

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In our daily conversation, especially in a formal context, we are supposed to generate not only grammatical but also polite and context-related conversation. This is able to be understood and analyzed through a pragmatic approach. Linguists use pragmatics as a tool to understand the speaker's meaning in a particular context. Pragmatics is defined by Leech (1983) as the study of meaning in relation to speech situations.

Humans are social beings. We like being surrounded by other human beings and share our personal experiences with others. As a social being, we perform conversations every day: at home, at school, at the workplace, or even chatting with our friends using the so-called "instant messenger." It means that conversation happens when there is more than one participant. Furthermore, a conversation can be analyzed through pragmatics due to the fact that pragmatics also focuses on the language that is used by humans as they interact with each other.

Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics. Pragmatics studies the aspects of meaning and language use that are dependent on the speaker, the addressee and the context of utterance. Besides, it also studies the effect that follows the speaker's choice of expression and the addressee's interpretation of the utterance.

In our daily conversation, people sometimes do not always say what they want to say directly. They might convey their ideas, feelings or opinions indirectly; in other words, they make an implicature(s) within the conversation. According to Mey (1993), "A conversational implicature is, therefore, something which is implied in conversation, that is, something which is left implicit in actual language use" (p. 45). In a regular conversation, we often deal with a speaker who generates an utterance which cannot be understood by using a semantic rule, but has to be understood in other ways. For example, when someone asks me 'What time is it?' it still makes sense for me to reply 'The bus just went by' in a particular context of conversation. The particular context itself should include the fact that there is only one bus a day that passes by, and I generate an implicature which can mean 'It's too late. The bus has already passed by.' Thus, to obtain the actual meaning within an implied utterance, we consider using a specific pragmatic approach, which is 'conversational implicature.'

Conversational implicature can also be used to lead to humour. People have their own systems in order to understand or interpret a conversation. However, there are many kinds of humour generated due to misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the system between the speaker and the hearer. Since

this thesis is concerned with pragmatics, I will analyze the non-observance of Grice's maxims and the incongruity process based on the incongruity theory by Jerry Suls.

The topic of this thesis is "Analysis of the non-observance of Gricean maxims and incongruity leading to humour in *Outnumbered*." The reason why I choose this topic is because I am interested in conducting a further analysis of the kinds of Grice's non-observance of the maxims and how the incongruity produces humour, based on the theory of incongruity by Jerry Suls.

The source of the data that I am going to use is the British sitcom *Outnumbered*, which is written, directed and produced by Andy Hamilton and Guy Jenkin. *Outnumbered* is about a family living in South London, where the parents are "outnumbered" by their three children. The parents are said to be "outnumbered" due to the mischievous behavior of their three children. The three children are Jack, Ben and Karen. There are five seasons in the sitcom; however, I use only the fifth season, which was first aired on 29th January 2014. In this season, Karen is finding it hard adapting to life in a big school, Ben auditions for a part in the school musical despite having no talent, whereas Jake makes a foolish fashion choice. I choose this data because it is a very recent season and thus, it is very relevant with the situation at the present time.

The significance of the study is in explaining why the sitcom is humorous due to the non-observance of the maxims. This study can help us understand the non-observance of the maxims creates humour. With this topic I hope that we are able to interpret the humour which is entertaining and can be appreciated by people.

Word Count: 721

Statement of the Problem

In this thesis, I would like to analyse the following problems:

1. Which utterance in *Outnumbered* does not observe the Gricean maxims?
2. What type of Gricean maxims does the speaker not observe?
3. What is the implicature generated?
4. How does the non-observance of Gricean maxims lead to humour?

Purpose of the Study

Based on the statement of the problem above, I would like to:

1. show the utterance in *Outnumbered* that does not observe the Gricean maxims.
2. show the types of non-observance of the Gricean maxims done by the speaker.
3. show the implicature generated by the speaker.
4. explain the process of how the non-observance of the Gricean maxims leads to humour.

Method of Research

This research is a descriptive qualitative research since it takes some steps, namely, collecting the data from the sitcom, analyzing the type of Grice's non-observance of the maxims, and analyzing the incongruity process based on Suls's theory of incongruity. The data of the research are all

utterances expressed by the characters in the sitcom *Outnumbered*. Then I write the research report.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of four chapters. The first chapter is Introduction, which consists of Background of the Study, Statement of the Problems, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research and Organization of the Thesis. The second chapter is Theoretical Framework, which covers the theories that will be used in analyzing the data: Pragmatics, Gricean Maxims and Suls' Incongruity-Resolution Theory. The third chapter contains the analysis of the non-observance of Gricean maxims and incongruity leading to humour in *Outnumbered*. The fourth chapter is Conclusion. Bibliography and Appendix are also included at the end of the thesis.