

# **"How ya doin' ?" Meta-Pragmatic Awareness in TV-Series: *Friends* (A Case Study)**

by

***Dr. Sarala Krishnamurthy***

***Dean, School of Communication***

***Polytechnic of Namibia***

***Windhoek***

***NAMIBIA***

*That TV serials by nature consist of conversation is stating the obvious. Whether the serials are soapies (Dynasty, The Bold and the Beautiful, Dallas) or detective (CSI, Miami), drama in the courtroom (Boston Legal, The Practice), adventure (Lost) or plain and simple "slice of life" (Sex in the city, Desperate Housewives, Friends), all of them depend on two vital ingredients for their success. These two ingredients are the elements of suspense and conversational exchange. It is the plot with the element of suspense that moves the story forward, quite like the Victorian three decker novel which was serialized in magazines in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and disseminated amongst an agog, eager, hungry-for-information public. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century plot ensures that the TV audience returns week after week, episode after episode. The other element, conversation, keeps them glued to the TV set and the interplay of words amongst the characters not only furthers the action but also provides for various factors like humor, profound insight into human nature and a vicarious experience of the unknown. Any TV show's success is reflected by the number of seasons that it has run. "**Friends**", a popular TV serial of the 90s ran for 10 seasons before it finally wrapped up after ten years. Part of the show's success was because of the situational comedy in which the characters are trapped. But most of it was because of the lively verbal interaction amongst them. This paper examines the cultural assumptions that are inherent in and integral to an understanding of social behavior using "**Friends**" as a case study with a view to explicating that although the pragmatic conditions of communicative tasks are theoretically taken to be universal, the realization of these tasks as social practice is variable.*

**When a diplomat says 'yes', he means 'perhaps';**

**When he says 'perhaps', he means 'no',**

**When he says 'no' he is not a diplomat**

**When a lady says 'no', she means 'perhaps';**

**When she says 'perhaps', she means 'yes'**

**When she says 'yes', she is not a lady.**

**(Voltaire –Quoted in Spanish in Escandell, 1993)**

In the field of applied linguistics, pragmatic analysis has shown remarkable growth in the last thirty years. From being a micro-linguistic analysis of speech patterns in social interaction, pragmatics has developed into a discipline of its own encompassing cultural performance, critical discourse analysis, sociolinguistic theory and social conventions. In its simplest form pragmatics is the study of “how more gets communicated than is said” (Yule: 1996:3). Pragmatics deals with utterances, the intentional acts of speakers at times and places which can be described as speech events. Logic and semantics traditionally deal with properties or types of expressions. But pragmatics focuses on the context within which an utterance is made. Therefore, the same utterance can ‘mean’ differently from token to token, from use to use, or from utterance to utterance.

Different theorists have described the properties of utterances in a variety of ways. Some theorists (Grice) concentrate on the nature of certain facts which are relevant to whatever is said. Certain others (Austin and Searle) are concerned with what happens beyond saying, that is, what speech acts are performed in or by saying what is said or what implicatures are generated by the utterance. Pragmatic analysis has included resolution of ambiguity and vagueness, reference of proper names, indexicals and demonstratives, anaphors and at least some issues involving presuppositions. In all of these cases facts about the utterance, beyond the expressions used and their meanings, are needed.

Looking beyond the logico-semantic meaning of an utterance, pragmatics has sought to explain the information one conveys, and the actions one performs, in or by saying something. Locke, Saussure and other influential theorists have pointed out that communication is basically the matter of a speaker encoding his thoughts into a language, a code, which is decoded by the listener and converted into thoughts. Thus language is a system of phonological, syntactic and semantic levels over which speakers of the language have mastery. In contrast, pragmatics takes the same speech but subjects it to some species of ampliative inference such as those that go beyond the application of rules.

Some of the facts with which pragmatics deal are the following:

- Facts about the objective facts of the utterance including who the speaker is, when the occurrences occurred and where;
- Facts about the speaker's intentions;
- Facts about the beliefs of the speaker and those to whom he speaks, and the conversation they are engaged in; the beliefs they share; the focus of the conversation; what they are talking about, etc;
- Facts about social institutions, such as promises, marriage ceremonies, courtroom procedures and life.

In all of the above, pragmatics encompasses notions of culture and theory that throw light in the way people use language and the purpose for which it is used. Boulton once said (1960:3) theatre is "literature that walk and talks before our eyes". It is this need expression, both physical and verbal, that makes the pragmatics of performance different from the cultural logic of texts. It is at this conjunctive that "cultural pragmatics is born". Alexander (2004:530).

For the purposes of this paper, I use the notion of Meta-pragmatics awareness as that which describes or characterizes the linguistic function of a speech as utterance and pragmatic function of utterance as action. In order to illustrate my argument that meta-pragmatic awareness focuses on speech utterances as distinctive patterns of exchange in a social set-up, I analyse the conversational exchange amongst the characters in the popular American TV Serial "**Friends**" which ran for 10 seasons keeping in mind an important point stated by Blondheim and Blum-Kulka (2001:512) "Monologism is symbolised by the unidirectionality of mass media's message". Unlike what happens in real life where there is a dialogue that is a part of any conversational exchange, on television even though a conversational exchange takes place, the message to the audience is non-negotiable. Therefore it is necessary to study not only the linguistic elements of the conversation, but also to examine the context of the utterance. Blommaere, Bulcaen (2000:460) state , "At the micro-level, a concrete instances of talk or concrete features of text could be analysed more satisfactorily, if a more dynamic concept of context – contextualisation – were used".

## **“Friends”**

**"Friends"** was created in 1994 by David Crane and was aimed at young adults who in 1990s were identified by café culture, dating scene and modern independence. Unlike certain relationships such as marriage, friendship is neither institutionalised nor is it a certifiable blood kin relationship. It lacks the legal nature of a marriage and cannot be viewed through the lens of romantic love which is sexual in nature. Rawlin's (1992) calls it “institutionalised non-institution” (9).

**"Friends"** ran for 10 seasons (10 years) and had a tremendous cultural impact as can be seen in the use of language and everyday fashion. The use of “so” to mean ‘very’ or ‘really’ was not invented by any **Friends'** writer, but it can be argued that the extensive use of the phrase in the series encouraged its use in everyday life. Further, “so” supported “totally” in the sense of “very”. (Examples are: “You are so moving”, you are so dead). The series has also been noted for the effect it had on everyday fashion and hairstyles particularly those of Jennifer Aniston who plays the role of Rachel in the series.

The series contributed a lot to change the heterosexual perceptions towards homosexuality through the use of a lesbian marriage between Carol and Susan (Ross ex-wife), through references to sexual fantasies and through references to cross-dressing, transvestitism and gayism around the main character in the serial, Chandler.

In US, **“Friends”** was the highest rated show in 2001, 2002 and number one show on Australian Television 4 times in 1998, 2000, 2001 and 2002. **"Friends"** quickly established a cult status in UK. In 2004 it received 9.44 million viewers and was one of the highest rated TV series ever for Channel 4 (excluding movies and special events). **“Friends”** became popular all over the world and was viewed in China, India, Korea, Japan, France, and several other countries.

The odd thing about "**Friends**" is that, as such, there is no story line or narrative. The rather sketchy plot is delineated by the development of the six friends through the ten seasons. I would like to argue that the show depicts the thematic premise of the integration of six dysfunctional young adults at odds with their environment and the society around them, into the wholesome, middleclass, mainstream, traditional American family life which embodies the American spirit. Thus the six characters, who, in the beginning of the series, are weird or quirky, towards the end of the series are restored to normalcy. What grabs the viewer's attention is that all six characters who provide much of the interest throughout the 10 seasons which depicted their trials and tribulations, are outlandish or bizarre and their quiriness gets diminished towards the end of 10<sup>th</sup> season. The series had to wind down because the characters ceased to grip the imagination of its viewers. In other words, restoration to normalcy led to the 'death' of the series.

For me the success of the series rests on the conversational exchange that takes place between the characters and the story moves forwards through dialogue. Further, unlike a novel or a short story, here, characters unfold through their interaction with other characters. As such, the action is kept to the minimum and we see the characters gathered either in Monica's flat in New York, or Joey's flat opposite, or in the "Central Perk" the coffee shop. The six friends travel to London, Barbados, Paris and Las Vegas, but apart from going out to restaurants, or to the park to exercise, their movements are confined to the New York flats and the corridor.

If we were to plot the characters on a cline ranging from quiriness to normalcy, Phoebe Buffay and Chandler Bing are the most weird, to Ross and Monica Gellar, the brother-sister pair, being the most normal and coming from a normal hetero-sexual family. Rachel Green and Joey Tribbiani are midway between the two pairs, exhibiting characteristics of simplicity, naivety, or even stupidity.

Chandler Bing is a character in the series who is weird. He is scared of marriage and this could be as a result of the divorce of his mother, an erotic novelist, Mona Tyler Bing and his father a cross-dressing Vegas burlesque-star, Charles Bing. He has serious commitment issues, even though, by the end of the series he gets engaged to Monica Geller, marries her and settles down. There are several references to Chandler being gay although he is not. Throughout the series he is noteworthy for his wit and sardonic

humor. He cracks nasty jokes at the expense of all his friends, particularly Joey, his roommate, with whom he has a good relationship. He is the most successful of all the six characters in the group working as an IT Procurement Manager.

Phoebe Buffay's bizarre family history is reflected in her chaotic existence. She has lead a chequered life, being brought up by her biological mother's friend, who has committed suicide. She and her twin sister, Ursula, are left on the streets to fend for themselves. She has no attachment for Ursula, a selfish typist cum porn star who has no qualms in using Phoebe's name for her own purposes. In the course of the series, Phoebe becomes a licensed masseuse. She goes through several relationships before she finally gets married to Mike Hannigan. In one season she gives birth to her half-brother's babies (triplets) because his wife is unable to carry them. She has been to prison, has dubious musical talent, is a vegetarian and believes in multiple gods (Thor, Odin, and Lucifer). She is partial to Joey, firm friends with Chandler and in a conflictual relationship with Ross. She finds Monica competitive and obsessive compulsive, but her relationship with Rachel is more stable. Phoebe's alter ego, Dr Regina Philange, is used by her several times to extricate herself from awkward and uncomfortable situations.

“**Friends**” success cannot be attributed to a compelling narrative, and it may be said that rather, the triumph of the series is because of the lively conversational exchange and it can be explained through a pragmatic analysis of the exchange that takes place between/amongst the characters.

### **Grice's Conversational Implicatures**

For the purposes of my analysis I would like to use H.G. Grice's influential theory of *conversation implicatures*. Grice draws a sharp distinction between what one says and what one “implicates” by uttering a sentence. What one says is determined by the conventional meaning of the sentence uttered and contextual processes of disambiguation and reference fixing, what she implicates, is associated with the existence of rational principles and maxims governing conversation. The utterance is identified widely with the literal content; what is implicated, i.e., the implicature, with the non-literal, i.e., what is communicated but not said. According to Grice, the ‘calculation’ of conversational implicatures is grounded on common knowledge of what the speaker has said, the linguistic and the extra-linguistic context of the utterance, general background

information and the consideration of the cooperative principle (CP). Grice states that CP is implemented in the plans of speakers and understanding of hearers by the following maxims:

- (1) Quantity
  - Make your contribution as informative as required
  - Do not make your contribution more informative than required
- (2) Quality
  - Supermaxim: Try to make your contribution one that is true
  - Submaxim: Do not say what you believe to be false  
Do not say that for which you lack evidence
- (3) Relation
  - Be relevant
- (4) Manner
  - Supermaxim: Be perspicuous
  - Submaxim: Avoid obscurity of expression, avoid ambiguity  
Be brief (avoid prolixity)  
Frame whatever you say in the form most suitable for any reply that would be regarded as appropriate.

## **ANALYSIS OF SPEECH PATTERNS**

Chandler Bing, Phoebe Buffay and Joey Tribbiani are the three most interesting characters in the series in terms of the speech patterns that can be identified with them. The quirkiness of the Chandler and Phoebe is reflected in their conversational style. Chandler Bing is complex because he uses various strategies in conversational exchange, while, even though Phoebe Buffay is also quirky, it is signaled differently from Chandler. They will be contrasted with Joey Tribbiani who provides a lot of the humor in the series but whose speech patterns are simplistic.

Chandler Bing is perceived as the most intelligent and the most sarcastic member of the group. He sneers at and mocks his friends in any given situation and he exhibits an awareness of his conversational style. Of the 500 memorable quotes drawn from the 10 seasons, 120 are attributable to him. His wit can be explicated in three different ways:

through the use of conversation implicatures and the cooperative principle as outlined above, through meta-pragmatic awareness which I will define in the course of this article and finally through references to movies, articles and books.

For e.g., [Joey comes out of his room wearing ridiculous clothes. He has to look 19 for an audition]

1) Joey: Am I nineteen or what ?

Chandler: Yes, on a scale from one to ten, with 19 being the dumbest a person can look, you are definitely nineteen.

Maxim of quality says that you should speak the truth, which Chandler does, but he flouts the maxims of quantity, relation and manner because his contribution is more informative than required, it is not really relevant and, it is prolix and not orderly. In the 20 examples given below it can be seen that Chandler flouts the maxims in different ways: either he flouts the maxim of manner or the maxim of relation or the maxim of quality; he occasionally flouts the maxim of quantity. This may be attributed to the fact that brevity is the soul of wit and sarcasm. What is fascinating is that in some instances he flouts them all at the same time, as in example 12. Ross owns a monkey which has been lost for a while. He is informed that it is employed in a film unit and he has an opportunity to meet his favourite pet. He says, "This is so exciting, I haven't seen my monkey in a year." In response to this comment, Chandler deliberately flouts the maxims of quality, relation and manner, when he says: "What you never look down in the shower ?" He flouts the maxim of relation because he puns on the word "monkey". It is well known that "monkey" refers to penis. The question he asks, therefore, is irrelevant to what Ross has just said. As far as the maxims of quality and manner are concerned, he is both prolix and untruthful since he utters a falsehood. All the humor attributable to him is because of sarcasm which can be explained through flouting of Grice's maxims.

Other examples are:

2) Monica: So you go to the gym ?

Chandler: Oh yeah, I have to go 4 times a week but I've missed the last 1000 times [maximum of quantity]

3) Ross: So are things between you and Joey getting any better ?



- Chandler: It couldn't get any worse. Last night, I spent 8 hours calling him trying to get him to talk to me [maxim of quantity and manner]
- 4) Monica: You kissed a guy!  
Chandler: In my defense, it was dark and he was a very pretty guy [maxim of manner]
- 5) Ross: Can I borrow your blue tie ? Emma spit on mine.  
Chandler: OK., but you'll have to give it back when I get a job. Of course by then, this will be obsolete and we'll all be wearing silver jumpsuit. [maxim of quantity and relation]
- 6) Ross: Does it hurt ? [After he removes the handcuffs off Chandlers' wrists ]  
Chandler: No, I just see guys doing this when they get cuffs taken off [maxim of relation]
- 7) Raymond: This is kinda out of the blue, isn't it ?  
Chandler: No, no. This isn't out of the blue. This is smack dab in the middle of the blue [maxim of relation and manner]
- 8) Ross: Uh, what did the insurance company say ?  
Chandler: Oh they said uh, "You don't have insurance here so stop calling us. [maxim of quality and relation]
- 9) Susie: – How come all I can think about is putting that ice in my mouth and licking you all at once ?  
Chandler: Because I went to an all boy's high school and God is making up for it. [maxim of relation and manner]
- 10) Monica: The sun is out !(drawing back the curtains)  
Chandler: [squinting in pain] Hey, remember when I had corneas?  
[maxim of quality, manner and relation]
- 11) Ross: This is so exciting, I haven't seen my monkey in almost a year ?  
Chandler: What, you never look down in the shower ? [maxim of quality, manner and relation]
- 12) Question: Do you know anything about chicks?  
Chandler: Fowl .. no, women ... no [maxim of manner]

- 14) Joey: But I can't stay too long, I gotta get up early for a commercial audition tomorrow.  
Chandler: So when you said "get up early" did you mean 1986 ? [maxim of relation, manner]
- 15) Chandler:(enters with a terrible hangover)  
Monica: How ya doing ?  
Chandler: Well, my apartment is not there anymore because I drank it [maxim of quality, manner and relation]
- 16) Monica: You know Phoebe, a heart attack is nature's way of telling you to slow down.  
Chandler: I though a heart attack was nature's way of telling you to die [maxim of relation, manner]
- 17) Ross: You got the job?  
Rachel: Are you kidding? I'm trained for nothing! I was laughed at in 12 interviews today  
Chandler: And yet you are surprisingly upbeat!  
Rachel: You would be too if you got new boots 50% off.  
Chandler: Oh, how well you know me [maxim of manner]
- 18) Monica: Oh that's my old bathing suit from high school .... I was bigger then.  
Chandler: Really ... I though that's what they used to cover Connecticut when it rained [maxim of relation and manner]
- 19) Janice: It's a small world after all.  
Chandler: Yeah. And I still don't get bumped into Beyonce [maxim of relation and manner]
- 20) Ross: The door closed! I can't see anything with the door closed!  
Chandler: And the inventor of the doors rests happily in his grave. [maxim of relation and manner].

Chandler always has a sarcastic answer to any question addressed to him as can be seen in the examples given above. What is significant is that all the characters become a butt of Chandler's jokes excepting Monica who eventually gets engaged to and marries him. In the exchange of wit Monica upstages him all the time.

## METAPRAGMATIC AWARENESS

While there are references to Chandler being gay in the series, he is not really homosexual. Part of the humour in the series is also because of this play at being gay. Chandler without realising it, admits to a bisexual nature. I call this meta-pragmatic awareness, wherein a character is aware of the signal that he sends out but is unable to prevent himself from doing so. Not just that, he deliberately plays the role given to him by the other characters.

- 1) Monica: Chandler, it's OK. You don't have to be so macho all the time.  
Chandler: I'm not macho  
Monica: You are right. I don't know I was thinking
- 2) Chandler: Sometimes I wish I was a lesbian  
[everyone stares]
- 3) Joey: Hey I got something for you.  
Chandler: What's this ?  
Joey: 812 bucks  
Chandler: Well I don't know what Big Leon told you, but is an even thousand if you want me the whole night.
- 4) Chandler: You sent out these tuxes to celebrities for onward shows  
Rachel: Yeah  
Chandler: You mean these tuxes have been down the red carpet with people screaming "wow, you look fabulous" at them.  
Rachel: Honey, could I recommend watching a little bit more 'ESPN' and less "E".
- 5) Chandler: [entering from bathroom with an issue of Cosmo] All right, I took the quiz, and it turns out, I do put career before men.
- 6) Chandler – So when is the big game going to start! [on Thanksgiving day]  
Phoebe – You don't have to do that, Ross and Joey aren't here, you can watch the parade.
- 8) Joey: How come we don't have jam at our place ?  
Chandler: Because the kid's need shoes.

- 9) Chandler: You are not gonna believe what I did today.  
Monica: Well clearly you didn't shower nor shave.  
Chandler: I got good. I played this game all day and now I rule. They should change the name to *Ms* Chandler.
- 10) Chandler: The Bings have horrible marriages. They yell. They fight. And they use the pool bay as a pawn in their sexual games.  
Ross: Chandler have you ever put on a black cocktail dress and asked me up to your room ?  
Chandler – No.  
Ross – Then you are neither of your parents.

Let us just take one example to explicate what I have described above: In example 5, Chandler walks out of the bathroom with a women's magazine called "Cosmo" which obviously runs a quiz to test whether women consider career more important or men in their lives. He states that, according to the results, he does put career before men. First of all, it is not expected that any man would be interested in filling this kind of a questionnaire which is considered to be a female activity. Secondly, even if he were to do so, to admit it in the presence of his female friends would most definitely be totally unacceptable unless he were gay. While Chandler knows that he is teased about being gay, he plays up to it and through his speech he reveals meta-pragmatic awareness.

### **REFERENCES TO OTHER SHOWS, MOVIES AND BOOKS**

Chandler, unlike the other characters, reveals awareness of other shows on TV, movies and books as in the examples given below:

- 1) Monica – Hey, guess who is coming for Thanksgiving dinner?  
Chandler – Sidney Poitier?  
(Reference to the movie "Guess who is coming to dinner?" in which Sir Sidney Poitier plays the main role)
- 2) Chandler – All right, you will notice that I am full dress. I, in turn, have noticed that you are not. So, in the words of A.A. Milne, "Get out of the chair Dill hole".

### **PHOEBE BUFFAY**

Phoebe's quirkiness is almost always expressed through the flouting of Grice's maxim of manner where she gives an answer which is not expected of her. Of the 500 quotable quotes about 72 are attributed to her. Her responses are very different from Chandler's. Where Chandler flouts three, or, sometimes, all four maxims in his answers to questions addressed to him, Phoebe is rather plain in her response in conversations. Take the first example given below:

1) Rachel - Hey, you wanna go see a movie ?

Ross- Yeah, sure.

Rachel- How about you, Phoebe ?

Phoebe- No, thanks, I've already seen one. (maxim of manner)

Here she is brief, relevant, perspicuous and truthful but her answer is not the right one. Similarly when Joey asks her, "Pheeb, you wanna help ?" She answers: "Oh, I wish I could. But I really don't want to." According to Gricean maxims, conversation can take place when the felicity conditions are right. Here even though the felicity conditions are right, Phoebe does not utter that which is expected of her. Below are several examples of the same:

### **PHOEBE**

1. Phoebe: Come on Ross, you are a palaeontologist. Dig a little deeper.  
(maxim of manner)
2. Phoebe: My mom used to stick her head in the oven. Actually she only did it once, but it was pretty weird. (maxim of manner)
3. Phoebe: I remember the day I got my first pay-check. There was a cave in one of the mines and eight people were killed.  
Monica: Wow, you – you worked in a mine.  
Phoebe: No, I worked in a Dairy Queen, why?(maxim of manner)
4. Phoebe: Well, I am a pacifist, but when the revolution comes, I'll destroy all of you. (maxim of manner)
5. Phoebe: Look, I had a hard life. My mother was killed by a drug dealer.  
Monica: Phoebe, you mother killed herself  
Phoebe: She was a drug dealer. (maxim of manner)
6. Rachel: Well, I guess it wasn't cupid that brought her after all.  
Phoebe: No, just another regular flying dwarf.(maxim of manner)

In contrast with Chandler Bing and Phoebe Buffet, Joey Tribbiani does not have any witty lines. He is conceived as an actor who is always looking for a job. He is simple minded, has trouble understanding negative criticism with regard to his acting, shows a great love for food and has remarkable success with women. His pick-up line is "How ya doin' ?" which became very popular in US( Tagliamonte:2005). It is his stupidity that causes laughter as can be seen in some of the examples given below. For instance, when Monica asks him: "What would you do if you were omnipotent ?" He replies, "I'd probably kill myself", clearly understanding the word to mean "impotent." He does not flout any maxims, but his answers evoke laughter. He shows pragmatic awareness when it comes to a reference to his own stupidity as in the example: Rachel: " Joey, Are you sure that on some level you don't want to take off my bra ?" And he replies, "I don't have another level." In all the examples given below there are references to his being naive, stupid or simple minded. All the examples evoke laughter.

## **JOEY**

1. Joey: You can't have s-e-x in front of a b-a-b-i-e.  
(spelling baby wrong)
2. Chandler: (to Joey who is removing his tie) Would you put that back on !  
Monica's gonna be here any minute.  
Joey: But it hurts my Joey's apple ( instead of Adam's apple).
5. Phoebe: Joey, if you had to give up sex or food, which would you pick?  
Joey: OK ... sex. No, food. No uh .... I want both! I want girls on bread.
6. Joey: What? You made a bet. A bet is a bet. You bet on a bet and if you lose, you lose a bet.
7. Monica: Joey, what would you do if you were omnipotent?  
Joey: I would probably kill myself. (misunderstands the word to mean impotent)
8. Joey: Rachel, you gotta find out if he is in the same place you are.  
Otherwise it is just a moo point.(instead of moot point)  
Rachel: A moo point?  
Joey: Yeah. It's like a cow's opinion. It doesn't matter. Its moo.

9. Rachel: Are you sure that on some level you don't want to take off my bra?  
 Joey: I don't have another level.(meta-pragmatic awareness).
10. Rachel: Joey, you can't steal an award.  
 Joey: I am not stealing it. I'm accepting it on her behalf.  
 Rachel: You don't even know what behalf means.  
 Joey: I know what it means. It's a verb. As in, I behalving  
 it.(misunderstanding the word 'behalf')
11. Joey: I hate his(Ralph Lauren) underwear. One time I bought a pair  
 market XS and let me tell you there's no room for anything excess  
 in there.(misunderstanding 'XS' which is extra small).
12. Joey: I thought it'd be great, you know I have some time alone with my  
 thoughts ... turns out I don't have as many thoughts as you'd  
 think. (meta-pragmatic awareness)
13. Joey: (Asking a patient his age pretending to be a doctor)  
 Patient: Can't you work that out by my date of birth?  
 Joey: I'm a doctor, not a mathematician.

The use of Grice's maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner to understand and explain the speech patterns of characters in the popular series "**Friends**" gives us an insight into the ways by which we can analyze characters. As can be seen, even though the series did not have a strong plot or story line to move it forward, it became renowned and its popularity rests on the conversational exchange that takes place throughout the series. Further, some of the pragmatic devices are so favored that they have become an accepted part of the lingua franca.

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