

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

In a daily conversation, a speaker and a hearer will operate under the cooperative principle, which means that both the speaker and the hearer converse with a good intention. Sometimes people mean much more than they actually want to say. When communicating, speakers frequently produce utterances the meaning of which are not clear for the hearers. In a conversation, for example, a speaker may give an untrue answer to make a false assumption to the hearer. The fact is that people are not always good and kind or cooperative in a conversation. This shows their non-cooperation of the cooperative principle.

The theory of cooperative principle includes four conversational maxims, namely the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner (Thomas 56). The non-cooperation of the cooperative principle generates a certain implicature. The context of the conversation helps us establish what an implicature might be. However, a speaker might fail to observe a maxim, because the speaker is incapable of speaking clearly, or because they deliberately choose to lie. In my opinion, people can be non-observant of the maxims for some reasons, such as the hearer is not smart or the hearer does not respond to the speaker's question appropriately. By doing the non-observance of the maxims, the meaning of the

utterance is not directly stated in the words uttered. Thus, it can create a gap between the speaker and the hearer which can result in the occurrence of humor. When a conversation is conducted by a speaker who is trying to deliver a message to the hearer who draws a conclusion from the utterance, they may have different interpretations. In addition, a conversation also depends on its context. It is important to realize that maxims function to support verbal communication. Non-observance of the Gricean maxims can refer to the style of the speaker when deceiving, misleading, even showing imperfect linguistic performance to the hearer so that the hearer gets a different meaning. It becomes worth studying since the utterance of a speaker might have two intentions of meaning: a) the literal meaning, which is the expressed meaning that can be obtained by interpreting the words based only on the information from the utterance, b) the implied meaning, which is what the speaker means on a specific occasion (Thomas 56).

Because of those reasons, I would like to analyze the non-observance of the Gricean maxims in television series which creates humor. The topic of my thesis is **Non-Observance of Gricean Maxims in the Dialogues of *The Nanny* TV Series**. It is interesting to analyze how the non-observance of Gricean maxims in *The Nanny* television series occurs. This topic is significant for both speaker and hearer in a communication that people are supposed to tell the truth, be relevant, and inform anything as clearly as they can. Besides, this topic seems very challenging since it is difficult to identify which maxims that occurs in non-observance of Gricean maxims. I choose this topic because the main character in this series often shows non-observance of the maxims to save her status when she is in an uncomfortable situation, and because I want to show that the use of non-observance of the maxims in the television series is very important to create humor.

In terms of linguistic area, the topic I choose belongs to Pragmatics. Pragmatics, according to Jenny Thomas, is the study of speaker's meaning. In particular, it is "the study of the contextual meaning and is concerned with the speaker's utterance and the interpretation of the utterance" (2). I use specific theories of maxims by H.P. Grice since these theories enclose an attempt at explaining how a hearer gets the information or the idea from what is said to what is meant from the level of expressed (literal) meaning to the level of implicature (implied) meaning. Therefore, Grice's theory is suitable for my topic in which the humor in the television series is triggered by dialogues which have implicatures.

I hope by writing this thesis, people will understand that they often do non-observance of the Gricean's maxims in a daily conversation. This will help them as a hearer, to be more aware of people who fail to observe the maxims in one's communication. Moreover, the awareness may help the hearers to understand or interpret the speaker's utterances which have an implicature.

The data of this study are taken from a television series entitled *The Nanny* from the episodes in the first until fifth seasons. *The Nanny* is a story about Fran Fine, who becomes the nanny for a single-parent family in Manhattan, the Sheffields. Fran has to take care of Maxwell Sheffield's children, Maggie, Bryan, and Gracie. The Sheffields have a butler, Niles, whose father has worked for them since he and Maxwell Sheffield were boys. Maxwell Sheffield has a business partner, C.C. Babcock.

In their interaction, the characters, especially Fran, Niles and C.C. often use offensive words which deliver some implied meaning within their conversation. When the characters are being witty, deliberately choose to lie or even trying to tease each other, they often misunderstand others. As a result, the non-observance of the maxims occurs when they interact; in addition, those factors create humor in each episode.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

From the background of the study presented previously, the problems of this study are stated as follows:

- 1) What type of non-observance of Gricean maxim occurs in the utterance?
- 2) What type of Gricean maxims does the speaker fail to observe?
- 3) What is the implicature of the speaker's utterance?
- 4) How does the speakers' failure to observe a maxim create humor?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Based on the statement of the problem above, the purposes of the study are formulated in the following points:

- 1) To find the type of non-observance of Gricean maxim which occurs in the utterance
- 2) To identify the type of Gricean maxim the speaker fails to observe
- 3) To reveal the implicature of the speaker's utterance
- 4) To find how the speaker's failure to observe a maxim creates humor

1.4 Method of Research

I started my research by studying the theories from several sources and then I watched *The Nanny's* DVD the first until fifth seasons to collect the data. With the theory of Gricean maxims, I analyzed the data, classified the findings and discussed the results. Finally, I concluded what I have done in this study.

1.5 Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter One is the Introduction, which contains the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, Method of Research and the Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is the Theoretical Framework, which contains the theories used to analyze the data. Chapter Three presents the analysis of the non-observance of the Gricean maxims in the dialogues of *The Nanny* television series. Finally in Chapter Four, this thesis puts forward the conclusion of the study. After the conclusion, there is Bibliography and Appendices which are considered the end of this thesis.