

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background of the Study**

In a daily conversation, a good conversation should be based on the cooperative principle (CP). Following the cooperative principle means that a speaker and a hearer should converse cooperatively (Thomas 62). Sometimes, in a conversation, the speaker may produce unclear or irrelevant utterances while he or she is talking. Such utterances can make the hearer misunderstand what the speaker means because people are not always cooperative in a conversation.

To assist in this matter, there are some rules stated by H. P. Grice to make a conversation run smoothly. A conversation can run smoothly if the speaker and the hearer follow the rules correctly. If they do not follow the rules, they do not observe the cooperative principle, and they thus generate implicature. Implicature is “generated intentionally by the speaker and may (or may not) be understood by the hearer” (qtd. in Thomas 58). In other words, the speaker does not always precisely say or write what he or she means and

sometimes the hearer cannot directly get the meaning of what the speaker really means.

Grice introduces four conversational maxims so that we can consider what the implicature might be. According to him, if the speakers follow the CP there will be no prompt to look for another interpretation (Thomas 63). The four conversational maxims are the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner (Thomas 63-64). Communication will run smoothly when one follows the CP, but there are possibilities for a communication to break down when the participants do not follow the CP rules. In this case, they “fail to observe a maxim” and that can result in an unsuccessful communication.

There are so many reasons why people fail to observe a maxim. For example, the hearer may not get the speaker’s intended meaning, or the speaker does not clearly utter the information that is needed by the hearer. This non-observance of the maxim can cause the meaning of the utterance not to be directly stated within the words uttered by the speaker. Therefore, misunderstanding can occur between the speaker and the hearer. This misunderstanding can bring some effects, such as arousing a tense atmosphere or causing humor.

The title of my thesis is “The Non-Observance of Gricean Maxims in *Two and a Half Men* That Result in Humor,” The data source is taken from the third and fourth seasons of the series. The characters in this television series often show non-observance of the maxims in their conversation. The non-observance of the maxims frequently brings humor effect to the audience. That is why this comedy television series *Two and a Half Men* is suitable for my thesis writing.

In my thesis, I analyze the non-observance of the maxims in *Two and a Half Men*, the third and fourth seasons. Each episode tells a story about two adult brothers, named Charlie Harper and Alan Harper, and an eleven-year-old child,

named Jake Harper. Jake Harper is Alan's son from his former wife, Judith Harper. Alan and his son, Jake Harper, stay in Charlie's house, due to his divorce. Charlie is a jingle writer and he also has so many girlfriends to date, while Alan is a chiropractor who does not have a girlfriend to have a date with.

In this television series, the characters, especially Charlie, Alan and Jake, often fail to observe the maxims. They usually generate implicatures within their utterances. This failure can happen because they generally give no attention to one another although they live together in Charlie's house. That is why they communicate irrelevantly and the conversation between one another becomes unclear. Their failure to observe the maxims brings humorous effects in those episodes.

I am interested to analyze *Two and a Half Men* comedy television series because I found it interesting to know the hidden meaning within the speaker's utterance. I want to reveal the humor as well by finding out the failure to observe the maxims in this particular comedy television series. The characters' failure to observe the maxims often makes the audience laugh.

In writing this thesis, I hope to help people consider the implied meaning within the characters' utterances in *Two and a Half Men* television series which contain the non-observance of the maxims. Besides, this research can raise the readers' awareness of other people's failure to observe the maxims. If the audience is already aware of the failure in communication, they can interpret the implied meaning within the characters' utterances.

738 Words

### **Statement of the Problem**

In my thesis, the research problem is formulated in the following questions:

1. What type of the non-observance of Gricean maxims does the speaker in *Two and a Half Men* fail to observe?
2. Why does the speaker fail to observe the maxim?
3. What is the implied meaning of the speaker's utterance?
4. What are the humorous effects that are caused by the speaker's failure to observe the maxim?

### **Purpose of the Study**

In doing the analysis, I want to

1. find the type of the non-observance of Gricean maxims that the speaker in *Two and a Half Men* fails to observe.
2. explain why the speaker fails to observe the maxim.
3. show the implied meaning of the speaker's utterance.
4. explain the humorous effects that happen because of the speaker's failure to observe the maxim.

### **Methods of Research**

In this study I use the library research to find the theory. I select the data from the comedy television series entitled *Two and a Half Men*, the third and fourth seasons. By using the Gricean maxims, I classify the data, show the non-observance of the maxims, and explain the implied meaning of the speakers' utterances as well as the humorous effects resulting from the non-observance of the maxims. Finally, I draw some conclusions from the whole study.

### **Organization of the Thesis**

The thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is the Introduction, which consists of the Background of the Study, the Statement of the

Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Methods of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. The second chapter is the Theoretical Framework, in which I present the theories of conversational implicature that I use in analyzing the data. The third chapter presents the analysis of the non-observance of the Gricean maxims in the dialogues of the characters in *Two and a Half Men* television series. The fourth chapter, is the conclusion from the whole study. At the end of the thesis, I provide a bibliography and an appendix.