

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

A misunderstanding may cause conflicts between people. One of the causes of a misunderstanding may happen when people are having a conversation. The speaker may make a mistake when he tries to convey something to the hearer; as a result, the hearer gets a different understanding of the speaker's intention.

Conflicts caused by conversational misunderstanding occur in our daily life and also in TV series. The TV series that I have chosen to be analyzed is *Prison Break* Seasons 1-3. When conversational misunderstanding happens, an implicature will also occur.

Implicature means “any meaning which is conveyed indirectly or through hints, and understood implicitly without ever being explicitly stated” (Wood-Wallace). A linguist named H.P. Grice developed a theory called conversational implicature (cited in Thomas 57). According to Grice (in Thomas 57), in conversational implicature, the implied meaning may vary depending on the context of the utterance. As such, Grice proposed four conversational maxims:

maxim of quantity, quality, relation, and manner (Thomas 63-64).

To create a conversation which observes those four maxims, a cooperation is needed between the speaker and the hearer. Grice realized that a speaker or a hearer will not always follow the four conversational maxims. In certain situations, a hearer may refuse to cooperate with the speaker and thus, one or several conversational maxims are not fulfilled. Furthermore, a hearer may also fail in observing the maxims because of his or her inability to speak clearly. Therefore, Grice also provides a theory about non-observance of the maxims. He divides the non-observance of maxims into five categories: flouting, violating, infringing, opting out of, and suspending a maxim. The non-observance of maxims may lead to the occurrence of among others conflicts, suspense, or humor. Thus, to create a good conversation, the cooperation of the speaker and the hearer must be good.

My thesis topic is the occurrence of conflicts due to the non-observance of Gricean maxims in the TV series *Prison Break* Seasons 1-3. I choose this topic because conversation through words becomes an important way to convey our meaning, whether literally or figuratively. When people converse with each other, they very often fail to observe the four conversational maxims and thus, conflicts, suspense, or humor may occur. This failure is interesting to be analyzed as people usually do not notice that non-observance of those maxims may cause speakers and hearers to have an unsuccessful conversation. This topic is significant as it will help people realize that the four conversational maxims should be observed so as to make no communication problem.

The area of linguistics that my topic belongs to is Pragmatics. Pragmatics in a simple way is defined as “the study of speaker meaning” (Yule 3). The specific Pragmatic theory that I use to analyze my thesis is the conversational maxims proposed by H.P. Grice (quoted in Thomas 57). In analyzing the conflict, I use Perrine’s theory of conflict (Perrine 44).

The source of data that I use for my thesis is an American TV series entitled *Prison Break*. It has four seasons and I use the first three seasons as my thesis source.

Prison Break is an American TV series created by Paul Scheuring (Adelstein, par. 1). The set for each season is different but the main story of this TV series is the same for each season. The main characters are two brothers, Lincoln Burrows and Michael Scofield. Their father left their family when Lincoln’s and Michael’s mother was pregnant with Michael. This causes their mother to divorce their father while she is pregnant with Michael. After Michael is born, he uses her mother’s maiden name as his surname instead of his father’s surname. Hence, the brothers have different surnames. For a political reason, Lincoln is set up and thrown into jail and the story revolves around how Michael tries to save his brother to escape from prison and his willingness to do anything for his brother’s freedom.

I have chosen this particular TV series as my data because it contains many actions and therefore, many conflicts are likely to happen in it. The storyline is also good as it shows the unconditional love of a pair of siblings.

Hopefully, after reading my thesis, the reader will gain knowledge about conversational maxims and the differences between observance and non-

observance of the maxims. By reading this, people may also know how important it is to observe the conversational maxims in their conversations so that they will avoid the occurrence of conflicts.

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1.2 Statement of the Problem

There are four problems that I am going to analyze in my thesis, namely:

1. Which utterances in *Prison Break* Seasons 1-3 do not observe the Gricean maxims?
2. What types of non-observance of maxims do those utterances belong to?
3. What implicature is generated?
4. How does the failure to observe the maxims result in the occurrence of conflict in *Prison Break* Seasons 1-3?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purposes for analyzing the problems are:

1. To show the utterances in *Prison Break* Seasons 1-3 that do not observe the Gricean maxims.
2. To show the types of non-observance of maxims that those utterances belong to.
3. To show the generated implicature.
4. To show how a failure in observing the maxims can cause a conflict to occur in *Prison Break* Seasons 1-3.

1.4 Method of Research

I started my research after watching the TV series *Prison Break* as it reminds me of the theories that I have studied in class. I used the TV series as my data after I downloaded the series from the Internet. I reread the theory of Pragmatics, Grice's four conversational maxims, Grice's non-observance maxims, and also Perrine's theory of conflict. After studying the theories, I watched the TV series again. Then I collected the speech event in which a non-observance of maxims occurred. Lastly, I analyzed the speech event and wrote my thesis.

1.5 Organization of the Thesis

My thesis consists of four chapters. The first chapter, Introduction, consists of Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. The second chapter is Theoretical Framework, in which I explain the theories that I use in the analysis. The third chapter contains the analysis of the data that I use for my thesis. The last chapter is Conclusion, in which I conclude the results of analysis that reveal how a conflict occurs because of failure in observing Grice's conversational maxims. The thesis ends with Bibliography and Appendices.