

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

In life, people always have conversation with others. Conversation is one of the ways to convey what people want or think of. Conversation is “an informal interchange of thoughts, information, etc by spoken colloquy or an instance of this association or social intercourse, intimate acquaintance, the ability to talk socially with others”. <Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary>

Everything in life has their own rules. When someone breaks a certain rule, it may result in discomfort. This is applicable for a conversation. Even though human beings have the freedom of speech, a conversation has its own rules to be followed. However, sometimes people are not aware of the rules of conversation, which in some cases, is likely to become the source of conflicts. This may happen because when someone asks a question, the answer might be out of his or her expectation. The answer may contain an ambiguity, an overlap of information, an irrelevant response, or information that lacks evidence.

Consequently, one must follow the rules of conversation to prevent one from having a wrong interpretation.

Such a language phenomenon leads me to discuss Conversational Implicature. Conversational Implicature is included in Pragmatics. Pragmatics itself is the study of speaker's meaning dealing with utterances. In this area, there is a principle which is needed to have a delicate conversation, which is called Cooperative Principle. In Cooperative Principle, there are some rules of speaking which are called Gricean Maxims. If the speaker and hearer are aware of the rules of conversation, they will take their conversation into serious consideration by applying the Cooperative Principle.

This particular topic is interesting to be analyzed because people often fail to observe Gricean Maxims in their conversation. This affects both the speaker and the hearer in getting a delicate conversation. Gricean maxims are not only important for analyzing conversations in our daily lives but also applicable for analyzing conversations in television series.

In this thesis, I would like to focus on the non-observance of the Gricean maxims in Desperate Housewives television series, especially through the characters' utterances. Specifically, I would like to discuss the types of the Gricean maxims failed to be observed, the effects and the purpose of failing to observe the Gricean maxims in the television series. Non-observance occurs when one does not obey a certain Gricean maxim. The non-observance of Gricean maxims does not only lead to comedy, but also give a negative effect. That is, the emergence of conflicts or tense atmosphere.

After watching the television series, I am interested to know further the importance of conversations in the daily life of the housewives, the way they are speaking with others. In this particular television series, Gricean maxims play an important role to make the television series interesting. In Desperate Housewives, there are utterances in the characters' conversations that are not observed (the Gricean maxims) for some reasons, which result in the rise of conflict.

From the five housewives in the television series, I would only like to analyze four of them, who become the central characters. I would like to analyze the conversation done by the four of them.

One of the characters whose utterances I will analyze is Bree. She is pictured as a conservative lady. As such, she often has to speak implicitly.

Therefore, she often fails to observe certain Gricean maxims because she has to maintain her image.

The next housewife, Susan, is depicted as a clumsy and panicky woman. She does things without much thinking. Because of those characteristics, she always does mistakes.

In order to cover up her mistakes, she often fails to observe certain Gricean maxims. It causes conflicts between her and the people who communicate with her.

The third character is Lynette, a woman who is torn apart between her desire to be a career woman and her responsibility to look after her children.

Accordingly, she usually fails to observe the maxims to show that her life is amazing without having a great career, even though deep inside, she feels the contradiction.

The last character is Gabrielle. She is a spoiled, shopaholic, materialistic housewife who has a rich husband and a big house with luxurious things. Yet, she does not feel satisfied with her condition because her husband rarely accompanies her. Thus, she finds her satisfaction by having an affair with her gardener.

In doing so, she often does the non-observance of Gricean maxims to cover up her cheating.

The significance of my topic is that I want to prove that when Maxims are not observed, they might end u with the occurrence of conflicts, which I want to prove by using Desperate Housewives.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

In my thesis, there are five problems to be analyzed:

1. Which type of the non-observance of the Gricean maxims do the interlocutors do in Desperate Housewives?
2. Which Gricean maxims do the interlocutors fail to observe in Desperate Housewives?
3. Why do the interlocutors fail to observe the Gricean maxims?
4. What is the implied meaning of their non-observance of the Gricean Maxims?
5. How does the failure to observe the Gricean maxims give rise to conflict(s)?

## **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

In my thesis, I am going to:

1. show the type of the non-observance of the Gricean maxims the interlocutors do in Desperate Housewives.
2. show the Gricean maxims the interlocutors fail to observe in Desperate Housewives.
3. explain why the interlocutors fail to observe the Gricean maxims.
4. analyze the implied meaning of their non-observance of the Gricean Maxims.
5. explain how the failure to observe the Gricean maxims gives rise to conflict(s).

#### **1.4 Method of Research**

I take four steps in gathering my data. First, I watch the Desperate Housewives from DVD and write down the speech situations of the four housewives. Then, I select the conversations that contain non-observance of the Gricean maxims. Finally, I analyze them based on the type of the non-observance of the maxims and the type of maxims failed to be observed.

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

This thesis consists of four chapters, preceeded by the Preface and Abstract. Chapter I is the Introduction, which contains Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter II is the Theoretical Framework, in which I explain the theory applied to analyze the conversations of the television series.

Chapter III is the data analysis. Chapter IV is the Conclusion. Finally, at the end of my thesis, I present the Bibliography and Appendix.