

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### **Background of the Study**

Many people like watching humorous films because the films are entertaining. In a humorous film, it is not only its pictures that can make the viewers laugh but also its language. Language play performs a function of language that can contribute humour. In his book, Language Play, David Crystal (1998:1) says that the purpose of playing with language by bending and breaking its rules is only for fun.

Nowadays, we often find that language play is used in our daily lives. It can be found in a conversation, a novel or a humorous film. The understanding of the language play can help us to get a better understanding about the conversation, the novel, or the film. In addition, one of the products of language play is the creation of new words. “Another common form of conventional language play is the enthusiasm with which we make up new words.” (Crystal, 1998:30) I am interested in analysing language play in my thesis to help people to find the

meaning of the new words which are the products of language play. The topic of my thesis is Analysis of Language Play Found in *The Simpsons*.

In W. Keith Work's paper, it is said that "Social commentary is made on *The Simpsons*, but often almost without the audiences' knowledge, while still being entertaining and, as its creator, Matt Groening, has said, entertainment is definitely the key." (<http://www.snpp.com/other/papers/wkw.paper.html>, written by W. Keith Work) Thus, we can see that according to Matt Groening *The Simpsons* is meant to be entertaining. *The Simpsons* as a cartoon "...does what it does really well; it is entertaining and it pleases people. It considers its art, that's great; but if it doesn't so what?" (<http://www.snpp.com/other/interviews/groening00a.html>)

The fact that *The Simpsons* is entertaining is one of the reasons for the success of the film. This is also why a lot of people love *The Simpsons*. We can see this from the awards that *The Simpsons* has won. Recently, *The Simpsons*' The Seemingly Never Ending Story (2006) has won Emmy for 'Outstanding Animated Program'. So far *The Simpsons* has won nine Emmy Awards for the episodes: Life on the Fast Lane (1990), Homer vs. Lisa and the 8<sup>th</sup> Commandment (1991), Lisa's Wedding (1995), Homer's Phobia (1997), Trash of the Titans (1998), Behind the Laughter (2000), НОМЯ (2001), Three Gays of the Condo (2003). (<http://www.simpsoncrazy.com/news/news.phpid=907>, posted by Scott on Wednesday 30th August, 2006)

Besides the fact that *The Simpsons* is a humorous TV cartoon series, *The Simpsons* is also different from other cartoon films. Generally, we know that most cartoon films are for children. However, *The Simpsons* is one of the cartoon films that are made for adults because this cartoon film emphasises on satires. The satires in *The Simpsons* TV series are about the American lifestyle, culture, and society. The satires are made in the form of humorous language that describes an American family. As Brett Mullin says in his writing, *The Simpsons* uses incongruity, sarcasm, exaggeration, and other comedic techniques, to satirise most aspects of ordinary life, such as family, TV, and religion to achieve the true essence of satire. For example, one of *The Simpsons* episodes satirises the parents who push their children to succeed in sports to gain their parents' love. Some characters in *The Simpsons* give the descriptions about corrupt and promiscuous politicians and *The Simpsons* also satirises people of a religious affiliation who look down on those of other religions. (<http://www.snpp.com/otherpapers/bm.paper.html>, written by Brett Mullin)

The scripts of *The Simpsons* that I get from the Internet become my primary source of data. I choose *The Simpsons* scripts as my primary source because the scripts are easier to get so it is not time-consuming to find. In addition, the scripts are more accurate compared with the scripts that I would write by watching the TV series. The secondary source is *The Simpsons* TV series. This secondary source will help me in analysing the data because by watching the TV

series I will be able to find the contextual meaning of the utterances containing language play that I have got from the scripts.

Based on the fact that *The Simpsons* is created for satire and entertainment, I will divide my data into two categories. One contains language play for entertainment only and the other contains language play which reflects the series being a social criticism. I hope through this analysis, the people who watch *The Simpsons* will be able to appreciate the series better, both in terms of social criticism and linguistics.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In this thesis, I discuss some problems. They are:

1. What are the utterances containing language play in *The Simpsons*?
2. What language play is used in each of the utterances?
3. What is the significance of each of the utterances containing language play in *The Simpsons*?

### **Purpose of the Study**

In this study, I intend to show:

1. The utterances containing language play in *The Simpsons*.
2. The use of language play in each of the utterances.
3. The significance of each of the utterances containing language play in *The Simpsons*.

## **Method of Research**

In gathering the data, I read *The Simpsons* scripts as the primary source and I watch the film. Next, the data that I have got from the scripts are collected, selected and classified according to the kind of language play used in the scripts. The data can be in forms of words, phrases, or clauses. Afterwards, I analyse the data based on some linguistics theories. Finally, I draw a conclusion based on my analysis.

## **Organisation of the Thesis**

This thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter I is the introduction. It contains the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the method of research, and the organisation of the thesis. Chapter II contains the linguistic theories which are used to analyse the language play in *The Simpsons*. Chapter III contains the analysis of language play found in *The Simpsons*. The last one is Chapter IV, the conclusion, which contains my personal comments and opinions based on my analysis in Chapter III. At the end of the thesis are the bibliography and the appendix.