

# CHAPTER ONE

## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics studying the aspects of speaker's meaning and other features related to the context of utterance. People usually communicate their ideas through conversation. Conversation used by people is always related to what is in the speaker's mind and what he or she conveys to the listeners (hearers).

When we build a conversation with others, we intend to convey our thoughts, feelings, and desires through language. And yet, sometimes, we speak more than we actually want to say. In pragmatics, the term *implicature* is used to show an implied meaning or additional meaning which comes out in our speech.

The theory of conversational implicature is one of the topics discussed in Pragmatics. According to Paul Grice (1975), what a speaker means often differs from what the sentence used by the speaker. In order to build a smooth conversation, Grice (1975) introduces some principles called

*cooperative principles*. He also presents four kinds of maxim (Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner) to be observed by people in having their conversation.

Grice (1975) has noted that people very often fail to observe the maxims, which may bring effect to the atmosphere of the conversation. In this case, he states five ways of people's failure to observe the maxims: (1) flouting a maxim, (2) violating a maxim, (3) infringing a maxim, (4) opting out of a maxim, and (5) suspending a maxim. In this thesis, these five ways are applied to the analysis of *Ugly Betty*.

*Ugly Betty* is an American TV series that was firstly released in 2006. The story is based on a Columbian telenovella "*Yo Soy Betty La Fea*." It tells about Betty Suarez, a new secretary in Mode, a high-fashion magazine. Betty is sweet, smart, and hardworking. Yet, unlike her co-workers, she is neither slim nor beautiful. The only reason for the publisher to hire her to be his son's secretary is that he thinks Betty is someone whom Daniel will never sleep with. Betty's hard work and determination later could earn Daniel's respect as she helps him find his way in becoming the leader of a fashion magazine company and also in dealing with people who try to block his way (IMDb).

This TV series has motivated me to write a thesis entitled "Analysis of the Non-observance of the Gricean Maxims Which Leads to Conflicts in *Ugly Betty*." The seven characters selected in this TV series are Betty, a new secretary at Mode; Daniel, the son of Mode Magazine's owner; Wilhelmina, one important worker at Mode who is trying to take over the company from Daniel and his

father's authority; Bradford, Daniel's father; Alexis, Daniel's brother who tries to take over the company along with Wilhelmina; Ignacio, Betty's father; and Hilda, Betty's sister. They are selected because they are mostly involved in the conversation and their utterances which contain non-observance of the maxims lead to the conflicts of the story.

Like movies, TV series is one media that can also reflect human social life and is played by some actors and actresses. When I watch a TV series, I am interested in one important aspect that mostly occurs in a movie, which is the dialogue (conversation) between the characters. The actors or the actresses speak to one another and there will be the case of non-observance of the maxims which lead to the atmosphere of the whole story. All of this is the reason why I took a TV series as the data of my analysis.

This TV series is chosen because there are many conflicts and intricacies in the story. Some major conflicts are also caused by the characters' failing to cooperatively give "appropriate" response towards one's questions or statements. Besides, the events and conflicts that appear in this TV series can also happen in our real life. In other words, the stories are mostly related to people's everyday life in general. The conversations usually take place in the office, house, neighborhood, and other public places so they enable us to understand more about the use of maxims in daily conversation and how it can lead to conflicts.

The conflicts I found in Ugly Betty can also be classified into four major parts. The first conflict is related to Wilhelmina's attempt to take over the company. Wilhelmina is sly and she uses dishonest ways in order to become the

leader of Mode Magazine. This characteristic of Wilhelmina's often causes conflicts between Meade's family members (Bradford, Claire, Daniel, Alexis) and her. The second conflict happens in Betty's family. Conflicts involving Betty, Hilda, and Ignacio often raise since there is a clash related to the characteristics of these characters. Betty, who is outspoken and always curious about things, sometimes argues with his father, who is a bit strict and harsh to his children. Betty's characteristics sometimes also lead to the third major conflict, which involves the minor characters and her. The last major conflict happens among Meade's family members, due to their characteristics as well.

I hope this study will be significant and will give contribution to the area of Pragmatics, particularly on conversational analysis. The readers will understand more about the types of maxim used in the drama comedy TV series and show that people usually fail to observe the maxims in their daily conversation regardless they realize it or not; and one of which may result in conflicts. In the future, it is hoped that this study can be useful for other researchers who carry out studies on similar topics.

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## **1.2. Statement of the Problems**

To analyze the utterances in the dialogues taken from *Ugly Betty*, I try to formulate the research problems into the following research questions:

1. What type of non-observance of maxims is found in each of the utterances?
2. Which maxim is not observed?

3. What is the implicature of each of the utterances?
4. How does the non-observance of the maxim lead to a conflict?

### **1.3. Purpose of the Study**

In line with the problems mentioned above, this thesis intends

1. to find out the type of non-observance of maxims found in each of the utterances in the dialogues.
2. to find out the maxim which is not observed by the characters in their conversation.
3. to clarify the implicature within each of the characters' utterances.
4. to clarify the way the non-observance of the maxims leads to the conflict in the TV series *Ugly Betty*.

### **1.4. Method of Research**

There are six steps taken in doing this thesis. First, I collected certain information and theory related to the topic of this thesis. Second, I chose TV series *Ugly Betty* as the source of the data as it is suitable for the topic. Third, I watched the TV series *Ugly Betty* and searched linguistic features that contain non-observance of maxims in the characters' utterances. Fourth, I analyzed the type of non-observance of the maxims and the implicature within the utterance. Fifth, I analyzed the way the non-observance of the maxims leads to the emergence of conflict. Finally, I wrote the research.

## **1.5. Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis is divided into four chapters. The outline of this research is arranged systematically as follows:

Chapter One is the Introduction. It presents the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problems, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is the Theoretical Framework. It contains the underlying theory used to analyze the non-observance of the maxims. Chapter Three is the Analysis. The discussion on non-observance of the maxims used in the TV series *Ugly Betty* is elaborated in this chapter. Chapter Four is the Conclusion. It consists of my personal comments and opinion about the discussion. This last chapter is followed by the Bibliography and the Appendix.