

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Communication plays an important role in social interaction when exchanging information. Communication is also necessary to help two or more interacting persons reveal their intentions. It is the means for people to ask and command others, which could be done either directly or indirectly. In communication, people need a tool, called language, which constitutes symbols and rules arranged as a unity. Both the speaker and the hearer have to be able to understand the language used as a means of communication among them.

Verbal language, consisting of literal and non literal meaning, is often used in daily conversation. People may also use non-verbal language in interacting with their interlocutors; this includes gestures, body language or posture, facial expressions, eye contacts.

When a speaker communicates with a hearer by using verbal language, sometimes the speaker may produce certain utterances that have implied meanings. We can see the example in the utterance “It’s hot in here”. If the speaker utters “It’s

hot in here”, it can be that he conveys not only the literal meaning, namely, the fact that the room is really hot, but also the implied meaning, which suggests an order or a hint that someone should open the window in order to get fresh air.

However, the intention that the speaker wants to convey may be interpreted differently by the hearer. The hearer may understand the literal meaning of the speaker’s utterance, but she or he may not realize the existence of the implied meaning. This will cause the speaker’s implied meaning not to be accepted by the hearer. As a result, the hearer may misinterpret the utterance which indicates an implicature. This will automatically generate a misunderstanding, which induces a particular emotional response.

There are many people who do not pay attention to such a language phenomenon. Apparently, the mistakes of interpreting the implied meaning can result in particular effects, depends on the situation in which the speaker and hearer are engaged. If the speaker and hearer are in a serious situation, the misunderstanding may result in anger or annoyance. When both the speaker and hearer are in a different situation, humor is one of the factors of the misunderstanding.

These clashes of intentions can be analyzed by using Gricean Maxims. To analyse the humor, I decide to take the comedy series as the source of my data. It is because I want to show that Gricean Maxims can be the source of the comical effects in a comedy series. This is the reason why I am interested in discussing this topic. Therefore, I decide to analyse *the Non-Observance of the Gricean Maxims in Will and Grace* for my thesis.

The topic that I discuss is included in the scope of Pragmatics, with the specific theory of the Gricean Maxims, namely, the maxims of Quantity, Quality,

Relation, and Manner. By applying these maxims, I can analyse an implied meaning generated from a conversation called conversational implicature.

According to Grice, there are four conversational maxims to be obeyed by a speaker in order to produce a brief, clear, relevant, and truthful utterance. The impact of obeying the four conversational maxims is that the conversation uttered by the speaker will have no implicature at all. On the other hand, a conversation may contain implicature if the speaker disobeys the rules of Gricean Maxims.

A speaker may fail to observe the four conversational maxims based on certain reasons. The speaker may or may not have any intention to mislead the hearer. The other possible reasons are incompetent users of language, or certain professions which lead them to not be able to cooperate, or even the influence of certain cultures or beliefs.

I take Will and Grace TV series as the source of my data as I am of the opinion that movies are more easily understood. I am more attracted to something visually displayed, so that it is easier for me to digest the story. In addition, the brief conversations hold an important role in assisting me to follow the flow of the story. I decide to analyse a comedy TV series because it is more entertaining and able to make the audience laugh because of its comical situation.

The conversations in Will and Grace TV series contain implied meanings. There are four main characters in Will and Grace TV series: they are Will Truman, Grace Adler, Karen Walker, and Jack McFarland. They often fail to observe the Gricean Maxims. This leads to the comical situation in the movies.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In this thesis, there are three problems I am going to analyse:

1. Which categories of non-observance of the Gricean Maxims does the speaker fail to observe?
2. Why does the speaker fail to observe the maxims?
3. What comical effects occur due to the failure of observing the maxims?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This thesis is done to show the following points:

1. To show categories of non-observance of the Gricean Maxims that the speaker fails to observe.
2. To show the reason why the speaker fails to observe the maxims.
3. To analyse the comical effects occur due to the failure of observing the maxims.

1.4 Method of Research

The first step in doing this research is watching Will and Grace TV series. The next step is collecting all the comical dialogues in which the four conversational maxims are not well observed. The third step is classifying all the data into the types of non-observance and conversational maxims. The fourth step is analysing the data by applying the theory. The last step is writing the research report.

1.5 Organization of the Thesis

In this thesis, there are four chapters. Chapter One, the Introduction, consists of the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is the Theoretical Framework, in which I describe the linguistic area and the approach used in writing the thesis. Chapter Three is the Discussion, which constitutes the presentation of the findings as well as the interpretation of the data. Chapter Four is the Conclusion, which represents the final results of this research and which also contains my personal comments on the findings.