# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

**Background of the Study**

The Simpsons is an animated sitcom which began its debut on television on December 17, 1989. It consists of 17 seasons and 368 episodes. It was claimed by *TIME* magazine in 1998 that The Simpsons was the best television series of the 20th century (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Simpsons, 2006: 1).

The humorous scenes in The Simpsons are generally supported by the contexts because the language used in the scenes does not always contain humorous expressions. This is evident when we only read the script and do not watch the movie. To understand the humorous scenes, we have to learn about the participants (characters), the setting, the whole story, and the background of the Simpsons.

The characters that we need to know is, for example, Flanders, who is a fretful and annoying person. He always comments on the Bible and its rule. The setting of place in The Simpsons is usually at home, workplace, and school.

The background of the Simpsons consists of the family and their education. The members of the Simpsons are Abe, Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, and Maggie. The Simpsons belong to a middle class family. We can see it from their house,

which is quite big; it consists of four relatively large bedrooms. They have two cars; one is a station wagon and the other one is a sedan.

Homer is a high school graduate while Marge, Homer's wife, is not clear whether she is a high school graduate or a college graduate, but she is known as an intelligent housewife. Bart is a fourth grader and Lisa is assumed to be a third grader.

With such background, I decide to choose the contexts of utterances in some humorous scenes in The Simpsons as the topic of my thesis. Generally, we know context as a situation when one utterance is said. In my analysis, I want to show that non-linguistic context is important in order to make one utterance humorous and without it, the utterance might not be humorous. I analyze my data, which are in the forms of utterances and their contexts, by using theories of discourse analysis and context based approach.

**Statement of the Problem**

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

1.  What utterances can be found in some humorous scenes in The Simpsons?

2.  What types of context support the utterances in creating the humorous scenes in The Simpsons?

**Purpose of the Study**

In this thesis, I want to present:

1.  the utterances found in some humorous scenes in The Simpsons.

2.  the types of context that support the utterances in creating the humorous scenes in The Simpsons.

**Method of Research**

To conduct this study, I have followed some steps. Since The Simpsons consists of a number of episodes, I chose the Homer's Barbershop Quartet episode. I watched it several times in order to understand the story and the humorous scenes. After watching it several times, I looked for the script, which was available on the Internet. I did not write the script manually from the scenes because the utterances, which were in the forms of subtitles, were not always accurate. Some words may be missing, and some scenes were presented so fast that I did not have enough time to write it down. I used the script from the Internet in order to get more accurate data. After getting the script, I matched the scene in the film with the written utterance (script). Then, I selected the scenes which were humorous as well as the written utterances. In analyzing the contexts of the utterances in some humorous scenes, I collected the data and put them in sequence to make the analysis of the contexts easier to manage. The focus of my analysis is the utterances and their contexts in some humorous scenes. The result of the analysis is presented at the end of this thesis in the form of table.

**Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter One; which is preceded by the Preface, the Table of Contents and the Abstract, contains the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two presents the theories which are used to analyze the data of this study. Following is Chapter Three, the Analysis of the Contexts of Utterances in Some Humorous Scenes in The Simpsons. The Conclusion of the analysis is put in Chapter Four. This thesis ends

with the Bibliography, which contains the list of the sources of the theories used in this thesis. The Appendices in this thesis consist of a synopsis of <u>The Simpsons</u>, the script, and a table containing the result of the analysis.