CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

While having a conversation in daily life, people are sometimes unable to convey what they actually want. They tend to beat around the bushes instead of going to the main point. This usually leads to many possibilities such as misunderstanding, conflict, humor, etcetera.

People rarely say what they actually want to say because of the situation that they are in. Probably it is because they are not allowed to tell the truth, or they intentionally try to mislead the hearer. In order to understand what the hidden meaning or implied meaning behind the speaker's utterance is, the hearer must understand the situation and condition beforehand; otherwise, the hearer will fail for sure to understand the real meaning of the speaker. (Thomas 63)

For the reason above, the topic that I come up with for my thesis is: *Analysis on Non-Observance of the Gricean Maxims in Family Jokes which Lead to Humor in Laughfactory.com.* The significance of this topic is to reveal the implied meaning behind the speaker's utterance. At the same

time, it will also help the reader of these family jokes to understand the real meaning behind them.

The chosen topic is within a linguistic area known as Pragmatics, an area which discusses the hidden meaning of a speaker's utterance. The theory that I am going to use is created by H.P. Grice in 1950 about non-observance of maxims. The main purpose of using this theory is to reveal the humor of those family jokes.

In a conversation, there are certain rules to be followed so as to make the conversation flow fluently. Those rules are called conversational maxims, introduced by H.P. Grice. There are four conversational maxims, which are Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner; each of which has its own rule to be followed by the speaker to make sure that the hearer gets the message.

However, there is a chance that a speaker may fail to observe a certain maxim. There are a lot of reasons why a speaker may fail to observe a maxim; for instance, they deliberately avoid answering a question, give an irrelevant response, or use imperfect language.

Grice noticed that, and thus he pointed out five different ways of how a speaker fails to observe the maxim, and those five ways are flouting the maxims, violating the maxims, infringing the maxims, opting out of maxims, and lastly suspending the maxims.

To strengthen the effect of humor in those jokes, I use another theory, Script Incongruity, which was founded by Raskin. The theory mainly talks about how a dialogue may have two different scripts. One of the scripts is easy to predict, while the other is totally unpredictable. It is the unpredictability effect that leads to humor in a dialogue.

This thesis mainly discusses the humorous dialogues in the family jokes on the website *Laughfactory.com. Laughfactory.com* started in 1979 and has been recognized as "the #1 comedy club in the country" by high-profile media such as USA Today. The founder and driving force of *Laughfactory.com* is Jamie Masada, who is revered as a pioneer and innovator and is an iconic name on the comedy scene. The New York Daily News called him the "Real King of Comedy." His knowledge and expertise have made him the leading authority on all things comedy and his advice is highly regarded by the entertainment industry's top power brokers. (Laughfactory.com)

The reason why I choose this particular category from the website *Laughfactory.com* as my source is basically because of its amusing and funny dialogues, which are totally worthy to be analyzed; moreover, most of the dialogues also contain non-observance of the Gricean maxims. The other reason is because the jokes in this category are mostly taken from our daily life conversations, which increases its analytical value. The most amusing part is to see the use of sarcasm at the perfect moment by each of the speakers with or without the intention of leading the dialogue into a humorous situation. In addition, as the jokes from this category are mostly taken from daily conversations, their languages are really simple and easy to understand.

By writing this thesis, I hope the readers will become more aware of the implied meaning in their daily conversations. The reason is because the failure to observe the maxims happen quite a lot without people noticing it.

(Word Count: 725)

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The problems which will be analyzed are as follow:

1. What type of non-observance maxims according to Grice's theory are there in the jokes of this category?

2. What is the implied meaning within the speaker's utterance?

3. In terms of Raskin's theory of Script Incongruity, how does a speaker's failure to observe maxims lead to humor?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Based on the stated questions, the purposes of my study are as follow:

1. To find out the type of non-observance of the Gricean maxims that occurs in the utterance.

2. To observe the implied meaning within the speaker's utterance.

3. To reveal how the speaker's failure to observe the maxims can lead into humor.

1.4 Method of Research

First of all, I started my research by browsing on the Internet about *family jokes* which I am going to use as the source of my data on the website *Laughfactory.com*. After that, I analyzed those jokes with the cooperative principles of Gricean theory of non-observance maxims and Raskin's theory of Script Incongruity which I learned from some sources, either in the form of books or websites. Finally, I identified the speaker's failure to observe the maxims

which creates humor, and classified it based on Grice's theory. At the same time, I also try to figure out the implied meaning of the speaker's utterance.

1.5 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is Introduction, which includes 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, which is about the theories that I am going to use in my analysis. Chapter Three is the analysis of my data, which is taken from the category family jokes in the website *Laughfactory.com.* Chapter Four is Conclusion, which consists of my own comments and suggestions for further research. The last to be presented in this thesis is Bibliography and Appendices.