

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Communication is “the process of sharing or exchanging information with them, for example by speaking, writing, or using equipment” (Collins COBUILD Advanced Learner’s English Dictionary 276). All people communicate in their daily lives. Therefore, communication plays an important role in human life. One means of communication is spoken language. Spoken language is produced by producing utterances. By producing utterances humans are able to show their intention such as to express feelings, to have someone do something or to show intentions. Thus, it is clear that communication concerns with utterances as well as with the speaker’s intention and the interpretation of the utterances. If the speaker and the hearer of a conversation manage to cover those things, they will be able to understand each other. As a result, the communication and the actions which are produced will come right just as expected.

In daily conversation, when a speaker produces an utterance, sometimes he or she speaks more than he or she actually wants to say. In this case, generally the

utterances are not totally explicit (Thomas 56). The speaker usually puts an implied meaning within an utterance. For example, in a situation when a mother and her daughter are shopping in a mall looking for clothes, suddenly the daughter finds a dress and says “That is a nice dress, Mom!” The utterance “That is a nice dress, Mom!” can be interpreted as having three different meanings. First, it is possible that the speaker is just giving a comment that the dress is nice. Second, if we look at this utterance further, it may also have an implied meaning which indirectly suggests that the mother give the dress to the speaker. Third, if we see it from another angle, the daughter may be saying a harsh criticism that it is a strange-looking dress.

Based on the above example, miscommunication is likely to happen due to different kinds of interpretation. H.P. Grice introduces some rules called conversational maxims to make conversations run smoothly. In practise however, it is often found out that a speaker does not pay attention to the rules due to some reasons. If the hearer can interpret the speaker’s utterance correctly, then it is all right. Problems occur when the hearer’s interpretation is different from what the speaker means to say. That can happen because of various reasons such as the speaker does not give clear and complete information as needed by the hearer so that the hearer is unable to get the intention of the speaker. It can also be that the speaker consciously and deliberately lies when producing the utterance. These failures may produce different effects from what the speaker expects. The effect produced can vary such as anger, humour or suspense.

In my thesis, I would like to discuss the failure of observing conversational maxims in the television series Prison Break from season one until

three which cause suspense to the audience. I really hope that after reading my thesis, people will be aware of the fact that people are connected with the rules of Gricean maxims in a conversation. Hopefully, the topic which I choose can make people to be more concerned with what happens in a conversation and know when to break the rules or obey them. My topic belongs to Pragmatics, which concerns about speaker's meaning. The specific theory that I use is the theory established by an expert of Pragmatics, H.P. Grice. He explains about a situation which is called the failure of observing the maxims. According to Grice, a conversation needs four conversational maxims to run smoothly. The four maxims are known as the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner. In the television series that I analyze, I find that the characters often break the conversational maxims instead of obeying them. This causes suspense to the audience. Suspense means "a state of excitement or anxiety about something that is going to happen very soon; very eager to know" (Collins COBUILD Advanced Learner's English Dictionary 1461).

I decide to take Prison Break television series instead of other series as the source of my data because this television series obviously shows the failure of observing the maxims through the conversation between the characters, which causes suspense to the audience almost from the beginning of the movie until the end of it. This television series completely fulfils my need for the source of data to write my thesis as there are a lot of evidences in the series that resemble the situation in daily conversation, in which one cannot stick to the maxims every time. There are some situations which force the speaker or the hearer to break the rules. (Words: 750)

Statement of the Problem

The problems I am going to analyse are formulated as follows:

1. What is the type of non-observance of maxims which the speakers do?
2. What is the type of the conversational maxims which the speakers fail to observe?
3. Why do the speakers fail to observe the maxims?
4. How does the failure of observing the maxims in the scene help to create suspense?

Purpose of the Study

The research is done:

1. To show the type of non-observance which the speakers do.
2. To show the type of conversational maxims which the speakers fail to observe.
3. To know the reason why the speakers fail to observe the maxims.
4. To show the failure of observing the maxims in the scene which creates suspense.

Method of Research

In doing this analysis, the first step I do is watching Prison Break television series. While watching the series, I am collecting the dialogues which contain the failure of observing the maxims. The next step is analyzing and categorizing the specification of the non-observance and conversational maxims. The last step is analyzing the suspense felt by the audience which comes out of the failure of observing the maxims.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis contains four chapters. The first chapter is the Introduction, which consists of the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. The second chapter is the theory which I use to do my analysis. The third chapter is the analysis of the data. The last chapter is the conclusion of the analysis. This thesis ends with the Bibliography and Appendix.