CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Study

Communication is a way to exchange thoughts, messages or information. In communication, people can deliver what they think or want. In delivering people's thoughts, sometimes the information is not communicated as desired. Such a condition is called miscommunication. Miscommunication is usually exploited in a comedy film to create a humorous scene.

Comedy is a genre of film in which the emphasis is on humor. In a comedy film, there are two ways to make people laugh, namely by visual and verbal humor. Visual comedy is a comedy in which the funny thing is built by the action; on the other hand, verbal comedy is built by the utterance (Steel).

Since this is a linguistic thesis, I do not discuss visual comedy. My thesis contains the role of the non-observance of Gricean maxims in producing humor in the television series How I Met Your Mother in characters' utterances. In How I Met Your Mother television series the characters often misinterpret the other characters' utterances, which will make people laugh. Sometimes the utterances contain ambiguity, stack up information or irrelevant response.

My thesis is related to Pragmatics, the study of speaker's meaning dealing with utterances. In Pragmatics, there is a principle called cooperative principle which is required to have a smooth and clear conversation. In Cooperative Principle, there are rules of speaking called Gricean Maxims.

A maxim is "the term Grice uses for the four sub principles of his cooperative principle" (Grundy 90). Grice has proposed four kinds of maxims, namely the maxim of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. A speaker and a hearer must employ Cooperative Principle in order to be aware of the rules of conversation. In a conversation, a speaker's message sometimes is not directly found so the hearer must find out the message that the speaker wants to deliver. This is called conversational implicature, which is put forward by H.P. Grice.

Gricean maxims are not only significant in analyzing the conversation in our daily life but also useful for analyzing the conversation in TV series. The non-observance of Gricean maxims may lead to suspense or humor.

How I Met Your Mother focuses on a group of friends living in New York. It is a comedy film which tells about the friendship of five main characters and how they fall in love. There are five characters who always fail to observe the maxims: Ted Mosby, Marshall Eriksen, Lily Aldrin, Robin Scherbatsky and Barney Stinson. The main character, Ted Mosby, is a romantic person who has a strong desire to get married as soon as possible. Another character is Marshall Ericksen, Ted Mosby's best friends. Marshall Eriksen is a lawyer and Lily's husband, who has a dream to open a law office for saving the environment. Lily Aldrin is a kindergarten teacher. She has a dream to become an artist but she cannot make her dream come true because she is not good at drawing. Another

girl in <u>How I Met Your Mother</u> television series is Robin Scherbatsky. She is a reporter at Metro news. Becoming a reporter makes her happy because she can know Ted and finally she ties her relationship with him. The last character is Barney. He is a person who makes the atmosphere become clamorous. His best friends, Ted and Marshall, call him a womanizer.

The reason why I choose <u>How I Met Your Mother</u> instead of other comedy films as my data source is that in most episodes of this film the non-observance of maxims creates humor. Besides, the characters also have unique personalities when they are falling in love or in a difficult situation. They say something that is untrue, give an irrelevant response, give more or less information as well as unclear information. Because of those reasons, the film becomes interesting and funny.

My thesis is significant to make people understand what they mean through the utterances. Sometimes in a conversation, the hearer must guess what the speaker means to avoid misunderstanding between the speaker and the hearer. Thus, hopefully both the speaker and hearer will be able to understand each other more in a particular context of utterances.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The problems that I will discuss are formulated as follows:

1. What kind of non-observance of maxim is done by the character?

2. What implicature is generated from the utterance when the speaker fails to observe the maxim?

3. How does the non-observance of maxim lead to humor?

1.3   Purpose of the Study

The purposes of doing the research are:

1. To find out the kind of non-observance of maxim done by the character.

2. To find out the implicature that is generated from the utterance when the speaker fails to observe the maxim.

3. To know how the failure to observe the maxim leads to humor.

1.4   Methods of Research

In writing my thesis, I begin by watching How I Met Your Mother, my data source. While watching these TV series, I write down the utterances which contain non-observance of maxims. Then, I analyze them based on the type of non-observance and the type of maxims failed to be observed. After that, I find out the non-observance of maxims which leads to humor. Lastly, I write a research report.

1.5   Organization of the Thesis

My thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter One is the Introduction, which contains 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; it deals with the explanation of the Pragmatics area. Chapter Three is the analysis of the data and Chapter Four is the Conclusion, in which I write my personal comments and opinion of the findings. The thesis ends with   the   Bibliography   and   Appendices.