

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Reading books can be one of the choices for some people to spend their spare time. There are some kinds of book; they are novel, biography, poetry, drama, comics, etc. They have their own styles; however, the one that I find most interesting is comics.

Comics can be described as “a form of visual art consisting of images which are commonly combined with text often in the form of speech balloons or image captions” <[http: www.answers.com](http://www.answers.com)>. I like the way how the story of a comic is presented in frames and how the utterances are presented in the speech balloons. Moreover, I like the pictures and the language which is simpler to understand. I like to read comics especially funny comics. I like comics which have funny story, funny pictures and witty language.

Usually we say that comics are funny because of the story, but actually, we can say that a comic is funny not only from the story itself, but also from the picture of the comic, or the witty language or speech that is used in the story.

Wittiness is the ability to say or write clever, amusing things (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 2005: 1755). There are a lot of ways to make witty language; one of them is by using language play. Language play is 'an action of manipulating the language by bending and breaking its rules' (Crystal, 1998: 1). We can find a lot of language play in comic books. Sometimes it is used in the characters' speeches, sometimes in the titles of the stories. The names of some places or buildings can also contain language play and the way the author gives names to the characters may also use the process of language play.

A comic series which uses a lot of language play is *Asterix and Obelix*. *Asterix and Obelix* is French comic series, written by Rene Goscinny and Albert Uderzo. This comic has become a world-wide bestseller since it was printed in the year of 1961 and has about thirty-three series. The main characters of this book are also famous. Asterix is famous for his small body and his bravery, and Obelix is famous for his big and tall body that makes him look like a giant. This comic series tells about the adventure of two best friends named Asterix and Obelix with Dogmatix, Obelix's dog. They live in a Gaulish village. In this comic series the author uses language play, especially in the names of the characters. If we look further at some names in this comic series, we may find that the author very often reveals the characteristics of the characters through the names of the characters.

Studying language play can be fun because when we read something, in this case comic books, we can find what actually the words or names come from, and from that point we can find out the meaning of those names or what the author wants to tell us by using those names of characters. Sometimes when we read a comic, we read it just for fun. We just want to know the story and we do

not really pay attention to the words used in the comic, especially the names. We just know that this is the name of the character without knowing why the author gives such a name to the character. That is why I would like to analyze the language play found in the names of characters in *Asterix and Obelix* comic series. The books that I use for this thesis are *Asterix and Cleopatra*, *Asterix and the Big Fight*, *Asterix and the Cauldron*, *Asterix and the Chieftain's Shield*, *Asterix and the Great Crossing*, *Asterix and the Caesar's Gift*, *Asterix and the Normans*.

There are four areas of language play used in the *Asterix and Obelix* comic series. They are Phonology, Morphology, Semantics, and Stylistics. We use Phonology when we deal with the sound of words (Hyman, 1975: 1). Morphology is used when we deal with the study of word formation (Hufford, 1983: 1) and we use the theory of Semantics if we deal with the meaning of the words (Crane, Yeager, Whitman 1981: 129).

In writing this thesis, I want to make people more aware of the author's creativity in using language when they read a comic book so that they not only read the book or the story and know all the characters of the book but also understand why they are given such names, to make them realize that there must be a good reason behind the naming of the characters.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

In this thesis I would like to analyze:

1. Which names in *Asterix and Obelix* comic series contain language play?

2. What process of the language play is involved in the creation of each name?
3. What is the relationship between the naming of the characters and the description of the characters?

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

This thesis is done to:

1. To show which names in *Asterix and Obelix* comic series that contain language play.
2. To describe the process of language play of each name.
3. To explain the relationship between the naming of the characters and the description of the characters.

### **1.4 Methods of Research**

The first step in writing this thesis is reading the *Asterix and Obelix* comic series. Then I note down all the characters' names. After getting a list of the names, I start to classify them based on whether or not they contain language play. After that I analyze the process of the language play and also relate the names to the description of the characters. Finally I write the research report.

### **1.5 Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis consists of four chapters. The first chapter is the Introduction, containing the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. The second chapter

contains the theories. The third chapter contains the data analysis. The fourth chapter contains the conclusion of the thesis. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and Appendices.