?

Should we run next door and grab a bite?

Penny : What if they call our names?

Leonard : Oh, don't worry. They gave me this vibrating coaster.

Penny : Oh, and the fairy tale continues.

From the dialog above, verbal humor categories were written in bold. The researcher tried to understand the attitude and speech acts of the societies when they interact with each other in a community. The observation result, as follows: Firstly, humor

speech acts that the researchers found various such as the presence of parties who communicate humorously, emotionally, and ordinarily. Secondly, humorous utterances that are contained in The Big Bang Theory are diverse, such as the speakers spoke briefly following the wishes of the interlocutor, there is also a piece of redundant and vague information that cause misinterpretation.

The discourses contented forms of stimulation that have the potential to provoke a smile or a laugh response to the audience, also contain many implications to the conversation; as a result of deviations from the cooperation and politeness principles, even though the actors are unaware.

The success of humor to be considered humorous is caused by the implication of the conversation, along with the use of other linguistics aspects. Humor or parody is a complex phenomenon that depends on knowledge, memory, and the ability of the viewers to interpret the contents (Elizabeth, 2006).

CONCLUSION

The study is about the speech acts at The Big Bang Theory in CBS TV station, season 9, about The Matrimonial Momentum. The study consists of three speech acts, namely, locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. While the violation cooperation principles consist of qualities, quantities, relevance, and *manner* maxim.

The highest violation was in quantity maxim. Each violation of the maxim has its impact, such as quantity maxim can cause ineffectiveness or convoluted conversation because of its excessive contribution. The quality maxim violation can cause misinformation because of the incorrect input. Furthermore, the breach of relevance maxim can increase communication failures because of the conversation interconnection between the speakers and the interlocutors. The last, the violation of the *manner* maxim can cause misinformation caused by the ambiguity context of the conversation to cause jokes and senses of humor.

Weaknesses in this article do not explain the function of speech acts, so in the future it is expected that there will be research related to the function of speech acts.

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