

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

Having analyzed the data from the conversations in The Naked Gun trilogy in the previous chapter, I have arrived to some conclusions. I find out that the most frequent misunderstanding caused by different interpretations of speech act classification happen when a representative utterance is misunderstood as a directive utterance. The first reason why this can happen is that sometimes people say something not in a form of a complete sentence, but using only one or two words. Now that it is only one or two words, people are bound to misinterpret what the other people are saying. Since there is not much to comprehend from just one or two words, the hearer can think of several different things, which are all related to the words. For example, when Frank hears “Ship... Boat...”, he thinks it means that Nordberg wants to sail, which is not what Nordberg means.

In addition, there is another reason why a representative utterance can be misunderstood as a directive utterance. The reason is that the sentence has a word that has another meaning which can distract the hearer from understanding the purpose of the utterance. For example when Frank hears the word baboons, he misunderstands the meaning of the word baboons, because in this movie the

word has more than one meaning; as a result, he misunderstands the speech act classification.

I also find out that misunderstanding in speech act classification does not necessarily have to be of different speech act classifications, but it can also be of the same classification. In this thesis, I find out that an offer can be misunderstood as a question. An offer and a question are both classified as directive. In my opinion, an offer can be misunderstood as a question because people can offer something in the form of a question; as a result, the hearer thinks that the speaker is asking a question. The exact reason why a question is misunderstood as an offer is that the form used as an offer is incomplete. For example when Frank offers a cigarette, he just says, “cigarette?”, which can be the incomplete way of saying “would you like a cigarette?” as an offer or “do you know that this a cigarette?” as a question.

On the other hand, in this analysis the least frequent misunderstanding caused by different interpretations of speech act classification happen when a directive utterance is misunderstood as a representative utterance. In spite of this, actually in reality this kind of misunderstanding happens very often. I believe it is just a coincidence why the reality about this misunderstanding is not reflected in the film. A directive utterance can be misunderstood as a representative utterance when people implicitly tell someone to do something, for example, when a person says, “I have always wanted to have a diamond necklace.”, he or she does not only say it but also hints that the hearer should buy a diamond necklace for him or her.

The next thing I find out is that an expressive utterance can be easily misunderstood as other speech act classification. In this thesis, an expressive utterance can be misunderstood as a directive utterance, a representative utterance, or a declaration utterance. In my opinion, this happens most probably owing to the fact that the context allows the hearer to have a different interpretation of what it is meant. The situation or the context when a conversation takes place can affect someone's understanding on what the speaker says. Therefore, a conversation at different times and different places can have different interpretations. For example, when a priest expresses his surprise by shouting, "Jesus Christ!", and he shouts it out at the end of a prayer in a burial ceremony, one can think that the priest has just finished the prayer. Nevertheless, if the priest shouts, "Jesus Christ!" when he is not in a burial ceremony, Jesus Christ! may not be understood as a declaration utterance.

I also do not find a declaration utterance being misunderstood as any other speech act classifications. I think this makes sense because we know that declaration utterances can only be uttered by certain people of certain institution and at a certain time and place. For example, a priest can only appropriately say, "I now pronounce you husband and wife." at a wedding ceremony. Seeing that it can only be said appropriately by certain people of certain institution and at a certain time and place, it is unlikely that someone will misunderstand declaration utterances.

Another linguistic feature that may potentially create misinterpretation is ambiguity. In this thesis, I find out that the type of ambiguity that most frequently causes misunderstanding is referential ambiguity. The reason why this can happen

is that there is a word or a phrase that can refer to more than one thing. As a result, people are bound to have a different idea of what is being talked about by the speaker. Demonstrative pronouns and proper nouns are the examples of words that can easily create referential ambiguity. For example, the word that in what is that? can refer to anything. Another example, when a doctor says “what is your problem?”, the word problem can refer to any problem. Nevertheless, the context will limit what that or problem means so that the hearer will not have too many interpretations of the words.

Another thing that I find out is that I do not find any utterance that contains categorial ambiguity. I believe this kind of ambiguity is almost impossible to happen when the speaker and/or the hearer knows English well. Considering that categorial ambiguity is ambiguity that happens because a word can refer to more than one part of speech, the speaker and the hearer must be someone who has limited knowledge of English.

Last but not least, I would like to comment that misunderstanding caused by misinterpretation of speech act classifications, syntactic ambiguity, and semantic ambiguity are really an extraordinary source of a comedy movie. It can make the movie funny and smart at the same time, because it can intrigue the audience as they think of what is being talked about in the movie to understand the comical scenes.