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Impoliteness as a Means of Comedy in the TV Series *The Nanny*

Nezdvořilost jako prostředek humoru v seriálu *Chůva k pohledání*

(Diplomová práce)

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Prohlášení

Tímto prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci na téma: „Impoliteness as a means of comedy in the TV Series *The Nanny*“ vypracovala samostatně pod odborným dohledem vedoucího diplomové práce a uvedla jsem všechny použité podklady a literaturu.

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podpis

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

The following describes the abbreviations used throughout the thesis. The abbreviations mark specific episode of the TV show *The Nanny* that is the source of examples.

S – season

E – episode

Following S or E is a number that marks specific season and episode, e.g. S04E11 – marks the fourth season and the eleventh episode of the show. From the abbreviation the name of the episode as well as other information about it can be found in the Bibliography.

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INTRODUCTION

Both, politeness and impoliteness, are concepts that we come across every day. Politeness is something that we usually welcome in our lives and something that we strive for, because it can positively affect our relationships in the long term. Impoliteness, we preferably want to avoid, because of its harmful effects on our relationships. Nevertheless, both politeness and impoliteness are not simply black and white. There is much more to them than meets the eye. This thesis is focused on two concepts that are connected to those previously mentioned – mock politeness and mock impoliteness.

The aim of this thesis is, firstly, to provide a brief account of politeness and impoliteness theories with respect to what is considered mock politeness and mock impoliteness. Secondly, to analyse the use of mock politeness (sarcasm) as well as mock impoliteness (banter and sarcastic banter) in the American television series *The Nanny* (1993-1999). The reason why I chose this topic is that, to my knowledge, there has not been a study of banter and sarcasm directed at their use in television series. In my opinion, a long running television series can provide an extensive source for data collection. Furthermore, I think that banter and sarcasm are very popular phenomena of modern age and they are being used in television increasingly. The reason for choosing this particular television series is because of its format. It is a sitcom – which stands for situational comedy and portrays a set cast of protagonists in their everyday lives in a comic way (Dalton 2005). Therefore, I expect the ratio of banter, sarcastic banter, and sarcasm to be higher in sitcoms than in real life as all of the concepts can be considered to have a comic effect in conversation. From a brief look at the series I expect to find both mock impoliteness and mock politeness equally distributed throughout the sitcom.

To provide some background for the television series, *The Nanny* originally aired between 1993-1999. The sitcom depicts the life of a Jewish woman Fran Fine from a poor neighbourhood in New York who becomes the nanny for the three children (Grace, Brighton, Margaret) of a Broadway producer and a widower Maxwell Sheffield. She moves into his mansion and finds a friend in Mr. Sheffield's butler Niles, who she shares her sense of humour with. Niles mostly makes fun of Mr. Sheffield's business associate C.C. Babcock, who is trying hard to get Maxwell's attention as she is in love with him. As the television series continues, Maxwell and Fran gradually fall in love and also Niles' and C.C.'s relationship becomes friendlier.

The theoretical part attempts to define all theories relevant for this thesis. In Chapter 1 the basic theories of politeness and impoliteness are discussed. Firstly, the role of politeness as not only a verbal behaviour is explained. Brown and Levison's (1999) concepts of positive and negative politeness as well as the concept of face are described and followed by Leech's Politeness Principle (2014) and his "characteristics of politeness" (Leech 2014, 4-8). Secondly, using the theories of Culpeper (2011), Holmes (2008) and Leech (2014) the impoliteness is defined and characterized by adapting the previously used characteristics of politeness. In this part of the chapter the emphasis is put on the intentionality of impoliteness. Chapter 2 provides the theoretical framework for banter, sarcasm and sarcastic banter. With respect to banter, the chapter provides an explanation why relationships are important when analysing banter together with the rules of banter (Terrion and Ashworth 2002) and functions of banter (Plester and Sayers 2007). Next, sarcasm is explained in detail and is followed by a description of non-verbal cues connected to it. Finally, in this chapter sarcastic banter is defined and its relation to both – banter and sarcasm – is explained.

Chapter 3 focuses on establishing the criteria for the distinction between banter, sarcastic banter and sarcasm using some of the theories provided in

Chapter 1. The emphasis is put on the role of non-verbal cues in classifying banter, sarcasm and sarcastic banter. Furthermore, the expected responses are listed and some are supported by examples. Lastly, the terms context and co-text are described for the purpose of further analysis. The analysis of all three phenomena is presented in Chapter 4. The chapter is focused on the adherence of the data to the rules established previously as well as the connection of banter, sarcastic banter and sarcasm to context, co-text or both. With respect to banter the dynamics of each relationship presented is explained. The reactions are also analysed. Chapter 5 provides the conclusion of the analysis results with a commentary and an overview of whether the expectations of the thesis were met.

For the purpose of the thesis, the selected data complied with the prerequisites that are stated in the theoretical part of the thesis. Therefore, in the process of selection the only instances that were transcribed were, firstly, those that were funny to the audience or the protagonists themselves. Secondly, the instances involved impolite forms used without offending (banter), polite forms used with the intention to offend (sarcasm), and lastly polite forms that at first glance look to be sarcastic but were found to have positive meaning (sarcastic banter). In the process of selection only data concerning the four main characters were transcribed – Maxwell Sheffield, Fran Fine, C.C. Babcock, Niles – in examples only their first names are going to be used to identify them. The data were collected from randomly selected episodes of the television series and they were transcribed by ear. Some of the quotes presented in the thesis need more context for the analysis because they can involve communicative behaviour beyond a simple sentence. The context, including the non-verbal cues, needed for the analysis is recounted in brackets as a part of the quotation. When there is an extra stress put on certain words it is going to be marked by writing the stressed word in capital letters. Furthermore, the instances that involve banter or sarcasm are going to be marked in italics. The collected examples are also used in the theoretical part when applicable.

1. DEFINING POLITENESS AND IMPOLITENESS

This chapter gives a summary of politeness and impoliteness theories. There has been a lot of research done in the field of politeness and impoliteness in both sociolinguistics and pragmatics. Therefore, I am going to begin with introducing the concept of politeness and some of the theories in this field that I find important in Chapter 1.1. Then I am going to move to impoliteness, its definition and recognition in similar manner in Chapter 1.2. The politeness and impoliteness theories can provide some criteria for analysing sarcasm, banter and sarcastic banter because of their close connection later in Chapter 2.

1.1. POLITENESS

The range of theories and concepts that could be discussed under the term politeness is vast, therefore, for the purpose of the thesis I have selected the theories and concepts that are considered to be the base of politeness theories. Firstly, Geoffrey Leech (2014) has done extensive work on the pragmatics of politeness and we cannot omit the work Brown and Levinson (1999) that is very commonly used as a starting point for any politeness theory. Let us start with defining politeness: Leech in his *Pragmatics of Politeness* (2014) gives to define what politeness means, an example of a violinist coming back on stage after her performance and bowing again and again after the applause continues. In this example both sides, the violinist and the audience, show polite behaviour: the audience is showing appreciation of the violinist's skills and the violinist is showing her humility (Leech 2014, 3-4). With respect to this example we can state that we should not associate politeness only with its verbal component, as one would perhaps expect, but we should also take into consideration this non-verbal communicative behaviour that was shown in the example above.

The importance of the concept of politeness lies in its “[potential] enduring effect on human relation” (Leech 2014, 9), whether and how we practice politeness or impoliteness influences the way people see us and what our future relationships will be like. Leech then continues to provide the definition of politeness: “a form of communicative behaviour found very generally in human languages and among human cultures” (2014, 3). It follows that we can define politeness as communicative behaviour with a specific purpose. After establishing that politeness is a communicative behaviour not limited to language only, we should continue with defining purpose of this behaviour more specifically. What kind of communicative behaviour is it? Leech speaks about “communicative altruism” (2014, 4). The polite communicative behaviour has the purpose of establishing comfort between two parties by each participant taking the feelings of the other party into consideration.

An important part of politeness theories is the *politeness principle* (PP) as defined by Leech:

The PP postulates that interactants, on the whole, prefer to express or imply polite beliefs rather than impolite beliefs. Polite beliefs expressed by the speaker S are beliefs favorable to the other person O (and/or unfavorable to oneself), whereas impolite beliefs are beliefs unfavorable to O (and/or favorable to S). (Leech 2014, 34)

In other words, the politeness principle helps us understand the language with respect to politeness. For this reason, Leech develops six maxims – tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, sympathy – those when broken can lead to impoliteness. The maxims stand for the following:

- *tact* – trying to impose upon the other as little as possible;
- *generosity* – attending to the needs of other as they come first;
- *approbation* – praise the other if possible, if not avoid criticism;
- *modesty* – being modest;

- *agreement* – “minimise disagreement” (Leech 2014, 35) between the speaker and the other;
- *sympathy* – expressing sympathy and compassion.
(Leech 2014, 35)

Similarly to Leech’s politeness principle, Brown and Levinson in their “Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage” (1999) explain politeness as an act of maintaining a *face*¹. Following their theory, everybody has two faces – positive and negative face. The negative face represents the formal politeness or, to put it another way, how we act and our freedom to do so. The positive face represents the self-image people are presenting for public’s assessment. (Brown and Levinson 1999, 312) The authors establish two terms – positive and negative politeness (Brown and Levinson 1999, 317). Positive politeness expresses speaker’s acceptance of the hearer’s wants or as the authors describe it, accepting the need of the hearer to be regarded as “a member of an in-group, a friend, a person whose wants and personality traits are known and liked”, e.g. avoiding disagreement, being optimistic, using in-group identity markers, etc. (Brown and Levinson 1999, 317). Negative politeness, however, is the satisfaction of hearer’s face, or in other words, the interaction with the hearer that does not impose upon him (e.g. being direct or indirect according to the situation, showing respect, apologising) (Brown and Levinson 1999, 317).

Lastly, it is important to mention that politeness is a universal feature of language (Brown and Levinson 1999, 312), i.e. every language has a way of expressing this feature. Although, the ways of expressing politeness can be different in every language. For instance, what is considered polite in one

¹ In Brown and Levinson’s the term face is “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself” and it “can be lost, maintained, or enhanced and must be constantly attended to in interaction”. (Brown and Levinson 1999, 311)

language does not have to be polite in another language, and the same follows for impoliteness which is going to be discussed in Chapter 1.2.

1.1.1. CHARACTERISTICS OF POLITENESS

We can explain better how politeness works when we have some kind of framework to characterize it. In my opinion, Leech's eight characteristics of politeness (2014, 4-8) are the kind of framework that helps us understand politeness better:

- *optionality* – “politeness is not obligatory” (Leech 2014, 4);
- *varying degree of politeness* – what channels do speakers use (verbal, non-verbal);
- *normality* – what is considered to be normal in a particular situation;
- *situationality* – how we react in particular situation, whether we need politeness at all;
- *reciprocity* – there is what Leech calls a “reciprocal asymmetry” – to explain this Leech reuses his violinist vs. audience example: when the audience claps and it gives high value to the violinist and it lower the audience, therefore, the appropriate/polite reaction of the violinist is to bow – to also lower oneself (Leech 2014, 6);
- *repetition* – politeness is usually ritualized to some degree;
- *transaction of value* – creating and transferring some kind of a value in form of thanks, requests, invitations, compliments, apologies, offers, etc.;
- *preserving balance* – participants want to preserve the balance and “rectify the sense of debt” they have towards the other by being polite. (Leech 2014, 4-8)

These characteristics are quite complex, the most important of them, I would say, are: optionality, degree of politeness, normality, transaction of values. All of these are connected. There is a norm to what is normal in a particular situation, however, as was said above, politeness is always optional, we can choose to use a certain “degree of politeness” (we can express it only verbally or we can add some non-verbal cues – tone of voice, a gesture, etc.) to achieve a transaction of specific values. These characteristics are going to be discussed further to help us with understanding impoliteness (see Chapter 1.2.1) as well as banter, sarcasm and sarcastic banter (see Chapter 3).

1.2. IMPOLITENESS

A great deal was written about the phenomenon of politeness, the impoliteness, on the other hand, is less talked about and studied. One of the influential theorists in the field of impoliteness is Culpeper (2011) who has written a great deal about impoliteness. Some of the previously mentioned ideas may apply to the concept of impoliteness as well. As we mentioned already politeness is a “communicative behaviour” (Leech 2014,3), and the same applies to impoliteness, as Culpeper states:

Impoliteness involves multimodal behaviours. This is the main means by which internal mixed messages can be conveyed: verbal, oral and visual elements can be matched or mismatched. (Culpeper 2011, 169)

Culpeper in his definition explains that when conveying any impolite message, we can use different channels to express it, however, only a single gesture can be enough to express something impolite. In accordance with politeness, the impoliteness is too a universal feature of language – every language has it. Some instances of impoliteness can be culture specific, i.e. what is impolite in one language or culture can be considered normal or even polite in another culture

or language. My favourite example for the cultural specificity of particular behaviour is slurping. Many of us has been told as kids not to slurp soup or other food because it is not polite to do so. In contrast, in some of the Asian cultures slurping is considered having the exact opposite value. For instance, slurping your food in Japan is considered a praise of the cook and a sign that you really like the food. Therefore, before we judge something as impolite we should always think if there is a cultural difference that can influence the polite or impolite interpretation of a certain behaviour. So how do we define impoliteness? To start with, let us provide three different definitions we can work with. According to Culpeper:

Impoliteness is a negative attitude towards specific behaviours occurring in specific contexts. It is sustained by expectations, desires and /or beliefs about social organisation, including, in particular, how one person's or a group's identities are mediated by others in interaction. Situated behaviours are viewed negatively – considered 'impolite' – when they conflict with how one expects them to be, how one wants them to be and/or how one thinks they ought to be. Such behaviours always have or are presumed to have emotional consequences for at least one participant, that is, they cause or are presumed to cause offence. Various factors can exacerbate how offensive an impolite behaviour is taken to be, including for example whether one understands a behaviour to be strongly intentional or not.

(Culpeper 2011, 23)

For comparison Holmes (2008) characterizes verbal impoliteness followingly:

[V]erbal impoliteness [is] linguistic behaviour assessed by the hearer as threatening her or his face or social identity, and infringing the norms of appropriate behaviour that prevail in particular contexts and among particular interlocutors, whether intentionally or not.

(Holmes 2008, 196)

Lastly, Leech uses his politeness principle to explain impoliteness:

Impoliteness can be recognized as a violation of the various maxims of the [politeness principle], both those of neg-politeness and those of pos-politeness. In general, impoliteness involves taking value from the other person and giving value to oneself. But it is important to bear in mind that these violations are scalar, like the maxims themselves: that is, just as there are various degrees of observance of the maxims, so there are various degrees of violation.

(Leech 2014, 222-223)

Given these definitions, we can conclude that impoliteness is, similarly to politeness, a kind of communicative behaviour (it can be verbal or non-verbal) that does not comply with what is considered to be a standard or appropriate behaviour in a certain situation. Therefore, this kind of communicative behaviour is viewed as negative because it negatively affects the emotions of at least one of the participants.

In Brown and Levinson, a “positive-face threatening acts” have the potential to express impoliteness and are described as the verbal and non-verbal communication “that by [its] nature [runs] contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or of the speaker” (Brown and Levinson 1999, 313). The positive-face threatening acts can suggest that “the speaker does not care about the addressee’s feelings, wants, etc.” (Brown and Levinson 1999, 314) To rephrase it, an impolite behaviour is the kind of behaviour which suggests that we do not care about the hearer’s positive face. Nevertheless, not all of the acts that threaten the positive face are strictly impolite as they include, for example criticism and disagreement, which cannot be considered impolite in their essence, and they depend on the way they are presented.

1.2.1. CHARACTERISTICS OF IMPOLITENESS AND INTENTIONALITY

To characterize impoliteness, I decided to use the same set of characteristics that Leech uses to characterize politeness and that were discussed in Chapter 1.1.1. I applied the characteristics of politeness by Leech (2014) to impoliteness so that they can be used later on in the practical part of this thesis and applied to banter and sarcasm:

- *optionality* – impoliteness is as well optional; sometimes it can be even unintentional (person can say/do something impolite and not realizing it);
- *varying degree of impoliteness* – as was said above, impoliteness does not have to be tied to language abuse, impoliteness is a communicative behaviour and thus it can use verbal as well as non-verbal channel to varying degree;
- *normality* – impoliteness is a deviation from what is normal and expected in a particular situation;
- *situationality* – how we react in a particular situation, whether we employ impoliteness at all and if so for what reason;
- *reciprocity* – if a person behaves impolitely, there is a chance that the other person who is subjected to this impoliteness will adopt the same stand;
- *repetition* – even in impoliteness there is a degree of ritualization to be found (ignoring insults, ridiculing the impolite behaviour, etc.);
- *transaction of value* – impoliteness too is creating and transferring a value, in this case negative – e.g.: expressing opinion, criticism, hatred, etc.

- *preserving balance* – if one person is to behave impolitely towards another person, they cannot expect that the other person is going to communicate back in a friendly and polite manner.

(based on Leech 2014, 4-8)

What is definitely worth discussing in more detail is the intentionality of impoliteness. The question of intentionality is usually considered with the phenomenon of impoliteness. The main question is whether a communicative behaviour is impolite only when it is intended to be so. Culpeper suggests that what matters more is whether the hearer understands the communicative behaviour as being intentionally impolite:

People make use of understandings of intentions and intentionality in their judgements, including their potentially impolite behaviour.
(Culpeper 2011, 50)

Even though, some may argue that the communicative behaviour is impolite only when it is intended to be so, I must agree with Culpeper. For impoliteness as well as politeness is not only the intention of the speaker but also and most importantly the hearer's comprehension of the communicative behaviour. For instance, I once overheard a couple's exchange in a fitting room:

- (1) She: What do you think about this dress?
He: I like it, they make your ass look nice.
She: So, you think I have a big ass, thank you very much.

This is what is described as “failed politeness” or “accidental offence” by Culpeper (2011, 51). The utterance offends the hearer as the politeness fails. There definitely was no intention to offend on the boyfriend's part, in fact, he meant the exact opposite, to compliment her, however, his intention was not

recognized. So, as Culpeper says the intention to be either polite or impolite is not “an essential condition for impoliteness” (2011, 51). In other words, the speaker can sound impolite to the hearer even though they are not trying to be, or even the speaker is trying to be polite rather than the opposite and can cause offence unintentionally. Similarly, we could also identify the failed impoliteness when the person that is subjected to impoliteness misses the impolite intention and the impoliteness goes unnoticed. The following example shows this kind of failed impoliteness, the reason the impoliteness goes unnoticed by the hearer is probably that the form of the impoliteness:

(2) (Niles is sitting in the kitchen reading newspapers, drinking a glass of alcohol and getting ready to smoke a cigar. Maxwell walks in and takes the glass from his stretched-out hand.)

MAXWELL: Ah, thank you, Niles.

NILES: *Cigar?* (He says sarcastically and hands the cigar to Maxwell.)

MAXWELL: Don't mind if I do. (He takes it.)

NILES: Will there be anything else, sir?

MAXWELL: Oh, is that the London Times?

(Niles is clearly annoyed, but hands him the newspaper.)

NILES: *Hmm! You know, my pyjamas are about your size.*

(Maxwell gives him a perplexed look, but continues telling him something else.)

(S01E11)

In this example Maxwell fails to understand the impolite intention behind Niles' sarcastic comments throughout the whole exchange, but in this example, he fails to recognize the impoliteness because of the use of sarcasm that is going to be discussed below in Chapter 2.2.

However, it should be noted that obvious intentionality helps to speed up the process of recognizing something as impolite. When there is clear

intention to be polite/impolite (e.g. using vulgar language, non-verbal cues as anger, etc.) in speaker's communicative behaviour it can usually be recognized by the hearer more quickly – it speeds up the communication process.

1.2.2. EMOTIONAL IMPACT AND INTENTIONALITY

This chapter follows to look at the effects of impoliteness and intentionality. Even though something is not meant to be impolite – failed impoliteness or accidental offence (Culpeper 2011, 51) – it can have some emotional impact on the hearer, i.e. he is offended or hurt by it. The emotional impact is considered to be a “central part of any definition of impoliteness” (Culpeper 2011, 21). Nevertheless, it should not be only an emotional impact that we take into consideration when analysing impoliteness, the emotions that drive the impolite communicative behaviour should be taken into account as well. This is what Culpeper calls an “affective impoliteness” (2011, 59) and Kasper describes as impoliteness driven by emotions (1990, 20-21). What is described by these terms is the idea that impoliteness not only can trigger off negative emotions in the hearer but also it can be triggered by negative emotions itself. However, we must bear in mind that just negative emotions do not necessarily mean impoliteness:

Displaying emotions such as contempt or anger has nothing in itself to do with impoliteness. However, somebody displaying great contempt for and anger at someone and doing so publicly may be judged [...] to have acted in an inappropriately and unfairly hurtful way [...]. (Culpeper 2011, 60)

To clarify Culpeper, it is only when the negativity is projected at someone that it is recognized as impoliteness. I would argue that the connection between politeness and positivity works in similar fashion, the positivity must be projected at somebody in a way that is meant to be complimentary, helpful, encouraging, etc.

To sum it up, both politeness and impoliteness as communicative behaviour consist of verbal and non-verbal elements. They both have an influence on how the relationships between people are progressing – politeness when done correctly has a positive effect on the relationship and impoliteness, on the other hand, a negative effect on said relationship. They are also deviations from what is considered to be a standard or normal communicative behaviour, each on a different end of the scale. Intentionality should also be considered when analysing politeness and impoliteness.

2. MOCK IMPOLITENESS AND MOCK POLITENESS

This chapter is going to be focused on the use of politeness and impoliteness in a specific context, it concentrates on what Leech terms mock politeness and mock impoliteness mean (Leech 2014, 100). In this thesis the term mock impoliteness is going to be used interchangeably with the term banter and sarcastic banter and equally the term mock politeness with sarcasm. In the beginning it is important to say that sarcasm and banter are “two apparent exceptions to the [politeness principle]” (Leech 2014, 100) as they work in contradiction to the form they have. Firstly, Culpeper in *Impoliteness: Using Language to Cause Offence* divides impoliteness into two separate phenomena – *genuine impoliteness* and *mock impoliteness* (Culpeper 2011, 208). He characterizes “mock impoliteness” as “the opposite of genuine impoliteness” (Culpeper 2011, 208), i.e. mock impoliteness is actually a form of politeness (see Chapter 2.1) Secondly, we can similarly divide politeness into *genuine politeness* and *mock politeness*. The mock politeness (or sarcasm) is in fact a form of indirect impoliteness (see Chapter 2.2). Let us now move to a more detailed explanation of the two mentioned.

2.1. BANTER – MOCK IMPOLITENESS

To start with, it is important to state that banter is a part of politeness. There are different views on the effect and the functions of what we call banter. Below, two case studies that are focused on banter are going to be examined. The researches of those tried to identify how banter works and why people use it. In the next part of this chapter the in-group importance of banter is going to be discussed, followed by rules of banter as well as its key functions.

As was mentioned above, banter is a kind of a “wolf in sheep’s clothing”, or in other words, politeness in impoliteness’s clothing. Let us start with Leech’s *Banter principle* that explains how banter works in theory:

In order to show solidarity with h[earer], say something which is (i) obviously untrue, and (ii) obviously impolite to h [and therefore the interpretation of such utterance must change that] what s[peaker] says is impolite to h and is clearly untrue. Therefore, what s[peaker] really means is polite to h[earer] and true. (Leech 1983, 144)

To explain banter, an expression or communicative behaviour is used by the speaker that is clearly negative to the hearer, however, the final interpretation of it is going to be the opposite – positive. Culpeper describes the workings of banter similarly to Leech’s Banter principle as a “mismatch” between the friendly and close context of the situation and the impolite utterance. He continues to describe how the banter works: „The more people like each other, the more concern they are likely to have for each other’s face.” (Culpeper 2011, 209) This leads us again to the interpretation of an insult as a joke:

We do not need to be polite to one another: I can insult you, and you will respond to it as a joke. This proves what good buddies we are. (Leech 2014, 102)

Therefore, in theory, banter “[involves] cancelling of impoliteness perlocutionary effects flowing from a conventionalised impoliteness formula when an obvious mismatch emerges with the context it is used in” (Culpeper 2011, 208). In other words, the situation signals the obviously untrue nature of the statement which makes the statement lose its impolite nature, thus it is interpreted as a joke. Another way to describe banter is as “an attempt to derive amusement at the expense of something or someone; for example, through an

insult, demeaning joke, teasing, sarcasm, or self-deprecating remark” not meant to cause any harm to the hearer (Terrion and Ashworth 2002, 59).

In addition, banter goes against the idea of positive politeness as presented by Brown and Levinson (1999) and mentioned in Chapter 1.1. In my opinion, the problem with Brown and Levinson’s theory (1999) is that they do not deal with banter or sarcasm in their politeness theory. Their idea of positive politeness is that in communication we always try to avoid disagreement, therefore the meaning of our utterance should be straightforward and true; hence banter is not in accordance to their theory. However, it is going to be shown that this case is not always true.

Let us now consider banter in terms of Grice’s *cooperative principle* (1975). In a nutshell, according to the cooperative principle you should speak in a way that is as informative as required (maxim of quantity), truthful (maxim of quality), relevant (maxim of relation), and clear and unambiguous (maxim of manner). Grice understands that some linguistic devices can flout his maxims, for example, banter is flouting maxim of quality as what is said is not meant to be taken as the truth. Therefore, Grice’s theory can explain phenomena such as banter better than Brown and Levinson (1999).

2.1.1. BANTER IN WORKING ENVIRONMENT

During my research for this thesis I came across certain studies that I see worth mentioning as they are concerned with banter in working environment and relationships as most of my examples from the television show are. Terrion and Ashworth focus in their study “From ‘I’ to ‘we’: The role of putdown humor and identity in the development of a temporary group” (2002), as the title suggests, on temporary groups in police training programme in Canada and how the group members use humour, specifically banter to establish group cohesion and sense of belonging into a group. They argue that work and humour are not mutually

exclusive as some argue (Duncan et al., 1990), they mention that some theorists do not share their views and see putdown humour as “[having] a negative effect on group development” (2002, 58-59). Nevertheless, they say that banter can serve as the exact opposite and it can even help initiate learning in a working community, as humour serves as a cultural and an identity glue (Terrion and Ashworth 2002, 58). From their study it is clear that the people who were part of it “regarded humour as an ice-breaker” (Terrion and Ashworth 2002, 63), moreover, regarding banter, they see it as an in-group marker – as a participant of their study said: “You would know you weren’t part of the group if nobody ever made fun of you” (Terrion and Ashworth 2002, 70).

In “‘Taking the piss’: Functions of banter in the IT industry” (2007) by Plester and Sayers the study too is focused on the use of banter and humour in a workplace. They suggest that for banter to work the willingness to banter must be mutual and “between equal and confident adults” (Plester and Sayers 2007,159), otherwise it may result in a straightforward impoliteness. Their study is concerned with three teams of three different IT companies. Their definition of banter is as follows:

‘Banter’ or ‘taking the piss’ [...] means to deflate someone else’s ego to bring them to the same level as others [by using] humorous strategies and tactics [and it] occurs when people are in good humor; when people are playful. (Plester and Sayers 2007, 158-159)

In other words, banter serves to flatten the structure of a company and to create more friendly working environment. Their results showed that banter indeed is practiced in work environment on daily basis but also accepted as “fun and enjoyment rather than [having] more offensive meanings” (Plester and Sayers 2007, 168).

What both aforementioned studies have in common is that they are focused on group forming and inner-group workings as connected to banter

which is going to be more discussed in the following Chapter 2.1.2. They also describe banter as a comic relief provided in stressful conditions which working environment can be as well as a tool to bring people together and create more closely-knit groups.

To sum this up, banter is considered to have a positive influence on relationships and group relationships – it is a sign of a close connection between two or more people that are willing to participate in it and it can function as a stress relief. Therefore, in a workplace banter should not be considered to have a negative influence, however, the willingness to be part of it is important to avoid straightforward impoliteness.

2.1.2. THE ROLE OF GROUPS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Above in the Chapter 2.1.1 we can see that the researchers not only agree upon the bonding function of banter but also provide a proof for it. Nevertheless, so far it has been talked only about banter in working environment, however, banter is probably most commonly used in relationships that are closer and more intimate (family, friendly or intimate personal relationships), where the banter is the sign of, as was mentioned above, being so close that we can say anything and the other person will take no offence because it is meant only as a joke. This is an example of what Radcliffe-Brown calls a “joking relationship”, i.e.:

[A] relation between two persons in which one is by custom permitted, and in some instances required, to tease or make fun of the other, who in turn is required to take no offence. (Radcliffe-Brown 1940, 195)

It is important to also mention that she adds it only works “so long as it is kept within certain bounds defined by custom” (Radcliffe-Brown 1940, 208-209). Banter unifies a group, bonds their members together and creates a sense of closeness or rather intimacy that permits the members of a said

group/relationship to say anything and in turn take no offence. The omission of somebody in a group from being the target of the banter is also very important as it is sign that the individual was not yet accepted into a group or already excluded, or in other words, “banter can mark group boundaries and such behaviours may indicate group’s identity” (Plester and Sayers 2007, 172). Consequently, trying to use banter while not being part of the group (even with the incentive of trying to be part of it) can lead to being excluded altogether.

The question why banter is so helpful and important in interpersonal relationships should be answered. I must agree with Lehtikoinen who says that “it is this mutual feeling of having a laugh which acts as a social glue” (2012, 19). In all of the above-mentioned relationships (co-workers, family members, friends or loved ones) it is the feeling of knowing the in-group members well enough to laugh at their impolite mockery rather than to get offended. It is Terrion and Ashworth that establish the role of the banter (in their words “putdown humour”) in group forming as crucial because it is “potent and pervasive communication medium for fostering a sense of belonging and meaning” (2002, 56).

I most certainly agree with the statement that “the act of laughing together [...] [seems] to have a salutary effect on the experience of being a member of the group” (Terrion and Ashworth 2002, 72) as it is going to be proved in the analysis later on. Therefore, if I agree that banter serves this purpose, it entails that I also have to agree that banter has a positive effect on the group and its relationship. Banter “help[s] foster a sense of ‘groupness’ – that is group cohesion and identity – a sense of moving from ‘I’ to ‘we’” (Terrion and Ashworth 2002, 56). Being part of the group makes insults acceptable, even laughable as every in-group member knows that they are not meant seriously.

2.1.3. RULES AND FUNCTIONS OF BANTER

Let us have a look how banter should work, Terrion and Ashworth put down five rules associated with banter in a group environment that “[serve] to preserve self- and social-esteem and a positive and friendly group climate.” (2002, 80), i.e. if we use banter in accordance with these rules the polite and also the comic effect will be preserved:

1. *presence* – members of the group which are not present should not be made fun of as it resembles more “betrayal or backstabbing” (Terrion and Ashworth 2002, 72);
2. *willingness to banter* – “a group member who is the target of a putdown has to be able and willing to laugh at him or herself” (Terrion and Ashworth 2002, 73) – insinuating that being willing to laugh at yourself makes you more likely to be a part of the group;
3. *no intention of offending* – the banter is always intended as a joke with no intention of offending anybody; when banter “goes too far” (Terrion and Ashworth 2002, 74) it puts the group intimacy and the usage of banter in danger;
4. “*untouchables*” (Terrion and Ashworth 2002, 74) – according to Terrion and Ashworth there are taboo topics that if subjected to being the target of a banter would put the people out of their comfort zone and offend them, therefore, they would create discomfort in a group;
5. *violating the rules* – violation of the rules usually means that the individual violating them will be met with discomfort of the group and possibly punished.

(Terrion and Ashworth 2002, 72-75)

The rules stated above are going to be useful later in Chapter 4.2 for further analysis of the collected data. However, the first three rules that Terrion and

Ashworth provide I find essential for banter: the presence of the target, everybody's willingness to participate and no intention to offend.

Another point I believe is important to add is that banter can and often is reciprocal, sort of back-and-forth communication act. To support my opinion, Plester and Sayers argue in their study that “banter focuses on some trait, habit, or characteristic of the recipient of the banter, who is then expected to participate with banter of their own” (2007, 159). Not only that bantering becomes a custom of a certain group or relationship – but also it can be reciprocated immediately in a kind of two-way back-and-forth exchange, for instance, part of the quote that is going to be used later on:

- (3) NILES: *Trollop*.
C.C.: *Bellboy*.
NILES: *Brunette*.
(They kiss passionately.)

(S03E01)

It must be mentioned that through the whole series C.C. has blonde hair – thus, he is insinuating that she is dyeing it. Here you can see the back-and-forth exchange of banter.

Nevertheless, let us move on to the reasons banter is used at all. In their study Plester and Sayers (2007) identified “six key functions of banter” that can help us understand what function the usage of an impolite communicative behaviour to communicate positive values have:

1. *making a point* – can be used for criticism;
2. *boredom busting* – can be “used to break up the day and add relief to boredom” (Plester and Sayers 2007, 178) – also a stress relief;
3. *socialization* – serves as in-group marker – it is used only between group members – therefore, it is easily recognized who is accepted into a group and who is not;

4. *celebrating differences* – as was said above, banter often targets personal traits, particularly extremes of some sort²;
5. *displaying the culture* – every working/family/friendship environment has a unique culture that defines the group, or as Holmes and Stubbe put it “shared humor emphasises common ground and shared norms” (Plester and Sayers 2003, 111)
6. *highlighting and defining status* – going back to what was said earlier, banter can be used to flatten social structures and create more friendly working environment, e.g. in their study Plester and Sayers found out that banter is “enjoyed more by lower level workers” as they are the ones that welcome flattening of the company’s structure. (Plester and Sayers 2007, 178)

(Plester and Sayers 2007, 168-181)

Plester and Sayers stress out that some utterances may have one function, however, most of them are multifunctional (2007, 168). Finally, it is important to add that there can be non-verbal cues that are helpful in recognizing banter as only a joke. For example, Keltner et al. provide a list of non-verbal cues that accompany the banter: “unusual vocalisations, singsong voice, formulaic utterances, elongated vowels, and unusual facial expressions” (1998, 1233). Facial expressions are very often found in the banter examples, for instance in this conversation of a couple I have witnessed:

- (4) He (with a sneer and smile): Honey, *you are stupid!*
 She (with a smile and wink): Well, *you are ugly*. We are even.
 (They both laugh.)

² Targeting a personal characteristic can be hurtful as Terrion and Ashworth suggested in their five rules of banter (2002, 72-75), therefore it is important to consider where we should draw the line because Plester and Sayers incorporate this into their study: “There [are] no official rules and few boundaries in teasing.” (2007, 174)

In the conversation of this couple you can see, that none of what is said is interpreted as having a negative meaning. Firstly, the reason why it so is most importantly the context of use – their relationship. Secondly, the non-verbal cues insinuate joking only. Their facial expression is also matched with a smile and the whole exchange is finally marked with a laughter afterwards that signals nobody was offended.

2.2. SARCASM – MOCK POLITENESS

Now that banter has been defined, explanation of sarcasm has to follow. Leech prefers to describe sarcasm as “conversational irony” (2014, 232) he argues that it allows better interpretation of the phenomenon. The author believes that the term sarcasm is too narrow – meaning only sarcastic remarks and comments (Leech 2014, 232). However, for the purposes of this thesis we are going to use the term sarcasm to cover sarcastic remarks, comments as well as sarcastic non-verbal behaviour. The author defines the sarcasm principle as follows:

If you must cause offence, at least do so in a way which doesn't overtly conflict with the [politeness principle], but allows the hearer to arrive at the offensive point of your remark indirectly, by way of implicature. (Leech 2014, 233)

This Leech's definition coincides with Culpeper's definition that titles sarcasm as “implicational impoliteness” (2011, 165) which in his terms “[mixes] features that point towards a polite interpretation and features that point towards an impolite interpretation” (Culpeper 2011, 166). Therefore, sarcasm can be defined as *mock politeness* – communicating meaning in a form that overtly sounds polite, but the covert meaning is a negative (impolite) one. Very good example is based on Grice's: “*You're a fine friend!*” (Grice 1975: 53), an example that insinuates nothing about its meaning having different than polite interpretation. However, when the word order is changed and intonational stress

is added to “you”: “*A fine friend YOU are!*” (Leech 2014, 234), it changes the interpretation of such utterance to sarcastic. Therefore, the sentence itself has a positive form but other signs (word order, intonational stress) point to it being meant in an untruthful way, which makes the interpretation sarcastic (negative). Another example of sarcasm provided by Holmes and Schnurr is: “*Good afternoon, Sue.*” (2005, 138). This sentence represents a polite greeting and it does not sound sarcastic at all until the context is provided. From the context we learn that Sue arrives late for work and possibly for work meeting and is greeted this way and the interpretation changes to sarcastic (Holmes and Schnurr 2005, 138). Adding, that the emphasis in the sentence is put on the word afternoon: “*Good AFTERNOON, Sue.*” The sarcastic interpretation is the only salient one in the context. The sarcastic interpretation is supported by the situational context of being late for work and the non-verbal sign of emphasis on the word “*afternoon*”.

2.2.1. INTERPRETATION AND NON-VERBAL CUES

Firstly, it should be mentioned how sarcasm works and why do people use it in their communicative behaviour. Sarcasm has double function: – “it works in favor of the speaker both offensively and defensively” (Leech 2014, 236). By “defensively” Leech means that the utterance the speaker uses does not have an impolite form and by “offensively” he means that the hearer is able to derive the negative implication from his words. The question is similar to the one of banter: What makes us understand something that is polite at form but having negative interpretation of its meaning? Leech explains it this way:

[T]he reason for treating an apparently polite utterance as impolite is that the polite interpretation is unsustainable—and is presumably meant to be so. (Leech 2014, 234)

The context of an utterance does not match its positive interpretation. Nevertheless, it is important to specify what makes the interpretation “unsustainable”. There can be two reasons for the impolite interpretation – first, the polite interpretation does not fit the situational context; second, the non-verbal behaviour and paralinguistic cues insinuate the impolite negative interpretation (Leech 2014, 233-234). This brings us to the topic of the non-verbal cues that help us distinguish sarcasm in speech.

Non-verbal cues, similar to those that signal banter and that were mentioned previously, are used to avoid any misunderstandings where sarcasm – e.g. special look, singsong voice, change of intonation and other types of non-verbal communication. In contrast with banter, sarcasm in its pure form is used to signal “an unfriendly demeanour” (Leech 2014, 102), i.e. the covert sarcastic meaning is meant to offend once deciphered, therefore, it can be used as one of impoliteness strategies:

- (5) (Fran greets C.C. at the door in a dressing gown.)
FRAN: Good morning, Miss Babcock. Come in make yourself comfortable.
C.C. (with a bright smile): *I see YOU have.*
(Fran laughs.)

(S01E05)

The change in a prosody of an utterance (the emphasis on the word "you") can undermine the verbally expressed politeness (Culpeper 2011, 169). Interestingly, changes in prosody of a sentence are one of the most common non-verbal cues for sarcasm. Although, prosody is a significant part of sarcasm, its mere presence or presence of any other non-verbal cue does not qualify an utterance as sarcastic, it is the connection between the non-verbal cues and the politeness expressed by the form used that helps us distinguish what is meant sarcastically:

[I]t is not simply the presence of these non-verbal cues that communicates ‘greater rudeness’, rather it is the way that these non-verbal cues mismatch verbal politeness cues that creates greater rudeness. (Culpeper 2011, 169)

The most important part of sarcasm (as it was with banter) is the “mismatch” between what is said (the form of the expression) and how and when it is said (the non-verbal cues and the context of situation).

2.3. SARCASTIC BANTER

An interesting phenomenon is sarcasm that is used not to offend, it is only used in a playful, joking way, the same way banter is usually used. In the following example sarcastic banter is used between Niles and Maxwell. One might argue that the different social position does not allow these two to banter, however, as is going to be explained later, their relationship is more family-like than simple employer-employee relationship. E.g.:

- (6) (Doorbell rings.)
MAXWELL: Niles, that's the doorbell.
NILES (in a grateful voice): Oh, sir, I would be lost without you.
(S01E10)

As demonstrated, Niles' reply would be under normal circumstances considered sarcastic, but his and Maxwell's relationship is very close even though it is a work relationship, they are close enough to use banter. It was proved above in Chapter 2.1.1 that banter works in favour of the relationships in a workplace – it has a positive effect on this kind of relationships. Therefore, we can consider example (6) above to be an example of banter that uses sarcasm as a way of expressing the impoliteness which is usually part of banter. Therefore, banter is far closer to a banter interpretation, it is what Bousfield calls “mock sarcasm”

(2008, 119), Leech describes as “ironic banter” (2014, 242) and Keltner et al. as “ironic teasing” (2001, 234). In this thesis the term *sarcastic banter* is going to be used to describe this phenomenon. To understand better what sarcastic banter is and how it works Keltner’s definition of teasing can be used:

[Ironic teasing] makes the tease indirect and less face-threatening for both teaser and target is the accompanying off-record markers, which signal that the provocation is to be taken in jest. (Keltner 2001, 234)

Sarcastic banter is making a sarcastic comment supported by the same “off-record markers” – non-verbal cues – as banter and sarcasm. As example we can again use Leech’s “*A fine friend you are!*” (Leech 2014, 234), This time the sarcastic meaning (the negative meaning) is cancelled out when replaced by banter interpretation signalled by non-verbal cues (smiling, laughing, intonation, tone of voice, etc.) of the sarcastic remark and it is taken as a joke only (Leech 2014, 241-242).

All things considered, sarcastic banter uses both sarcasm and banter strategies, however, the final interpretation is similarly to banter the polite one. Consequently, it should be specified how sarcasm and banter appear to differ. It was shown above that banter does not depend on straightforwardly impolite forms but it can make use of sarcasm as one of the ways to be realized. My opinion that it is banter that uses the strategies of sarcasm and no the other way around is supported by Leech who says that he was not able to find an example of banter exploited by sarcasm (2014, 242):

It seems possible that banter can exploit [sarcasm], whereas [sarcasm] cannot exploit banter. (Leech 2014, 241)

We have already established, that banter uses impolite forms in a way that does not convey negative meanings, on the contrary it is used as a sign of closeness and being able to say anything in front of the other person without them taking offence. It was also established that sarcasm is a way to convey negative meanings through positive forms – therefore, it is a strategy of impoliteness. So, when analysing sarcastic banter, we must first go through the process of recognizing sarcasm (which has negative interpretation), then we must establish that the negative interpretation is not salient in this context which makes us arrive at a conclusion that in fact it is banter we are dealing with. The process of deciphering communicative behaviour as sarcastic banter can be longer than it is with simple banter or sarcasm. Therefore, I argue that sarcastic banter belongs into the category of mock impoliteness together with banter as the final interpretation has polite meaning.

2.4. MOCK POLITENESS AND MOCK IMPOLITENESS

To conclude this chapter, it is important to remember that when identifying what mock politeness and mock impoliteness is we have “two sources of information” – “the mental lexicon [...] and the contextual information” (Culpeper 2011, 167). Also, it should be said again what the difference between sarcasm and banter is:

[Sarcasm] maintains courtesy on the surface level of what is said, but at a deeper level is calculated to imply a negative evaluation. Banter is offensive on the surface but at a deeper level is intended to maintain comity. (Leech 2014, 100)

Sarcasm being the more indirect way of conveying something impolite and banter even though it is impolite superficially it is not intended to offend. Another point to remember is that there is also the category of sarcastic banter and it belongs together with banter under the term mock impoliteness – therefore,

suggesting that we can use sarcasm in a bantering communicative behaviour,
however, we cannot use banter in a sarcastic communicative behaviour.

3. RECOGNITION OF BANTER AND SARCASM

In the analysis that follows we are going to focus on the distinction between banter, sarcasm and what was defined previously as sarcastic banter. Therefore, it is now important to set the rules for their recognition. Previously in Chapter 1.1.1 and Chapter 1.2.1 characteristics of politeness and impoliteness have been discussed. These characteristics can be used to differentiate between sarcasm, banter and sarcastic banter. We are going to focus on optionality, degree, normality, and transaction of value while adding form (meaning if the form the expression used is originally impolite or polite) and therefore, I have decided to put them in a table for greater clarity:

	MOCK IMPOLITENESS		MOCK POLITENESS
	Banter	Sarcastic banter	Sarcasm
<i>normality</i>	exception from the norm		
<i>optionality</i>	intentional		
<i>degree</i>	some need non-verbal elements to be recognized		
<i>function</i> (<i>transaction of value</i>)	positive	positive	negative
<i>form</i>	impolite	polite	polite

Table 1: Characteristics of banter, sarcastic banter and sarcasm

Table 1 sums up the characteristics of the above-mentioned devices (banter, sarcasm and sarcastic banter), which will be now discussed in more detail. Firstly, it was previously established that both mock politeness and mock impoliteness are an exception from the norm of politeness principle. Secondly, considering optionality, it was mentioned in Chapter 1 that both politeness and impoliteness

are optional and when considering impoliteness, the main question is intentionality. I argue that in case of banter, sarcastic banter and sarcasm there is no such a question and they can be only intentional. If banter was not intentional it would be just straightforward impoliteness and the same situation would arise with sarcasm – polite expression with no intention of impoliteness is simply polite. Therefore, all of these devices must be intentional. Although, they can be misunderstood as impolite.

With politeness and impoliteness, we could talk about to what degree something is polite or impolite – choice of expression, added non-verbal elements, etc. In case of mock politeness and mock impoliteness the non-verbal elements of the expression are often an essential part of the interpretation. E.g.:

(7) C.C. (to Niles who is offering her a drink): Niles, I don't make it a habit of drinking with the help.

NILES: *I've never been any help to YOU.*

C.C.: Exactly.

(S03E01)

As we can see in the example, the stress that is put on the word “you” is inseparable part of the expression that helps understand the expression as having sarcastic meaning. Without the stress the sarcastic meaning would be much harder to decipher or could be even understood as not having any sarcastic meaning at all. The stress is used similarly in the example “*A fine friend YOU are!*” above. In other words, in some instances the loss of the non-verbal signs can lead to a change of meaning from negative to positive and the other way around as was mentioned previously.

Regarding normality, it was established previously that both mock politeness and mock impoliteness are exceptions to the principle of politeness. With respect to form and function, sarcastic utterances or bantering can be harder to comprehend due to the difference between form and function and therefore

even when the non-verbal behaviour accompanying either mock politeness or mock impoliteness is present the utterance can be misunderstood. This opinion is supported by Culpeper:

An interpretation triggered through mismatching is more implicit and involves more inferencing than one triggered through matching, as targets must spend cognitive effort in resolving internal or external mismatches. (Culpeper 2011, 166-167)

Nevertheless, it is the mismatch between form and function that helps us establish what we are dealing with.

Lastly, in the analysis it is going to be attempted to establish the connection of each specific instance to context and/or co-text, i.e. what the interpretation of a sarcastic or a bantering instance depends on. Mey identifies co-text of a sentence “that portion of text which (more or less immediately) surrounds it” and usually is helpful for our understanding of a sentence or text (1993, 184). Nonetheless, co-text is sometimes not enough to have a full understanding of an utterance, that is where context comes to rescue. According to Mey, context is considered to be “the entirety of circumstances (not only linguistic) that surround the production of language” (Mey 1993, 184). Furthermore, the term context involves not only the situational context – all extra-linguistic factors that here immediately connected to the situation of the utterance, but also the wider context that involves the relationship between the participants of an exchange as well as all culturally shared knowledge.

3.1. RECOGNITION OF SARCASM

Essential part of recognizing something as sarcastic is the hearer’s reaction to it. Although, it should be noted that hearer’s failure to recognize the sarcastic meaning behind an utterance does not rid it of its negative meaning, for instance:

- (8) NILES: (reading newspapers, having a glass of alcohol)
MAXWELL: (taking the glass) Ah, thank you, Niles.
NILES: (sarcastically) *Cigar?*
MAXWELL: Don't mind if I do.
NILES: Will there be anything else, sir?
MAXWELL: Oh, is that the London Times?
NILES (clearly annoyed): *Hmm- You know, my pyjamas are about your size.*
(Maxwell gives him a perplexed look, but continues telling him something else.)

(S01E01)

Even though the non-verbal cues were in place the hearer failed to recognize the sarcastic meaning in the exchange. This does not mean that the utterance is no longer sarcastic, it just proves that sometimes the impolite intention behind an utterance can go unnoticed, in this example it was because Maxwell was lost in his own thoughts and simply tuned out these non-verbal cues.

It was mentioned previously that intentionality is an important part of sarcasm. Followingly, it is more common that the sarcastic intention is recognized. If the intention is recognized the hearer usually somehow reacts to it– the reaction can be miscellaneous – and the sarcastic comment can be followed by:

- *Sarcastic reply:*

- (9) (Niles comes into the room with dyed hair and C.C. is smirking)
NILES: What?
C.C.: *Smart... You're doing it gradually, so no one would notice.*
NILES: *Same way you became a woman.*

(S04E26)

Sarcastic reply suggests that the hearer understood the covert meaning behind an utterance, however, it allows him to retaliate against the speaker in the same way they used to offend him and, therefore, hide the impoliteness as well.

○ *Overt impoliteness:*

(10) (Maxwell offers C.C. a cigarette)

C.C.: Maxwell, I am wearing the patch. If I light a cigarette right now, my heart will stop.

(Niles standing next to her lights a lighter for her as if to light her cigarette. C.C. takes a chewing gum out of her mouth and puts it in Niles' pocket.)

(S02E15)

In this example the sarcastic gesture of lighting a lighter is followed by overtly impolite gesture of sticking a gum into somebody's pocket. As Leech suggests this one – “the escalation of rudeness” – is the least likely one as it would result only “in loss of face by both parties” (2014, 236).

○ *No reaction:*

Nothing is said; however, the hearer lets the speaker know by using non-verbal cues that he understood the sarcasm behind his comment – followingly, the hearer either shows displeasure or does not care about the intention to offend. In the following example the hearer expresses the discontent with an angry facial expression:

(11) C.C. (speaking to a guest at the dinner table): Sorry, Doug, you'll have to excuse us. This isn't a typical evening.

NILES: (quietly to C.C. only) *Yes, you're not home alone sitting on your foot massager watching 'Sisters'.*

(C.C. drops her knife and stops smiling.)

(S02E17)

Although, other cues can be used – e.g. pauses in speaking, stopping in the middle of walking, etc. Nonetheless, the most crucial part for recognition was mentioned previously and noted in Table 1. It is the mismatch between form and function. In case of sarcasm it concerns the mismatch between the polite form and negative meaning. The mismatch arises because the interpretation of a sarcastic utterance would otherwise not be possible when said in a certain way (using non-verbal cues previously mentioned) and in a certain context (one that does not allow the polite interpretation).

3.2. RECOGNITION OF BANTER AND SARCASTIC BANTER

It was previously established and repeated that banter is used in close relationships where speakers are comfortable using this phenomenon. Therefore, when analysing something as a banter the account of the relationship of participants in the conversation must be accounted for. The rules of banter (Terrion and Ashworth 2002) on page 27 can be helpful in analysing utterances with respect to the relationship. In Table 1 it was summarized that banter has an impolite form and positive interpretation and enough was said on this topic previously.

To compare both banter and sarcastic banter with sarcasm, we are going to analyse responses to these as well. The reactions that are expected are similar to those of sarcasm.

- *Bantering (or sarcastic bantering) reply*
- *Non-verbal reaction* – reacting by a gesture, facial expression, etc.
- *No reaction* – ignoring the banter despite recognizing it
- *Misunderstanding* – which can result in straightforward impoliteness.

Lastly, the six key functions of banter (Plester and Sayers 2007) as mentioned in Chapter 2.1.3 will help us establish if an instance complies with

one of these functions to further prove that it really is banter in the end. To review, the functions are – making a point (criticism), stress or boredom relief, in-group (relationship) marker, targeting personal traits, emphasis on shared humour, levelling the social structure.

3.2.1. RECOGNITION OF SARCASTIC BANTER

The phenomenon of sarcastic banter was discussed previously in Chapter 2.3. Sarcastic banter is a type of banter that uses sarcasm (a way of conveying impolite meaning more indirectly) as it would any other impolite formulae, therefore it adheres to the rules of banter. Culpeper suggests that sarcastic banter is becoming more and more conventionalized and explains how sarcastic banter is interpreted in normal conversation:

The ‘polite’ device is becoming a conventionalised prelude to impoliteness. Some of these regular ways of performing mixed impoliteness are themselves becoming conventionalised to an extent. The interpreter need not work through all the inferential steps that characterise the resolution of mixed messages, but can short-circuit the process by recognising the impolite meaning projected by the conventionalised impolite mixed message. The same is likely to be true of certain familiar forms of sarcasm and banter, or for that matter irony, metaphor and idioms. (Culpeper 2011, 177-178)

What can be taken from this, is that as sarcasm and sarcastic banter is becoming regular feature of everyday communication it is becoming easier for the participants to decipher the meaning and to understand it without going through all the "inferential steps".

Let us go back to the characteristics of sarcastic banter mentioned in Table 1 (see page 37). The table helps us also understand why banter should be considered part of mock impoliteness together with banter. In Table 1 it was established that all three devices are exceptions from the norm, are intentional

and use some non-verbal cues and context for their true meaning to be recognized. Nevertheless, the most important characteristics for distinguishing between sarcastic banter, banter and sarcasm are the function and the form. In comparison with sarcasm, sarcastic banter too has polite form – the impoliteness is not obvious when for example just seeing a sentence written down, for instance, the example that has been used previously and works well: "*A fine friend you are.*" In this sentence without any context or anything else to accompany it we cannot decisively say that the utterance is impolite, because it rather seems like the opposite. Although, it is enough to add some context and non-verbal cues for the interpretation to change:

(12) *A fine friend YOU are!*

(Said between two friends after one has disappointed the other.)

This is an example of sarcasm – form remains the same (polite), however the interpretation changes to having negative meaning. The stress on the word "*you*" and the context of the friend being disappointed helps us to arrive to this interpretation. Similarly, simply changing the context of example (12) can again lead to change of the meaning:

(13) *A fine friend YOU are!*

(Said between two friends while laughing after one pulled a joke on the other.)

The change in the situational context above leads again to change of interpretation from having negative meaning to having positive meaning. To conclude, the difference between sarcasm and sarcastic banter is the interpretation that is in the latter positive, and the difference between banter and sarcastic banter is the form of the utterance that is in the latter polite. Therefore, only when all matters of context are examined including the non-verbal cues, we

can clearly say what meaning an example “*A fine friend you are!*” has. Depending on the context it can be interpreted as all three previously mentioned devices – banter, sarcasm and sarcastic banter.

3.3. BANTER AND SARCASM IN COMEDY

When everything important was said about banter and sarcasm it should be considered how banter and sarcasm can work in a sitcom to produce comic effect on the audience. The explanation of why we laugh at something impolite is provided by Gruner and his “superiority theory”:

[...] we laugh at the misfortune, stupidity, clumsiness, moral or cultural defect suddenly revealed in someone else, to who we instantly and momentarily feel ‘superior’ since we are not, at the moment, unfortunate, stupid, morally or culturally defective, and so on. (Gruner 1997, 13)

In other words, if someone else is being ridiculed it makes us laugh. According to Terrion and Ashworth: “humour relies on making fun of a perceived weakness of the target (whether person, thing or institution) for its success” (2002, 58). That is why impoliteness, clumsiness and other device of ridicule are the source of the comic of many sitcoms. In sitcoms the dialogues and situations are carefully planned to achieve the desirable comic effect. Especially the instances of sarcasm are more fun for the audience, because of the reasons stated above. Moreover, arriving to the final meaning is more complicated and therefore, the audience is happy that they understood the indirect hidden meaning.

4. ANALYSIS OF MOCK POLITENESS AND MOCK IMPOLITENESS IN *THE NANNY*

As was previously mentioned the data that are subject to this thesis are from the American television sitcom *The Nanny* (1993-1999) and only the instances that involved banter, sarcasm, sarcastic banter or some phenomena that appeared to be connected with those previously mentioned were recorded. All the instances that were recorded (with the exception of those found in this thesis) can be found in Appendix 1 and they are divided into three tables – sarcasm, sarcastic banter and banter – sorted by seasons and episodes, and if need be provided with brief commentary. Some of the linguistic data presented here need more context for the analysis as we established previously that everything, even politeness, can be expressed by communicative behaviour beyond a simple sentence. As was established in the introduction the context and the non-verbal cues, needed for the analysis of a specific example are written in the brackets as part of the quote. Similarly, additional stress is highlighted by capital letters and the sentences (or possibly behaviour) that were the instances of either mock impoliteness or mock politeness were highlighted in italics.

In Chapter 3 it was mentioned that every bantering, sarcastic commentary or sarcastic bantering is an exception from the norm and is intentional, therefore in the following analysis most attention, when considering characteristics of these linguistic devices, is going to be paid to the non-verbal cues, form and function. The analysis that follows is going to be divided again into three categories – sarcasm, sarcastic banter and banter – and it is going to follow the theoretical framework established previously. Subsequently, it is going to include some other viewpoints that were acquired while analysing the data.

4.1. ANALYSING SARCASM

It was established previously in Chapter 2.2 that sarcasm is offensive indirectly by the way of implicature. It was also specified previously how to recognize something as sarcastic – usually there is no other interpretation than the negative one salient in the context of the utterance or other communicative behaviour. The sarcasm is also marked by non-verbal cues that help us identify something as sarcastic. Some of them are going to be analysed here. Further, we are also going to have a look at how sarcasm is created – whether it works with the co-text or the context or both. Notable part of sarcasm, as was mentioned, is the other participant's reaction to it, therefore, the types of reactions mentioned in Chapter 3.1 are going to be discussed in more detail as well. The reactions are more interesting because sarcasm is the indirect way of impoliteness and therefore, it is usually more thought through and even reacting to it can be harder.

In Table 1 in Chapter 3 it was established that sarcasm has negative function (it is offensive to the hearer); however, its form is polite, i.e. the form of the utterance (or behaviour), when torn out of the context that provides negative interpretation, would appear very normal and would have positive (polite) interpretation. This hypothesis is going to be shown on some examples from the television series. As was mentioned previously, this thesis is focusing on the four main characters. Their relationships can be observed through longer period of time and the relationship that contains the most sarcastic responses is the one between the butler Niles and the co-producer/co-worker of Maxwell Sheffield, C.C. Babcock. Accordingly, the most examples here are going to contain these two protagonists, with some addition of the other two protagonists as well.

C.C.'s and Niles' relationship with their frequent sarcastic remarks and sarcastic exchanges of comments is one of the biggest sources of comedy in the

television series. One of the simplest examples of sarcasm and the dynamics of their relationship is the following:

(14) (Niles is holding door for a C.C. who was leaving but got stuck talking to Fran)

NILES (slightly annoyed): Does this mean you aren't leaving?

C.C. (with a slight smile): *Sorry to disappoint you.*

NILES (closing the door unimpressed by her apology): *I'll bounce back.*

(S01E03)

The conversation starts as a very normal one with a polite question from Niles, even though he is a little annoyed. However, when C.C. notices that he is annoyed it makes her happy to annoy him even more, by remarking that she is “*sorry to disappoint him.*” Nevertheless, the interpretation of her being actually sorry is disregarded first of all by what we know about their relationship and more importantly by her slight smile while saying it – smile being the non-verbal cue. This non-verbal cue helps us identify her utterance as a sarcastic rather than a genuine apology. To add to this, Niles is ready to react to her sarcastic comment which he clearly understands and replies by another sarcastic comment. The reason why we regard his comment as sarcastic is mostly because in this situation the comment is an expected reaction to a genuine apology as for instance “*That is okay!*” or “*Don't worry about it.*” would be, which is not a typical reaction between these two protagonists and thus, we deduce from the context of their relationship that the interpretation has negative meaning. All of these replies would be, however, interpreted as sarcastic when uttered in this context in Niles' unimpressed and bored tone.

4.1.1. SITUATIONAL CONTEXT AND SARCASM

The most interesting sarcasm examples, I think, are those that work with the situational context in some way. In other words, the speaker uses what they or the others are doing (objects and what is happening around them) as a source of their sarcasm:

(15) (C.C. comes to the room while Niles is sweeping the floor and drops pile of papers on the table.)

C.C.: [Maxwell] wants these contracts in London by morning.

(Niles offers C.C. his broom.)

NILES: *Well, here, hop on. With the time difference you'll just make it.*

(C.C. looks at him with contempt and walks away from him.)

(S01E03)

In such situation the sarcastic comment is a reaction to impolitely worded request. The utterance without the situational context has positive meaning, however, the way Niles uses the situational context – he is sweeping the floor – implies the negative interpretation of C.C. being a witch. What underlines the sarcasm in Niles' utterance even more is the sincerity with which he says the sentence as a genuine advice to C.C. Another way to respond to sarcasm after responding to sarcasm with sarcastic remark too, is to ignore it altogether. Here C.C. chooses to ignore his sarcastic remark and gives him only contemptuous look that is the non-verbal cue which shows us her recognition of his intention to offend her. Similar example that works with situational context could be this:

(16) (C.C. comes with Niles to a room where Fran is sitting with a woman that looks and behaves exactly like Fran)

C.C. (in shock): *Good God, it's multiplying.*

(Fran, however, ignores her completely, probably for the sake of her guest and introduces the guest to C.C.)

(S02E01)

The sarcasm here is not signalled only non-verbally (C.C.'s shocked expression and tone of voice), but also verbally. She is using an expression that is completely out of context which makes it sound sarcastic. As was mentioned in Chapter 3.1, the mismatch between the situation and the expression used is the cue for sarcastic interpretation of such utterance. Fran's reaction here, however, is different than C.C.'s in the previous example, she decides to overlook her impoliteness completely, probably because they have company, and therefore she looks not bothered by C.C.'s comment. Another example of situational context as the cause of sarcasm is e.g.:

- (17) (C.C. walks into the room in a ridiculous outfit with bright smile, Niles announces her entrance.)
NILES: Miss Babcock, (slight pause) *I presume*.
(C.C. looks at him angrily.)

(S01E05)

In this situation the hearer (C.C.) was not ready for the sarcasm therefore, the only reply is the angry look she gives to Niles. The non-verbal cue in this example is the slight pause between her name and the additional "I presume". It is obvious that Niles knows who she is, however, him saying that he is not sure demonstrates that he thinks she looks ridiculous and therefore he indirectly criticizes her outfit, which is unexpected to her as she looks very happy with it. The sarcasm arises from the context of the situation – C.C. wearing ridiculous clothes.

In Chapter 1 regarding politeness it was mentioned that politeness is not only an utterance but also a non-verbal behaviour. Thus, I came across an

interesting phenomenon while analysing the data – an example of sarcasm being expressed without using words, e.g.:

(18) (Maxwell offers C.C. a cigarette)

C.C.: Maxwell, I am wearing the patch. If I light a cigarette right now, my heart will stop.

(Niles standing next to her lights a lighter for her as if to light her cigarette. C.C. takes a chewing gum out of her mouth and puts it in Niles' pocket.)

(S02E15)

This is a very interesting example of sarcasm. The sarcasm here is the gesture of offering C.C. the lighter for lighting a cigarette, a gesture which in a different context would be considered polite. Here the gesture is a reaction to what was said before – to the co-text of the situation. Therefore, the gesture is interpreted as Niles' wish for C.C. to die. What is also interesting is her reaction – usually it is just another sarcastic remark or just showing annoyance or anger, but here she reacts with an impolite gesture of her own as she puts her chewing gum into Niles' pocket. This reaction is another of the previously mentioned (see Chapter 3.1) – overt impoliteness. The overt impoliteness is a sign that she was not able to remain calm and she was clearly offended a lot by the sarcastic gesture.

The last example shown below is similar to the previous ones, it differs in particulars, for example the context of the situation and the non-verbal cues accompanying the sarcasm:

(19) (It is before Christmas and C.C. is talking to Maxwell looking tired, she hands Niles her glass for refill.)

C.C.: I just have so much work to do.

(Niles pours her a glass of whiskey.)

NILES (singing traditional Christmas carol): *Cheers, gotta keep that nose so bright. Don't you guide his sleigh that night?*

(C.C. is annoyed and Maxwell laughs, she looks at him with annoyance too.)

(S04E11)

The example shows an important situational factor – the situation takes place right before Christmas therefore singing a traditional Christmas carol is not out of place, however, it is used in a context that insinuates that C.C. is an alcoholic as the feature of having a red nose is usually associated with alcoholism. Her reaction – the annoyance – is the same as in some of the previous examples (e.g. example (15) and (17)). Let us now move to another source of sarcasm.

4.1.2. CO-TEXT AND SARCASM

Another very common source of sarcasm in this television series is a sarcasm based on co-text. Co-text (as was mentioned before) describes the words and sentences surrounding other utterance and followingly sarcasm can be based on what was said before – it is a reaction to previous utterances. The co-text can work in many ways, not only as simple sarcastic response to an utterance, it can also be a wordplay with what was said before, or parodying/imitating previous utterances. Nevertheless, let us start with a simple sarcastic response that originates in the co-text:

(20) (C.C. is going to an award show and makes plans for what to wear to this event.)

C.C.: Now what would I look really great in?

NILES (in matter-of-fact way like he is just offering possibility):
A sealed mausoleum.

(C.C. looks at him angrily.)

(S04E20)

Again, in another context the expression could sound perfectly normal, however, here following the question about what to wear it is completely out of place and meant to offend. The non-verbal cue is again the way the utterance is pronounced as if Niles is just giving real advice and offering her possibility. There is no verbal reaction, only her angry look that shows she is very annoyed. Let us follow with another example, this time with a different reaction to the sarcasm:

(21) C.C. (to Maxwell who is smoking a cigar): We [She and her brother] used to have so much fun. Every summer he'd take me to the horse show.

NILES (inquisitively as if genuinely interested): *Did you ever win?*

C.C. (completely calm): Maxwell, *will you put that out?* It's stinking up the house.

MAXWELL: Oh C.C., I thought you liked cigars.

C.C.: *I meant HIM!* (looking at Niles)

(S03E02)

Niles' response to her being taken to a horse show "*Did you ever win?*" is offensive for obvious reasons, however, the analysis is still necessary. He is reacting to what C.C. has said before (to the co-textual information) by a simple question that has perfectly polite form, however, the meaning has only negative interpretation when we consider what kind of utterance preceded. Thus, the only possible interpretation is the negative one – implying she was the horse participating in the horse show. The non-verbal cues here are again prosodic – the inquisitive and interested tone in which he “asks”. Her response at first looks like Fran’s in example (16) where Fran decided to ignore the sarcastic comment altogether and not to give the offender the pleasure of seeing her hurt. Nevertheless, we can see that C.C.’ comment was a thought-through sarcastic

comment in the end – when C.C. implies that Niles should be the one to be put out and not the cigar and thus reacts to the context of the situation.

Another way how the sarcastic meaning is often conveyed is playing with words from the previous co-text. In the following example C.C. is taking advantage of the idiomatic meaning of the phrase:

(22) (Fran and C.C. are watching Maxwell interacting with his kids.)

FRAN: Aw, isn't this sweet? Couldn't you just drop dead?

C.C. (with big constrained smile): *I don't know, could YOU?*

(Fran just smiles and ignores her.)

(S01E01)

The phrase “*drop dead*” in this situation means that the actions they are watching are very pleasing to watch. On the other hand, C.C. is taking into consideration the literal meaning of the phrase which makes her comment have a negative meaning. Therefore, her comment means that she wants to get rid of Fran and it is this obvious change from idiomatic to literal meaning that makes this seemingly polite utterance have a sarcastic meaning. The sarcastic meaning is emphasized by the non-verbal cue here in the form of the stress that is put on the word “*you*”. Fran probably does not recognize the intention to offend as she is too occupied watching the kids with their father.

The example that follows is similar to the others in a way that the sarcasm is connected to the co-text of the conversation, however, in this example the sarcasm is a continuation of what the speaker himself said previously (in the previous examples it was always a reaction to what the person who is the subject of sarcasm said):

(23) NILES (to a guest): Miss Mercer, right this way. Mr. Sheffield's sorry he's kept you. (quietly to C.C. in very different tone) *We're all sorry he's kept YOU.*

(C.C. just rolls her eyes and continues into the other room.)

(S03E07)

In this example repeating the same structure of the sentence with a different meaning is a part of the sarcastic meaning. The first “*kept you*” has the very polite meaning “*sorry to keep you waiting*”, however, the second instance of the phrase (even though it has the same sentence structure – has the same polite form) is marked by that non-verbal cue – in this case the stress that is put on the word “*you*” – that marks the interpretation as negative. In this example C.C. ignores him and even though she recognized the sarcastic meaning she does not look bothered, but rolling her eyes is a sign that she understood his sarcasm. The instances where a structure of what was said is imitated or parodied were quite common and more of them can be found in Appendix 1 – Table A: Sarcasm.

Let us now move to other examples of sarcasm that I found very interesting and worth mentioning. There are examples where sarcasm is asked for, where it is intensified by a non-verbal behaviour, or where it is expected. Let us start with one that is very peculiar:

(24) C.C.: Therapy happens to be very beneficial. I have been going for twenty years.

(Long silence follows and Fran and Maxwell are looking at her intensely.)

FRAN (laughs and waves it aside): *Nah! Too easy!*

(C.C. looks annoyed.)

(S01E07)

In this example it is obvious that Fran disregards saying anything sarcastic as “too easy”, because what C.C. says is literally asking for a sarcastic commentary.

The form and the interpretation of the utterance “*Nah! Too easy!*” is definitely not a negative one in general. Nevertheless, the context of the situation, i.e. where the conversation is taking place and what sentence precedes the change of the interpretation to the impolite one. This disregard of saying anything sarcastic is a sarcastic commentary itself. Firstly, it is accompanied by the non-verbal cue of laughter and waving her hand. Secondly, C.C.’s reaction (annoyed expression) proves that even she acknowledged Fran’s remark as offensive.

The following is an example of the intensification of sarcasm:

(25) (C.C. is being very harsh about something)

FRAN: *Question, when they shot Bambi's mother, did you find that a sad moment? (long pause) AT ALL?*

C.C. (with a bright smile): *I'm sure she's mounted on a nice wall in a fine home somewhere.*

(S01E07)

Firstly, this example of sarcasm is very straightforward. Previously, the participants of the conversation were talking about something completely else, when C.C. made harsh remark about something that was followed by this simple question in a positive form – Fran is asking in a way and tone that doubts C.C. could be “*sad*”, therefore, she is insinuating an impolite interpretation. Secondly, this utterance itself would be enough to generate a sarcastic interpretation of the utterance, however, it is intensified by the long pause that is followed by the stressed question tag “*At all?*”. The question tag and the long pause here serve as the non-verbal cues of sarcasm that intensify its salience. Moreover, C.C.’s reaction is sarcastic as well, the obviousness of Fran’s sarcasm allows her to show Fran that she is not offended and she is able to play along.

As the show progresses the sarcastic comments are expected every time where C.C. and Niles’ are concerned. The example below is an interesting one as the sarcasm was expected and asked for by C.C.:

(26) C.C.: I haven't seen Maxwell in three days. I don't know why I bother coming over anymore. (She pauses for a bit and says surprised.) Aren't you going to say anything obnoxious?

NILES: *I wouldn't kick a dog when she's down.*

(S01E13)

The first part of her speech is asking for some sarcastic comments, that is regarded by her surprise “*Aren't you going to say anything obnoxious?*” – this utterance is literally asking Niles for saying something sarcastic and it is a bit sarcastic as well – it has a polite form, the non-verbal cue is the surprised tone, the negative interpretation is that she expects Niles to always say something “*obnoxious*”, something sarcastic. Therefore, Niles' reply would be the response to the sarcastic comment – the reply again is sarcastic. Niles uses the personal pronoun “*she*” which is clearly aimed at C.C. saying she is too miserable by herself that it would be too much for him to increase her misery. He is using the phrase “*don't kick the dog when it's down*” that has no inherent impolite interpretation. Similar example where sarcasm is expected but prevented is this one:

(27) MAXWELL (about winning an award): Just once I want to be on top.

C.C.: I want you on top too, Maxwell. (She immediately turns to Niles who is just opening his mouth to say something and stuffs whatever she is eating into his mouth.)

(S02E18)

In this example C.C. does not want to hear any sarcastic comments, however, she expects them so she uses this quite impolite gesture – stuffing food into Niles' mouth – to avoid any sarcastic reaction. As everything about sarcasm was presented, we can proceed to analysis of banter and sarcastic banter.

4.2. ANALYSING BANTER AND SARCASTIC BANTER

Previously in Chapter 2.1, banter was defined as saying something impolite that obviously does not have any truth value and has, therefore, polite meaning (Leech 1983, 144). Banter is used in close relationships and it is very common in working relationships (see Chapter 2.1.1) because it flattens the social structure and thus it creates friendlier working environment (Plester and Sayers 2007, 158-159). The examples in the analysis are going to be judged by the criteria that were presented in Chapter 3.2 and summarized in Table 1 (see page 37). Banter is an intentional exception from the politeness principle that uses non-verbal cues to ease the interpretation of meaning. Nevertheless, the most important thing that distinguishes banter from the sarcasm and sarcastic banter and allows us to recognize banter is its form and function. Banter is presented in a form that without the situational context would be considered very impolite – it uses derogatory gestures, phrases and words, however, the function of it is not intended to be offensive. With banter the function is usually positive – it is meant to show how close the people are – in Leech’s words:

We do not need to be polite to one another: I can insult you, and you will respond to it as a joke. This proves what good buddies we are.
(Leech 2014, 102)

And as was shown in Chapter 2.1.1 it works in the same way in working relationships that are the subject of the television show. Consequently, an analysis of the inner workings of the relationships of the protagonists must be done before we can move to the analysis of banter. If sarcasm was mostly commonly found in the television series in the relationship between C.C. and Niles, then banter was most commonly found between Fran, Maxwell and Niles as the relationships between them are very close and friendly. Let us have a closer look on the individual relationships.

Fran and Niles are both working for Maxwell and their relationship is very friendly. Banter between all of them complies with the six functions of banter (Plester and Sayers 2003). Firstly, banter in their relationship is often simply a boredom busting (see page 28) – as they spend a great deal of the day together they use humour to relief the working tension. Secondly, they use it also as a tool of socialization or an in-group marker (see page 28) to show each other that they are good enough friends to use mock impoliteness without offending each other. Lastly, in their relationship they can also use banter to target personal traits (see page 29) without the other getting offended.

To move on, the relationship between Maxwell and Niles is a very close one and we can say almost familial, as it is mentioned many times that Niles works for Sheffield family for years and he knows Maxwell since he was a child. In their relationship the function of banter is not only to bust the boredom but also to flatten the structure (see page 29) that is between an employer and an employee. Similarly, the relationship between Fran and Maxwell is used for flattening the social structure. Here their closeness could be found problematic – at the beginning of the television show they do not know each other much, however, since the day they had met there is an obvious attraction between them that speeds up the process of them first becoming friends and then couple. Therefore, after closer analysis I would say, that their relationship is the one that uses bantering the most. Additionally, participants' reactions to bantering are going to be analysed with respect to the expected reactions discussed previously in Chapter 3.2. To compare banter with sarcasm, it is going to be examined whether the meaning of the banter is connected to the context or co-text (see Chapter 3.2.1).

4.2.1. ANALYSING BANTER

Let us now start with the analysis. The first example offers a view on the relationship between Fran and Maxwell very early on in the television series:

(28) (Previously, Fran has given Maxwell an advice about his oldest daughter, later on he rephrases what she has said to him)

MAXWELL: Hey, if I don't open the door, she'll only sneak out the window.

FRAN (with a knowing smile): Oh, that's very wise.

MAXWELL (with a smile): Yeah? Yeah, *some pushy old broad told me.*

(Fran laughs.)

(S01E04)

To start with, the banter here is connected to what was said in a previous conversation and therefore, it is connected to the context of it. Next, it is clear that in this example the non-verbal cue of the banter that insinuates it is not an insult is the smile with which Maxwell compares Fran a “*pushy old broad*”. Thus, the expression impolite in form changes its interpretation to positive (polite). Subsequently, from Fran’s reaction it is clear that being called an “*old broad*” did not offend her in the slightest, because she knows it was not meant to be offensive. The function of this banter is to show Fran that it is okay to joke in a bantering manner when talking together, as it is the first instance of banter between them. Moreover, on this example the adherence to the bantering rules mentioned in Chapter 2.1.3 can be demonstrated:

- *Presence* – the participant that is made fun of (Fran) is present in the situation.
- *Willingness to banter* – by the generally pleasant atmosphere of the situation (everybody is smiling) and Fran’s reaction we can judge that she is willing to participate in the banter.

- *No intention to offend* – the non-verbal cues discussed above help us apprehend the utterance as not being meant to be offensive.
- *Untouchable topics* – Maxwell is not touching on any topics that would be considered taboo by Fran.
- *Violating the rules* – Maxwell’s banter is in accordance with all of the previous rules, therefore, no violation is in place.

(based on Terrion and Ashworth 2002)

Furthermore, the failure of banter should be demonstrated as well. During the analysis an example arose where banter was misunderstood. A seemingly rude address that was meant in a joking manner failed to transfer its positive interpretation and thus resulted in an overt impoliteness:

(29) MAXWELL (clearly sad): Niles, hypothetically, if you cared very deeply for someone but feared losing them, what would you say to get them to stay?

NILES (in reassuring tone): Oh, SIR. I’m not going anywhere. (in a concerned voice, knowing he is talking about Fran)

MAXWELL: Not you, *you blithering idiot!*

(The doorbell rings and Niles is ignoring it.)

MAXWELL: Well, aren't you gonna answer the door?

NILES (sarcastically): Oh, is that what that bell is? Ah, you know, I never knew that because I'm such a BLITHERING IDIOT.

(Maxwell looks confused and just sighs.)

(S04E04)

To start with, the expression “*you blithering idiot*” is impolite in form and thus, it is not surprising that Niles is offended by it. We can say that he is offended by his response in the form of a communicative behaviour – he ignores the doorbell, secondly, by his sarcastic reply to the question whether he is going to open the door. The positive intention has failed to be recognized because of the absence

of non-verbal cues – Maxwell does not indicate either by his voice or his facial expressions that he did not mean to offend. We can only judge so from his confused look after he sees that Niles has been offended by him calling him an idiot. This example shows the importance of non-verbal cues as well as the misunderstanding of the banter which leads to the communicative behaviour being interpreted as offensive – to overt impoliteness.

Banter, similarly to sarcasm, can and does sometimes appear as back and forth exchange, i.e. when somebody uses banter, the not uncommon response to it is again banter, and this can go on for longer than just one exchange, for instance:

(30) (They are sitting on a couch together drinking.)

C.C.: So, tell me, Rochester, what did you do to kill a day before I came along?

NILES: Well, truth be told, my life was a little empty. (with a smile) But now I have a hobby.

(The both continue to talk in affected annoyed tone with a smile.)

C.C.: *I loathe you.*

NILES: *I despise you.*

C.C.: *Servant.*

NILES: *Trollop.*

C.C.: *Bellboy.*

NILES: *Brunette.*

(They kiss passionately.)

(S03E01)

Niles and C.C. usually have more hateful relationship and their relationship is the source of most of the sarcasm in the show as it was mentioned in Chapter 4.1, however in several instances of the show they are quite close and they are friendly or intimate with each other. The willingness to banter is obvious as they continue with their “insults”, however, we know that all of this is not meant

seriously, because they are both smiling the whole time and say it with affected annoyance that is not typical for them. Lastly, to support my opinion they end up kissing which is a definite sign that these bantering insults were not meant to offend. As to the key function of this banter – I would suggest that here they make fun of the each other by targeting their personal traits (see page 29). In case of Niles, C.C. makes fun of his job by calling him “*servant*” and “*bellboy*”. On the other hand, Niles makes fun of C.C. for always chasing after Maxwell by calling her “trollop” and of her hair colour (it was mentioned previously that she is blonde throughout the television series) and suggesting she is dyeing her hair.

To conclude, I must say that I was very surprised to find as little example of genuine banter as I did. From a brief overview of the series beforehand and from what was said before I expected bantering to appear more frequently in its genuine form. It was said before in Chapter 3.2.1 that sarcastic bantering is becoming more and more common in everyday language and in fact is becoming conventionalised and the same is true for banter. Nevertheless, the banter that uses an impolite expression, however, was much less common throughout the whole television series than sarcasm and the category that follows – sarcastic banter. The reasons for this could be many, however, I would suggest that the reason could be the period of release of the show. As the show ran in the 90s (1993-1999) the audience of that period was probably not used to hearing insults on television as we are now in 21st century. Therefore, banter can be very common nowadays but almost 20 years ago it could be very new. To support my opinion, in the United States using swear words on television is regulated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) since it was established in 1927 (Melvin 2012). As Melvin suggests the rules of profanity as established by FCC are gradually changing, however, it was not till around 2001 that using offensive impolite words starts being less taboo (Melvin 2012). This leads us to the sarcastic banter which was much more common in the sitcom than banter for the same reasons mentioned above. Overt impoliteness was not probably that

common on television, therefore, using sarcastic banter was avoiding overt impoliteness while maintaining the comic effect and bringing the same results as banter.

4.2.2. ANALYSING SARCASTIC BANTER

In this chapter it is going to be shown that sarcastic banter adheres to the rules and functions of banter presented earlier. Consequently, sarcastic banter is going to be compared with both – banter and sarcasm – according to the characteristics that were established in Chapter 3. To remind us, sarcastic banter is a type of banter that uses sarcasm – the kind of impoliteness that is less direct – to communicate meaning that has indirectly impolite form but positive final interpretation. The fact that the form is indirectly impolite can make it harder to deduce the correct interpretation from the sarcastic banter. Let us start with a simple example:

- (31) (Fran is talking to the girls about beauty.)
FRAN: You kids know that I'm a graduate from the Ultissima Beauty Institute. Four times Dean's List.
NILES (as in wonder): *And yet she's SO accessible.*
(Fran laughs and continues talking to the girls.)
(S01E02)

The sarcastic banter here reacts to what was said previously in the co-text – Fran suggests that she has great education and was a very good student as she was on “*Dean's List*”. This is diminished by Niles' sarcastic commentary which suggests that if she has had any quality education she would not have so much time on her hands to end up being a nanny. The wondering tone with stressed and prolonged “*so*” are the sarcastic non-verbal cues. These non-verbal cues, however, do not help us with the outright solution of whether the example is banter or sarcasm. Without further contextual information this example could be

considered as *genuine sarcasm* as it has polite form and negative interpretation, however, we have to take into consideration what was said about the relationship between Niles and Fran before (see page 59). Fran's and Niles' relationship is a friendly one as they work for the same employer and share the same kind of humour which is sarcasm based. Correspondingly, Fran's reaction implies that she finds it funny rather than offensive – she laughs. The function of this sarcastic bantering is “making a point” – Niles criticizes Fran in a way that she does not find offensive but rather humorous. Let us know exhibit if this instance of sarcastic bantering too adheres to the rules of banter presented previously:

- *Presence* – the participant that is being mocked is present in the situation, in this case it is Fran.
- *Willingness to banter* – the relationship between the two of them is very friendly, marked by shared humour; furthermore, Fran's response by laughter suggests that she is okay with it.
- *No intention to offend* – the non-verbal cues discussed above, unfortunately, do not help us in this specific example, however, it was established by the dynamics of the relationship that the utterance was not intended to offend.
- *Untouchable topics* – as was said their relationship is a close one and the topic of Fran's education and job is definitely not a taboo topic.
- *Violating the rules* – Niles' sarcastic banter does not violate any of the previous rules.

(based on Terrion and Ashworth 2002)

To review, it was established that the example (31) complies all the rules, even though, the non-verbal cues, that are usually very helpful with distinguishing between the sarcastic banter and the sarcasm, had not much of a decisive effect on this utterance.

The following example shows sarcastic bantering in the dynamics of Fran's and Maxwell's relationship:

(32) (Fran is running after Maxwell into his office, trying to talk to him. He is in hurry.)

FRAN (urgently): Mr. Sheffield, can I talk to you for JUST ONE minute?

MAXWELL (in sceptical tone): *I doubt it.*

(Fran smirks and continues talking.)

(S01E20)

This situation differs from the previous one in the respect that it is not in general just as relaxed as the previous one. Fran needs to talk to Maxwell urgently and therefore, the whole mood is less prone to joking. Nevertheless, as Fran emphasizes that she needs “*just one minute*”, Maxwell cannot resist to remark in a sarcastic way which suggests that he “*doubts*” than one minute is going to be enough. The meaning is not only co-textually bound to Fran asking for “*just one minute*” but is also bound to the context of their relationship – to knowing Fran as a person. Maxwell knows that Fran is very talkative and always has a great deal to say about anything and thus he is taking an advantage to refer to her talkativeness by his sarcastic remark. Here the function of the sarcastic bantering is a “stress relief” (see page 28) as bantering is frequently used in working environment as a relief to boring or stressful situation (Plester and Sayers 2003).

The form of the example complies with what was shown in Table 1 (see page 37) – the form is polite, but the intended function is not negative as it would be with sarcasm. We can judge the intended function more importantly from Fran and Maxwell's relationship and not only from Fran's reaction – there is no reaction other than the smirking. As was shown for instance in example (22) sarcasm can evoke similar reaction. Therefore, the determining factor is the

relationship between the two of them, Maxwell and Fran are close and use sarcastic banter quite often. In their relationship for the utterance to be meant sarcastically with the intention to offend it would have to be said in a situation that is more tense and serious than both of them just being busy, for instance in an argument. Lastly, Fran's reaction to the bantering is that she smirks as she obviously understands Maxwell's hidden implicature to her talkativeness but has too much on her mind to engage further. From everything that was mentioned previously we can infer that the function of the utterance is not meant to be negative – not meant to offend and thus it must be sarcastic bantering rather than sarcasm.

Throughout the examples it is shown that sarcastic bantering is more likely to be ignored, because it is not offending any participants of the situation and thus the targeted participants do not feel the need to defend themselves. E.g.:

(33) (They are talking about Fran hosting an event for the kids' friends from posh families and their mothers.)

FRAN (disappointedly): In other words, [I will be] a freak in a sideshow.

NILES (trying to lift up her mood by assuring tone): *Well, everybody loves the circus.*

(Fran ignores him as she has too much on her mind.)

(S01E03)

Firstly, it is shown that the sarcastic banter is disregarded and ignored by Fran as she has too much on her mind. Niles is offering a commentary on her situation as well as he is trying to cheer her up, two efforts that coincide with the functions of banter – making a point and stress relief (Plester and Sayers 2003). Considering making a point, Niles is offering his understanding of the situation and agrees that Fran is going to be out of place. As the banter is expressed in kind of tense situation (similarly to example (32)), it is supposed to function to

relief the stress of the situation by implying that even though the situation might be disastrous she is “loveable” as she is a part of the “circus”.

Secondly, taking into account the characteristics from Table 1, the form of the expression is definitely a polite one and seemingly unrelated to her situation. The function of such utterance again could be both polite (banter) or impolite (sarcasm). To support that this example belongs into banter we have the non-verbal cues presented. Niles says it with a smile in an assuring tone that suggests rather friendly demeanour. Another point that must be remembered is the weight of a relationship when establishing what banter is. It was mentioned numerous times above that the relationship of Fran and Niles is a very friendly one and rarely retracts to being intended to offend. To this we can also tie the idea of the previous paragraph – their friendship allows Fran quickly understand that this comment is not meant to offend and thus can be ignored by her. Lastly, it should be mentioned that the sarcastic banter in this example again emerges from the co-text – Fran is implying that she is “a freak in a sideshow” to which Niles implies that she indeed is part of a “circus”.

Sarcastic banter is in some instances very close to regular banter and just a simple change in the expression chosen can lead to the change from sarcastic banter to banter. In the following example this situation is going to be illustrated:

(34) (Maxwell’s tooth hurts and Fran offers help.)

FRAN: Now open up, let me take a look.

MAXWELL (a bit annoyed and surprised by her proposition):

Miss Fine, it's my mouth. I reserve the right to keep it shut. (with a smirk:) *An option you might consider from time to time.*

(Fran smirks too and walks away.)

FRAN: Alright.

(S01E05)

The sentence “*An option you might consider from time to time.*” obviously refers to the co-text of the conversation which Maxwell himself created by saying “*keep [my mouth] shut*”. If Maxwell opted to say straightforwardly “*You might consider keeping your mouth shut from time to time.*” which is precisely what was implied by his sarcastic remark it would change the form to being impolite. Thus, the sarcastic banter would change into banter.

If in some examples (e.g. examples (32), (33), (34)) the speaker was trying to hide the mockery at least a little, in the next instance the speaker is openly mocking the person that is targeted. The bantering rules are, however, preserved together with a polite form and positive interpretation:

(35) (They are talking about Fran’s date. Maxwell is checking himself – specifically his hair – in the mirror.)

MAXWELL: Do you think he still has all his hair?

NILES (with certainty in his voice while looking into the mirror over his shoulder): *OH, NO, sir. You're the fairest of them all.*

(Maxwell looks at him with amused expression but says nothing about it.)

(S03E01)

In the latter example, the comic effect of the sarcastic bantering expression comes from the situational context – Maxwell is standing in front of mirror with Niles behind him, as well as from the context inducing from the extralinguistic knowledge of the story of Snow White – by using the same sentence structure that is used there in a similar situation – the evil queen asking the mirror “*Who is the fairest?*”. Targeting personal traits (Plester and Sayers 2003) is the function of this banter, as the sarcastic meaning of the banter is targeting Maxwell’s vanity.

In Chapter 2.1.1 bantering was mostly described as group related, however, what was shown in the analysis is always happening between two

direct participants as the television show does not offer many examples where there are more than two participants in a sarcastic or a bantering exchange. I found it appropriate to state at least one that was found, i.e.:

(36) (They are all talking during breakfast about Maxwell going to a doctor and Fran wants to contribute with a story.)

FRAN: Meanwhile, I've got a cousin --

MAXWELL (interrupts her in affected irritated tone and rest his head in his hand): *OH, GOD, she's got a cousin.*

NILES (smiles at Fran at first and then smiles back at Maxwell):

Shall I push your appointment back an hour, sir?

(Fran ignores them and continues with her story.)

(S02E17)

The example shows that even in a bigger group bantering can work, more specifically sarcastic bantering. In this case there are three participants of the bantering: Fran, who is the target of the mockery, Maxwell, who starts with it, and Niles, who quickly follows Maxwell to add mocking sarcastic commentary of his own. Firstly, let us explain Maxwell's interruption. Maxwell interrupts Fran in the middle of a sentence to mockingly pretend to be irritated. The sarcastic bantering interpretation of his comment is supported by the non-verbal cues, he puts the stress at the beginning of his utterance ("*oh, God*") which adds affect to his pretended irritated tone. This is followed by a gesture of resting his head in his hand which adds to the imitation of irritation as well. The affectedness of it all implies that there is no intention of being impolite. Maxwell is mocking what is a part of the context of Fran's life – he knows her well and knows that for every situation she has a story connected to a family member.

Secondly, Niles' response to Maxwell's comment is following in the same manner – it is a mockery of Fran – he is insinuating indirectly that Fran's stories always take a while. He suggests postponing the appointment so Maxwell

can hear out Fran's story while smiling at both of them which implies that this sarcasm is not meant seriously, i.e. it is not meant to offend Fran. Thus, this marks Fran, as well as Maxwell and Niles, members of a group that is willing to banter and thus complying with all the rules mentioned previously. Consequently, this instance of a sarcastic banter has the function of socialization (Plester and Sayers 2003) – it is used very casually in a situation that just shows the mutuality of their relationship and it marks each of them as an in-group member, thus, showing that they all accept and know each other well enough to engage in this bantering relationship.

4.3. SUMMARY OF THE ANALYSIS

To sum it up, in Chapter 4.1 many different examples were analysed and it was established that we can divide sarcasm into two main categories – sarcasm based on the situational context (e.g. examples (15), (17), and (19)) and sarcasm based on the co-text (e.g. examples (20) and (23)). Having said that, it was ascertained that these two categories can sometimes overlay (e.g. examples (18) and (21)). Followingly, different non-verbal cues were shown, for instance face expressions showing heightened emotions (shock, happiness, boredom, interest, etc.), tone of voice, stressed words, pauses in the speech, laughter, etc. Responses were analysed according to the framework provided previously in Chapter 3.1. Examples were presented for all the types of responses listed there – not-recognizing sarcasm (example (22)) overt impoliteness (example (18)), sarcastic reply (example (14) and (25)), and no verbal reaction (either not being bothered at all by the sarcasm – example (16), or reacting only non-verbally by showing anger or annoyance, (examples (15) and (19))). At the end of Chapter 4.1 a few examples that were exceptional and non-traditional were shown and analysed. Finally, with respect to number of examples presented as well as to the abundance of sarcastic example in Appendix (Table A) it can be said that

sarcasm is a very common phenomenon in sitcom. It provides comic relief for the audience – it was established previously that people like to laugh at other people’s misfortune (Gruner 199, 13) and the indirectness of it makes it more “fun”.

In Chapter 4.2, it was observed through the analysis that the phenomenon of sarcastic banter is far more common in this television series than banter is. I must say that I was very surprised to find so few examples of banter. From the brief overview of the series beforehand and from what was said before I expected bantering to appear more frequently in its regular form. It was said before in Chapter 3.2.1 that sarcastic bantering is becoming more and more common in everyday language and in fact is becoming conventionalised and the same is true for banter. The scarcity can be seen in the number provided above in Chapter 4.2.1 as well as the size of Table B in the Appendix. It is my belief that the reason why regular banter is so scarce throughout the series is that sarcastic banter offers indirect way of realising impoliteness, i.e. it does not use the directly impolite expression as regular banter does. It rather implies something impolite and the negative meaning is despite that in the end proven to be untruthful. The reasons for using regular banter could be many, however, I would suggest that the reason could be the period of release. As the show run in the 90s (1993-1999) the audience of that period was probably not used to hearing insults on television as we are now. Therefore, banter can be very common nowadays but almost 20 years ago it could have been very new. To support my opinion, in the United States using swear words on television is regulated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) since it was established in 1927 (Melvin 2012). As Melvin suggest the rules of profanity as established by FCC are gradually changing, however, it was not till around 2001 that using offensive impolite words starts being a less taboo (Melvin 2012). This leads us to sarcastic banter which was much more common in the sitcom than banter as can be seen in Chapter 4.2.2 as well as Table C in the Appendix. Overt impoliteness was not

probably as common on television, therefore, using sarcastic banter was avoiding overt impoliteness while maintaining the comic effect of it all and bringing the same results as banter.

Furthermore, from the examples above follows that the sarcastic banter shown here is most commonly bound to either co-text of an utterance or to the concept of knowing the person well (the context of the relationship) – which is a prerequisite to banter in general. In comparison with sarcasm the responses to banter as well as sarcastic banter were scarce and not as diverse as those of sarcasm. If there was any reaction at all it was mostly simple smile or facial expression that suggested recognized the banter (examples (31), (32), (34), (35)). With sarcasm the responses were more varied and they show all the predicted responses (see Chapter 3.2.1).

Lastly, by analysing instances of sarcasm and sarcastic banter, it was shown – more specifically on instances of sarcastic banter – what it is that makes the difference in interpreting something as sarcastic banter or sarcasm. It was found out that the defining feature of something being either sarcastic or bantering is the nature of the relationship between two people as well as the situational context of said utterance. I.e. if such utterance would have been used in an argument it would be interpreted as sarcasm and thus as having negative meaning.

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to provide an overview of politeness and impoliteness theories, together with explanations of the phenomena listed under the terms of mock politeness (sarcasm) and mock impoliteness (banter, sarcastic banter). Within this theoretical framework of (im)politeness a detailed analysis of these phenomena was carried out based on examples from the American sitcom *The Nanny*. Based on this objective, the first part of the thesis establishes the theoretical framework, and the second practical part uses this framework and selected examples from the television show and analyses them with respect to it.

The first two chapters of this thesis provided an explanation and examination of the theories that were helpful later in the analysis. In Chapter 1 the terms positive politeness, negative politeness, face (Brown and Levinson 1999) as well as Politeness principle (Leech 2014) were explained. Later on, Leech's characteristics of politeness, that were presented in the theoretical part, were found to be the most helpful to distinguish between banter, sarcasm and sarcastic banter.

In Chapter 2, to substantiate what banter is, the case studies of Plester and Sayers (2007) as well as Terrion and Ashworth (2002) were examined and were found to be helpful to a certain degree in distinguishing between mock politeness and mock impoliteness. Banter provides speaker with a linguistic device that uses expressions negative in form but polite in meaning. With respect to that, both studies argue that banter is used in close-knit groups and helps its participants in building closer relationships. Firstly, the case study of Terrion and Ashworth (2002) established the rules of banter that need to be complied with in order for banter to work in the way it should – have a comic effect without offending. The role of relationships is emphasized, i.e. using banter is characterized by being so close to someone that you can say anything without

offending the other (Leech 2014, 102). Secondly, the functions of banter in communication according to Plester and Sayers (2007) were analysed. With respect to sarcasm, it was shown that sarcasm has opposite use than banter – it is a way of expressing negative opinions indirectly, i.e. to be impolite in an indirect way. Sarcasm as well as banter and sarcastic banter make use of non-verbal cues – their importance was shown. Finally, the phenomena of sarcastic banter was defined and its connection to banter and sarcasm was resolved. Sarcastic banter was classified as mock impoliteness, because its function is expressing polite meaning just like in the case of banter. It was explained that sarcastic banter is a phenomenon that uses expression that appears to be sarcastic at first (thus it should have negative interpretation of its meaning) but in the end, is found to have positive interpretation.

The framework in Chapter 3 established the rules more firmly and provided sufficient theory for the later analysis. It was established that we can distinguish the three – banter, sarcastic banter and sarcasm – by analysing their form, function and non-verbal cues together with analysing their connection to context and co-text. The responses to each of the phenomena were predicted according to some responses that were found in connection with sarcasm. Firstly, the form of the banter is impolite and has a positive interpretation. To arrive at the positive interpretation, one has to consider the closeness of the relationship between the participants of the conversation. Secondly, sarcastic banter works in the same manner as banter does, however, the form of the sarcastic banter is polite at first glance. Lastly, sarcasm is the opposite of the previous two, it has polite form and the interpretation. The context of sarcasm is represented by the situation at hand and the relationship between participants, which is negative and compared to banter does not have to be close at all. After analysing all non-verbal cues and the context sarcasm is meant to offend the other participant.

In Chapter 4, the practical part, the selected instances from the television series *The Nanny* were analysed according to the framework provided

in the previous chapters. Consistent with what was expected, mock impoliteness as well as mock politeness can be created in connection to both context and co-text of a given conversation. The analysis of the responses to banter, sarcasm and sarcastic banter showed that it is far more common to respond verbally to sarcasm which is meant to offend. The reason for this is probably that a verbal reaction to sarcasm can help the person being attacked save their face by defending themselves or retaliating. As a result of mock impoliteness not being meant to offend the reactions to it were far less diverse and were mostly limited to non-verbal expressions – e.g. a smile, a smirk, etc.

Nevertheless, the hypothesis that these phenomena (banter, sarcastic banter and sarcasm) are going to be used frequently throughout the television series for their comic effect was proven only partially right. The analysis proved that the use of banter in the show is rather scarce. The reason for the ratio of banter to sarcastic banter and sarcasm being so low is probably the fact that the laws which limited the use of impolite phrases and expressions on television in the 1990s were much stricter than they are nowadays. As a result, sarcastic banter was more commonly used as a source of humour in situations where banter could have been used instead. In accordance to the hypothesis, sarcasm and sarcastic banter were used as frequently as expected throughout the series.

RESUMÉ

Cílem této diplomové práce je poskytnout shrnutí zdvořilostních a nezdvořilostních teorií, především žertování, sarkasmu a sarkastického žertování v americkém seriálu *Chůva k pohledání (The Nanny)*, a následná analýza těchto jevů.

Teoretická část práce týkající se zdvořilosti a nezdvořilosti je založena především na teoretických poznatcích Geoffreyho Leech (2014), Jonathana Culpepera (2011) a Brownové a Levinsona (1999). Kapitoly zabývající se sarkasmem a žertováním dále vychází ze stejného základu společně s rozбором případových studií, jejichž autory jsou Plesterová a Sayersová (2007) či Terrionová a Ashworth (2002), kteří se zabývají právě žertováním, především však v pracovním prostředí. Tato teoretická koncepce je pak dále použita jako základ pro praktickou část, tj. pro analýzu výše zmíněného sarkasmu, žertování a sarkastického žertování ve vybraných epizodách americké situační komedie *Chůva k pohledání*. Situační komedie je médium, které převádí běžný život na spleť humorných scének, a proto je v praktické části očekáváno, že příklady všech zkoumaných jevů – žertování, sarkastického žertování a sarkasmu – tedy jevů spojených s humorem, se v tomto televizním seriálu budou vyskytovat v hojném počtu. Cílem práce je tedy také zjistit, zda se tato hypotéza naplní.

V první kapitole jsou podrobně popsány všechny základní teorie týkající se zdvořilosti a nezdvořilosti, které jsou relevantní pro tuto práci. Kapitola se předně zabývá definováním zdvořilosti nejen jako slovního projevu, ale především jako mnohem komplexnějšího komunikačního chování. Jinými slovy, zdvořilost není limitována pouze slovním projevem, ale zahrnuje i neverbální složku, tj. gestikulaci, tón hlasu, výraz tváře atd. Dále jsou v kapitole definovány termíny Brownové a Levinsona (1999) jako například pozitivní zdvořilost, negativní zdvořilost a tzv. tvář. V souvislosti se zdvořilostí je také

zmíněn další důležitý pojem, a to Leechův zdvořilostní princip (2014), který napomáhá správnému vyjádření zdvořilosti a jejímu správnému porozumění. To znamená, že pokud chceme něco vyjádřit zdvořile, vybíráme takové prostředky, které jsou upřednostňují osoby, s nimiž mluvíme. Velmi podstatnými teoretickými poznatky jsou pro nás Leechovy (2014) charakteristické rysy zdvořilosti, jako např. nepovinnost, vzájemnost, opakování apod. Pojmem definovaným v následující podkapitole je nezdvořilost, kterou Culpeper označuje jako „multimodální chování“ (2011, 169). Nezdvořilost je objasněna jako prvek, který rovněž není limitován pouze na slovní projev. Charakteristické rysy, které byly popsány u zdvořilosti, jsou v této kapitole aplikovány na nezdvořilost. Ve vztahu k tomuto jevu je důležité zohlednit otázku úmyslnosti, tj. zda je určitý slovní projev nezdvořilý pouze pokud je použit s tímto úmyslem, anebo i v případě, že nezdvořilost byla neúmyslná. Řešení nabízí Culpeper, který argumentuje, že důležitým faktorem je především to, jak posluchač vnímá daný slovní projev, a ne pouze úmysl mluvčího.

Ve druhé kapitole se práce zaměřuje na definici pojmů žertování, sarkasmus a sarkastické žertování. Pojmy žertování a sarkastické žertování jsou klasifikovány jako hraná nezdvořilost, na rozdíl od sarkasmu, který je klasifikován jako hraná zdvořilost. První podkapitola se soustředí na žertování a jeho definici včetně pravidel jeho správného použití (Terrionová a Ashworth 2002, 72-75) a jeho významu ve vztazích účastníků konverzace (Plesterová a Sayersová 2007, 168-181). Názvem žertování se označuje komunikační situace, kde se mluvčí vyjádří o konkrétní věci nezdvořile, ale v kontextu zcela jasně nepravdivě – výsledná interpretace tedy není nezdvořilá, jelikož je myšlena pouze jako žert (Leech 1983, 144). Dále se kapitola věnuje problematice vztahů, které jsou pro žertování nezbytné. Aby žertování nevyznělo jako otevřená nezdvořilost, musí být vztah účastníků komunikace velmi blízký a sami musí být ochotní se žertování účastnit. Tato problematika je objasněna na dvou případových studiích – Plesterová a Sayersová (2007) a Terrionová a Ashworth

(2002). Následující podkapitola se zabývá pojmem sarkasmus, který označuje jev opačný ve vztahu k žertování. Tento jev se v určité komunikační situaci objevuje tehdy, když se mluvčí vyjádří primárně zdvořile, nicméně po bližším posouzení situačního kontextu, kontextu obecně a neverbálních projevů s výrokem spojených, je daný výrok interpretován jako negativní. Tento výrok má pak stejný účel jako zamýšlená nezdvořilost, a to druhého účastníka komunikace urazit. Správná interpretace sarkasmu je podpořena neverbálními projevy, které byl zmíněny výše. V závěru se v poslední podkapitole nachází popis pojmu sarkastické žertování, které je jevem, co se týče jeho interpretace, nejkomplicovanějším. Sarkastické žertování může být chápáno jako komunikační situace, kdy se mluvčí vyjádří primárně zdvořile, nicméně sekundárně je tento jev interpretován jako sarkasmus (a tedy má nezdvořilou interpretaci). Tento sarkasmus je však uchopen v dané situaci, a případně v daném vztahu účastníků, jako neopodstatněný a závěrečná interpretace je tedy shledána zdvořilou. Z těchto důvodů je sarkastické žertování v práci zahrnuto pod termín hraná nezdvořilost.

V rámci praktické části se ve třetí kapitole práce věnuje přesnějšímu stanovení pravidel analýzy daných jevů (žertování, sarkastického žertování a sarkasmu). V průběhu kapitoly jsou všechny jevy srovnány a jsou určeny rozdíly, které jsou klíčové pro prokázání kategorie, do které budou jednotlivé výroky v rámci analýzy zařazeny.

Čtvrtá kapitola se zabývá samotnou analýzou vybraných příkladů všech výše jmenovaných jevů – žertování, sarkastického žertování a sarkasmu. Během analýzy bylo v rozporu s hypotézou zjištěno, že žertování v seriálu *Chůva k pohledání* je spíše vzácným jevem než pravidelným úkazem, zvláště pak při srovnání se sarkasmem, který se vyskytoval v průběhu celého seriálu hojně. Příčinou nedostatku očekávaného žertování je s největší pravděpodobností stáří seriálu – seriál byl v Americe vysílán mezi lety 1993-1999, kdy bylo použití určitých nezdvořilých slov a frází na televizních

obrazovkách mnohem více limitováno Federální komunikační komisí (anglicky Federal Communication Commission). V důsledku tohoto omezení je v seriálu použito více sarkastického žertování, které poskytuje možnost použít zdánlivě nezdvořilý výraz alespoň nepřímo.

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Název práce: Nezdvořilost jako prostředek humoru v seriálu *Chůva k pohledání*

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Markéta Janebová, Ph.D.

Počet stran: 97

Cílem této diplomové práce je poskytnout shrnutí zdvořilostních a nezdvořilostních teorií s důrazem na žertování, sarkasmus a sarkastické žertování v americké situační komedii *Chůva k pohledání (The Nanny)*, a následná analýza těchto jevů. První část teoretického zkoumání poskytuje vysvětlení následujících konceptů: pozitivní zdvořilost, negativní zdvořilost, tvář, zdvořilostní princip, nezdvořilost a úmyslnost. Druhá část teoretického základu se soustředí na vysvětlení pojmů hraná zdvořilost (sarkasmus) a hraná nezdvořilost (banter a sarkastické žertování). V souladu s tímto teoretickým rámcem jsou vybrané příklady z televizního seriálu analyzovány a následně rozděleny do tří kategorií – žertování, sarkastické žertování a sarkasmus – podle své formy, funkce a neverbálních znaků s nimi spojených. Analýza nám umožňuje vyhodnotit, do jaké míry jsou jednotlivé jevy použity v daném televizním seriálu a proč.

Klíčová slova: hraná nezdvořilost, hraná zdvořilost, sarkasmus, žertování, sarkastické žertování, zdvořilost, nezdvořilost

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Title of the Thesis: Impoliteness as a means of comedy in the TV Series *The Nanny*

Supervisor: Mgr. Markéta Janebová, Ph.D.

Number of pages of the thesis: 97

The aim of this diploma thesis is to provide a brief overview of the politeness and impoliteness theories with a special emphasis on banter, sarcasm and sarcastic banter in the American sitcom *The Nanny*, and the analysis of these phenomena. The first part of the theoretical research provides an explanation of the following concepts: politeness as communicative behaviour, positive politeness, negative politeness, face, politeness principle, impoliteness and intentionality. The second part of the theoretical framework focuses on characterizing mock politeness (sarcasm) and mock impoliteness (banter and sarcastic banter). The theoretical framework is then applied to the selected examples from the television series and analysed accordingly. The thesis focuses on distinguishing the three phenomena – banter, sarcastic banter and sarcasm – apart by analysing their form, function and non-verbal cues together with the responses they get. The analysis should allow us to evaluate to what extent each phenomenon is used in the television show and why it is so.

Key words: mock impoliteness, mock politeness, sarcasm, banter, sarcastic banter, politeness, impoliteness

APPENDIX

The examples presented here are limited to those that were not used in the text above. To some examples a brief commentary is provided with respect to their function, relationships of the participants, or analysis of their connection to context or co-text.

Season and episode	Example	Commentary
S01E01	NILES: Sorry to interrupt, sir. I see you're working hard as always, Miss Babcock. (C.C. almost throwing herself at Maxwell.) C.C.: Theatre has always been a passion of mine. NILES: <i>Hmm, and I can't wait to see what you'll be mounting next.</i>	situational context
	FRAN (wearing bright sexy red dress): Is my face red? C.C. (jealously): <i>Well, now it matches the rest of you.</i> NILES (triumphantly as if proud of her): <i>There's that rapier wit we've come to count on.</i>	C.C. – ridiculing Fran's appearance – situational context Niles – responds to defend Fran – context
S01E03	C.C.: Oh, you'll love it. I was a debutante. It's the only way to meet the right people, make the right connections, marry the right man.. GRACE (says with child's innocence): But you never got married. NILES (with a laugh): <i>Good one.</i>	Grace's comment may sound sarcastic but she did not mean to offend – she was just curious. Niles – response connected what Grace said – co-text
S01E04	MAXWELL: (gives C.C. a dog) DOG: (growls) NILES: <i>Fluffy and a good judge of character.</i>	situational context
S01E05	FRAN: Good morning, Miss Babcock. Come in make yourself comfortable. C.C.: <i>I see YOU have.</i>	co-text – word play
	FRAN: Look, I can understand that you're incredibly threatened by me. (She is wearing ridiculous bridesmaid dress. C.C. gives her <i>sarcastic look.</i>) FRAN: Yes, even in this dress.	sarcasm expressed non-verbally.
	FRAN (to C.C.): However, it doesn't mean that we can't all live under one roof. (in pretended surprised voice) <i>Oh, that's right, you don't live with us.</i>	co-text – word play
	(C.C. previously uses the phrase “And I mean that in the nicest possible way.” to threaten Fran) FRAN (to C.C.): But if you ever hurt one of my kids again, they'll be wiping your blue blood off	co-text – parodying

	the walls. (with big smile and cheerful voice) <i>And I mean that in the nicest possible way.</i>	
S01E07	(Fran is digging in the garden where Grace buried her shoes) NILES: Miss Fine, is 3 o'clock in the morning. FRAN (angrily): <i>Thank you, BIG BEN.</i> NILES: Lose something? FRAN: NO, <i>I have always wanted to visit China.</i>	extra-linguistic context and the situational context
S01E09	C.C.: Nanny Fine, a synthetic fur. How very p.c. of you. FRAN: What? C.C.: P.c. as in politically correct. FRAN: Oh, well, actually it's J.C., as in Penney. Your outfit is nice, too. C.C.: Of course, de. It's an Adolfo. NILES: <i>As in Hitler?</i>	co-text - parodying the structure of the passed conversation
	MAXWELL: He took advantage of you naivete and complete lack of sophistication. FRAN: <i>Don't forget incredible stupidity.</i> MAXWELL: Right.	Maxwell – unintentionally impolite Fran's reaction – sarcastically adding to the impoliteness
S01E13	MAXWELL: (to C.C.) No, Chloe knows lots of people there, so I'm letting you off the hook. C.C.: I don't want to be let off the hook. NILES: <i>She wants her hooks in.</i>	context (Niles knows she is after Maxwell) as well as co-text – word play (uses same words)
	(Niles hand her a glass of juice.) C.C.: Just plain tomato juice? Don't you have anything hard? NILES: <i>Not for you.</i>	co-text – word play
S01E15	C.C. (to Maxwell): Maxwell, you tease. You wouldn't leave me hanging. NILES: <i>No, we'd cut you down in a week or two.</i>	co-text – word play
	(Fran has a cold and C.C. does not want to catch it.) C.C.: Can't be too careful. Germs everywhere. Nobody touch me. NILES: <i>We'll try to restrain ourselves.</i>	
	FRAN: Oh, Miss Babcock, you look gorgeous. Much too young to be going to a reunion. NILES: <i>Of redwoods maybe.</i> C.C.: Dear Niles, always so witty. <i>Especially for a servant.</i> NILES: <i>At least when I offer something people take it.</i>	sarcastic exchange – context
	C.C.: Maxwell, who's more important, me or the nanny? <i>(Niles is humming quiz show tune.)</i>	non-verbally expressed sarcasm
	C.C.: I can't show up without an escort. NILES: <i>Why don't you just inflate one like you usually do?</i>	context
	C.C.: Oh, this is a dream come true. I feel like I have died and gone to heaven. NILES: <i>I have that dream, too, but you go in the other direction.</i>	co-text – Niles imitates what C.C. has said

S01E16	C.C.: Well, if you'll all excuse me, I have a life to get on with. I have a standing invitation with a certain senator. NILES: <i>Hm. What some politicians won't do for a vote.</i>	context
	C.C.: If anyone wants my opinion... NILES: (interrupts her) <i>Hands?</i> MAXWELL (stops him): Niles.	more impolite because of the interruption
S01E17	C.C. (introducing herself): Hello. Actually, I'm more like part of the family. NILES: <i>Yes, we keep putting her out at night and she keeps finding her way back.</i>	
	C.C.: I don't know why, I just love weddings. NILES: <i>Yeah, we all want what we can't have.</i> C.C.: Maxwell, do you think you'll ever get married again? MAXWELL: I hope so. Oh, I love my children, but it does get a little lonely at times. C.C.: Poor baby, you know I'm always there for you. NILES: <i>Making lazy circles in the sky.</i>	context
S01E18	C.C.: (to Fran) I'll be happy to give them their money back and sell their tickets on the street. NILES. <i>I'll drop you off at your usual corner.</i>	context as well as co-text
	GRACE: C.C., how come your dog hates you? NILES: <i>Well, after all, he is a male.</i> C.C. (in a sing-song voice): <i>Not for long.</i>	
S01E19	MAXWELL (to Niles who is cleaning the windows): Niles, please, I am trying to work. NILES: <i>As opposed to what I'm doing, which is a hobby?</i>	co-text
S01E20	NILES: Miss Babcock, there's a gentleman on line three who claims to be your father, <i>and I admire him for having the guts to admit it.</i>	
	FRAN (to C.C.): Why don't you have him over for dinner? Niles can whip something up. C.C.: I would like him to meet the man in my life. MAXWELL: Oh, by all means bring him along. NILES: <i>I'll blow him up and put him in his usual chair.</i>	context
	C.C.: Niles, we can't use this china. The pattern is hideous. (She shows the plate to Niles.) NILES: <i>That's not the pattern, it's your reflection.</i>	both context and co-text
S01E21	C.C. (to kids): Hey, kids, you know when I'm down in the dumps what cheers me up? FRAN: <i>A fifth of Scotch and a fresh pack of batteries?</i> (This is followed by long pause and Maxwell hiding a smile.)	context
S02E02	C.C.: Oh, Maxwell, please? I'm begging you. It'll only take a couple of minutes. You don't even have to like it. NILES: <i>There's a speech she knows by heart.</i>	co-text

	"C.C. (to Maxwell): I don't want to risk offending [my psychiatrist]. We're on the verge of a breakthrough. NILES (in a surprised tone and then hopeful tone): <i>Oh, good. Maybe he'll find a personality we like.</i>	co-text
S02E05	C.C. (to Fran on the topic of death): I'd rather die young. NILES: <i>And we're all pulling for you.</i> (C.C. stops at the last step and then continues walking without turning back.)	co-text
	(Fran does not want to speak in front of Niles.) MAXWELL: Oh, Niles, oh, you can speak freely in front of him. We have no secrets in this house. C.C.: <i>That's because he listens at the door.</i> (She says to Niles's eyes with a smile.) NILES: <i>How else would I hear you scratching to get back in?</i> (C.C.'s smile freezes.)	sarcastic exchange – context
S02E07	(Fran is arguing with Maxwell.) FRAN: You are jealous because Phillippe discovered something that was right under your nose. MAXWELL: And what would that be exactly? FRAN: My star quality. MAXWELL: <i>That's rather like discovering the atomic bomb. Sounds good in theory, but millions will suffer.</i>	
	C.C.: People will be walking out in the middle of her performance. NILES: <i>Just like one of your dates.</i>	co-text
S02E15	MAXWELL: (to C.C. who is smoking on the terrace) Quit smoking, C.C. and you can come inside. (to Niles who is standing there with hideous artificial tree.) Niles, get that hideous thing off the terrace, would you? Niles (to C.C.): <i>Mr. Sheffield wants you to get off the terrace.</i>	situational context
	(Maxwell offers C.C. a cigarette) C.C.: Maxwell, I am wearing the patch. If I light a cigarette right now, my heart will stop. (Niles standing next to her lights a lighter for her as if to light her cigarette. C.C. takes a chewing gum out of her mouth and puts it in Niles's pocket.)	non-verbally expressed sarcasm – co-text
S02E18	C.C. (to a famous playwright): Your plays are so profound. Where do you get your inspiration? WRITER: Give me an uptight alcoholic spinster, and I'll give you a play. NILES (spreads his hands next to C.C. and in sing-song voice says): <i>Ta-ta!</i>	co-text – expressed more by the non-verbal cues
S03E07	MAXWELL: It [Niles' cure for hangover] isn't working. NILES: <i>So sorry. Forgot the hair of the dog. (pinches a single hair from C.C.'s hair).</i>	expressed both verbally and non-verbally

	C.C.: Ouch! (She hits him with a newspaper.)	
S04E01	(Maxwell was in a plane that almost crushed but it was okay in the end.) C.C.: Oh, Maxwell, what an ordeal this flight was. I can't imagine anything more terrifying. (Niles shows C.C. her own reflection in a silver plate.) NILES: <i>Booga, booga, booga!</i> (C.C. looks at him and walks away.)	Non-verbally expressed
S04E03	C.C.: Maxwell, I am sorry I am late. I had to pack a bag. They're fumigating my apartment. NILES: <i>They've tried that before. You always come back.</i> (C.C. just stares at him annoyed) C.C.: Anyway, it's very difficult to find a hotel that will accept dogs. NILES: <i>Did you promise you wouldn't hump the bellboy's leg?</i> (C.C. gets even more annoyed) C.C.(with a bright smile to Niles): You know, Niles, <i>it's a pity we don't see more of one another.</i> (to Maxwell with excited tone as it she just got the idea) Maxwell, I just had a crazy notion. Why don't Chester and I stay here? (Niles looks angrily at her.)	numerous examples of sarcasm
S04E08	C.C. (to Fran who is disappointed that they are not going to the movies with the kids): Maxwell will go insane if he has to see "The Hunchback" one more time. NILES (in a questioning tone): <i>Then why don't you quit?</i> C.C. (with laughter): <i>Oh, Niles, dear sweet, overcompensating for his little SPATULA, Niles.</i>	co-text and context
S04E20	(Maxwell wins an award and gets up to go on a stage to take it. Fran kisses him passionately.) C.C. (to them): Excuse me. Excuse me. I co-produced. I raised money. FRAN: <i>Oh, I'm sorry.</i> (<i>She kisses her passionately too.</i>) C.C.: What are you doing? Get off me!	verbally by "Oh, I'm sorry" and non-verbally – by the kiss situational context
S04E26	(Niles comes into the room with dyed hair and C.C. is smirking.) NILES (pretending nothing changed): What? C.C. (with a smirk): <i>Smart! You're doing it gradually, so no one would notice.</i> NILES (without any emotion): <i>Same way you became a woman.</i>	situational context

TABLE B: Banter

Season and episode	Example	Commentary
S01E14	(Fran gives advice to Maxwell about the kids.) MAXWELL: You have a very good point. <i>How annoying.</i>	

	(Fran laughs.)	
S02E02	(Fran has cold) FRAN: Do I sound like I'm coming down with a cold? NILES (without thinking says): <i>Constantly.</i> FRAN: No, I mean it.	Suggesting that her voice always sounds like that -
S04E04	(Fran is working in a television and asks C.C. for business advice) FRAN: Oh, you know, I really am too nice to negotiate big deals. I guess <i>I should have a ruthless blood sucking leech on my side</i> (pointing to C.C.) C.C. (with a bright smile: I'll take that as a yes! (They shake hands)	At this point they have quite friendly relationship – shared humour

TABLE C: Sarcastic Banter		
Season and episode	Example	Commentary
S01E01	(Fran is overfilling her plate.) FRAN: I just love a good buffet. NILES: It's free, Miss Fine. You're allowed to go back.	
S01E03	(C.C. gives her opinion on certain topic and everyone disagrees.) FRAN: You know, I agree with Miss Babcock. (Maxwell and Niles look at her in disbelief.) FRAN: <i>I know, it was an ugly shock to me too.</i>	marking C.C. as in-group member
S01E05	FRAN (shouting): Hurry up, kids, the limo's waiting. (With a smile to Niles) I love saying that. NILES (sarcastically): And I love hearing it. (She smiles at him again.)	their relationship does not suggest negative interpretation in this case
S01E07	(They are visiting a psychiatrist because of Grace.) FRAN: Oh, I am speechless. MAXWELL: <i>This is a miracle.</i> PSYCHIATRIST: No, it's really a common psychological occurrence. MAXWELL: <i>No. The miracle is her being speechless.</i> (Fran gives him a look, but is not offended.)	context – Fran always have something to say
S01E10	(Maxwell is avoiding making a decision) MAXWELL: I've got a tennis game. Excuse me. FRAN: (sing-songy voice holding a package of tennis balls) <i>Oh, Mister Sheffield, you forgot your balls.</i>	situational context as well as co-text – wordplay functions as criticism
S01E13	MAXWELL (running to door to open them for his date): It's all right, Niles, I'll get it. It's probably Chloe. NILES: <i>Don't trip over your hormones, sir.</i> MAXWELL: Niles, I'm perfectly in control of my hormones.	functions as levelling the social structure Maxwell dismisses the banter from his position of power (he is the boss).
S01E16	(Fran is suggesting a family holiday to which she hopes to be invited and is looking for Niles' support as he may be coming too.)	

	<p>FRAN: (to Niles): Don't you want a little peace and quiet?</p> <p>NILES: <i>Desperately. How soon can you all pack?</i></p>	
S01E20	<p>(The doorbell rings.)</p> <p>MAXWELL: Oh, Niles, there's someone at the door.</p> <p>Niles (coming to the door in pain) <i>Oh, and I thought another angel got its wings.</i></p> <p>MAXWELL: You should do something about your feet.</p> <p>NILES: <i>Oh, perhaps I can chew them off.</i></p> <p>MAXWELL: <i>I'm thinking more of a visit to a chiropodist, but as long as you take care of it.</i></p>	
S02E01	<p>(The doorbell rings.)</p> <p>NILES: Oh, I'll get it.</p> <p>FRAN: <i>Niles, you know, you don't have to keep announcing that. It's your job. Believe me, no one's going to horn in on you.</i></p>	co-text – mocking the everyday phrase “I’ll get it.”
S02E07	<p>FRAN: Can you imagine anything more ridiculous than me doing Shakespeare?</p> <p>MAXWELL: <i>Well, yes. People paying to see it.</i></p> <p>FRAN: Ha-ha. I'll have you know that in high school,...</p>	
S03E10	<p>NILES: Well, what makes you so sure she wants you?</p> <p>MAXWELL: Oh, come on, man, she practically spelled it out. She wants someone tall, handsome, creative.</p> <p>NILES: <i>Did she also mention cocky, vain, couldn't get the laundry in the hamper if his life depended on it?</i></p> <p>MAXWELL: No.</p> <p>NILES: Then what are you worried about?</p> <p>MAXWELL: I'm telling you, she wants me.</p>	
S03E21	<p>FRAN: Can I ask you a question? I have been dressing like this for three years, and there's nothing going on between us?</p> <p>MAXWELL: That's right. I'm your employer.</p> <p>FRAN: Mmm. And what is it you do again?</p> <p>MAXWELL: I produce musical theater.</p> <p>FRAN: <i>Oh, now it's all making sense to me.</i></p>	
S03E26	<p>MAXWELL: I mean, when you pay someone, they only tell you what you want to hear.</p> <p>NILES: <i>Absolutely, sir. (pause) You are so clever and witty and handsome...</i></p> <p>MAXWELL: Oh, shut up!</p>	Maxwell – no in the mood for bantering – his reply is overtly impolite.
S04E01	<p>(Niles sees that Fran is pissed at Maxwell.)</p> <p>NILES (in sing-song tone): Ooo, somebody was so very bad. (inquisitively) What did you do? Shall I close th door?</p> <p>MAXWELL: <i>Yes, just make sure you are on the ohter side of it.</i></p>	co-text
S04E16	<p>(Fran being held hostage in a robbery.)</p> <p>NILES: Oh, sir, thisis horrible. What shall we do?</p>	

	<p>MAXWELL: Well, I have to go down there and help.</p> <p>NILES: <i>Oh, of course. The SWAT team and the FBI desperately need the producer of ""Jelly's Last Jam"" on their side."</i></p>	
S05E05	<p>C.C.: I am perfect for Maxwell. I am dependable, respectable, and men are always drawn to my classic Swedish features.</p> <p>FRAN: <i>So you're a Volvo.</i></p>	