

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

It is an undisputable fact that we are human beings who need a social interaction. In the social interaction, human beings use language to communicate with one another. Language can be a medium to express ideas, feelings, and the experiences that happen in people's life. However in the use of language, there will always be a lot of misinterpretations. Therefore, language is a useful tool in our life in order to understand one another but every individual can have a different interpretation when he or she communicates. Misinterpretation can also happen because sometimes a speaker delivers certain utterances that contain an implied meaning, called implicature within his or her speech. For example, if someone says "it's hot in here", it does not only mean literally that the place is hot, but also it contains some implied meanings; it could suggest someone should turn on the air conditioner or give him or her some fresh drink.

In real conversations, people often misinterpret the implied meaning of an utterance. People's mistake in interpreting the implicature can give certain effects to their emotion. An example is in a serious situation when someone is arguing

with another person and the speaker tries to explain what happens. In this situation, the misinterpreting may occur to the listener, which is probably caused by the listener's lack of information or their misinterpreting the speaker's intention. On top of that, this misinterpreting can cause laughter, anger, sadness, disappointment, embarrassment and so on. These effects are exploited in comedies to create a humorous story.

The subject of misinterpreting is interesting to discuss because it is something that commonly happens, regardless of time, place, and participants of the conversation. In addition, it gives me such a big curiosity to find out some factors affecting misinterpretation.

This misinterpreting can be analyzed by using the theory that was proposed by one of the founders of the modern study of Pragmatics, H.P. Grice. Thus, I would like to discuss how the non-observance of Gricean maxims potentially create humor in comedies. I decide to take a comedy series, "Frasier" as my data source. I take this comedy series because this film has many dialogues, in which the Gricean maxims are applied so that I can use the series as my data source and select appropriate data for my analysis. Therefore, my topic will be how the non-observance of Gricean maxims potentially create humor in "Frasier".

This comedy series is about Dr. Frasier Crane, a psychiatrist, who goes back to his hometown in Seattle, Washington after he gets a divorce in Boston. Frasier lives with his father, Martin Crane, and a caretaker of his father, Daphne Moon. Frasier has a brother named Niles, who is married but does not get along well with his wife. Niles often visits Frasier and has a crush on Daphne. Frasier also hosts a popular radio talk show on KACL 780AM.

I choose this TV series for the reason that the dialogues are understandable and humorous. I can analyze the conversation in the TV series which is appropriate for my analysis about the non-observance of the maxims. Another reason is because a film provides detailed information, such as dialogues, context, intonation, situation, events, setting and also the characters. Therefore, I can easily analyze the dialogues in the film.

In the film, there are misinterpretations among the characters and those potentially create humor to the audience. The misinterpretations can be analysed by using one of the theories in Pragmatics. Therefore, the linguistic area of my analysis is Pragmatics. "Pragmatics is the study of how more gets communicated than is said" (Yule 3). It is concerned with the study of meaning as delivered by a speaker and interpreted by the listeners. Furthermore, in the non-observance of the maxims itself, there are more specific theories that I use. There are five ways of people's failure to observe the maxims according to H.P. Grice. Those are flouting a maxim, violating a maxim, infringing a maxim, opting out of a maxim and suspending a maxim. Each of them shows a specific problem in the non-observance of Gricean maxims.

I use Pragmatics as my approach for the reason that in analyzing this comedy series, I deal with the speaker's intention. The significance of this study is to expect the readers to get more understanding about how humorous effects occur in a comedy series due to the non-observance of the maxims.

749 Words