CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

As social beings, people need to communicate with one another to convey their ideas, their feelings and also their needs. Conversation is one of the means which can be used to fulfill the needs. Conversation is "oral exchange of sentiments, observations, opinions, or ideas" ("Conversation," def. 2a (1)), in which people are able to understand one another through their utterances in addition to other communication efforts. Yet, in the process of communication, people often fail to observe the Gricean Maxims, which is the conduct of speaking introduced by Paul Grice, in their conversation.

Pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning (Thomas 1), and one of the main concerns in the study is the conversational implicature. Deliberately or not, in daily conversations a speaker often expresses his or her intention implicitly to the hearer. They do not always say directly what they mean; as a result, they fail to observe the Gricean Maxims. Conversational implicature in pragmatics studies

how a hearer is capable of catching the implication a speaker intends to generate from his failure in observing the maxims and interpret it correctly (58). Besides, pragmatics "explores how a great deal of what is unsaid is recognized as part of what is communicated" (Yule 3). This means that what a speaker implies in his utterance is not only in the literal meaning, but also in the figurative meaning, which is needed to be understood by the hearer based on various knowledge he or she has.

Furthermore, this conversational implicature is often used in creating humour. From time to time, misinterpretation within a conversation between the speaker and the hearer happens, and this misinterpretation could be funny in some cases. When a speaker utters something to the hearer, the latter might not get exactly what the speaker actually means. Yet, the hearer feels that he or she understands it and replies it with an answer that is actually unrelated to what the conversation is about. Thus, by the time the wrong answer is spoken, it creates humour. Generally speaking, humour is created from the misinterpretation between a speaker and a hearer, as each of them has a different point of view and interpretation.

The topic of this thesis is *the role of maxims in script incongruity in jokes in Reader's Digest magazines*. I have chosen this topic as there are lots of humours around the world, and I take an interest in how a joke, especially in the form of a conversation, is interpreted and appreciated. In this thesis, I would like to analyze the types of maxims unobserved in a joke and the importance of their role in creating the joke itself. People of all ages and nationalities like humour; but

without some necessary knowledge required to understand it, sometimes they fail to appreciate humour.

This topic is significant because the readers can be aware of how an implicature is created in a joke and how that implicature works as the core of the joke itself. Together with the understanding gained from the result of this study, it is expected that the new knowledge will help readers to interpret and appreciate humour as how it is intended in the first place. Therefore, after reading this thesis, the readers are expected to understand jokes better.

This topic belongs to the area of linguistics called pragmatics, as it is concerned with implicature in a conversation. The theories that will be specifically used are Grice's conversational implicature in maxim (of pragmatics) and Raskin's theory of script incongruity to enhance the explanation of the humours. I choose those theories because they are closely related with each other, and in a joke the relation becomes an important part in creating the joke.

The sources of the data which will be used for this analysis are jokes in *Reader's Digest* magazines 2007, 2008 and 2009 editions. As for the reasons why those sources are chosen, it is due to the relevance to the analysis, the availability of them as I own the magazines myself and the ample amount of data they contain. Moreover, it might be important to note that the jokes printed in *Reader's Digest* magazines are chosen from many jokes sent by the readers of the magazines, thus granting quality assurance for the jokes.

(714 words)

Statement of the Problem

In this study the problems that will be analyzed are:

1. Which type of the maxim is unobserved in each joke?

2. What is the implicature understood by the readers?

3. In relation to Raskin's theory of script incongruity, how does the non-observance of the maxim help the occurence of humour in the jokes?

Purpose of the Study

Based on the statement of the problem above, I propose to:

1. Specify which type of the maxim is unobserved in each joke.

2. Find out the implicature understood by the readers.

3. Explain the significance of non-observance of the maxims to Raskin's theory of script incongruity towards the occurrence of the humour in the jokes.

Method of Research

In the process of completing this thesis, I gathered sources of data for the analysis from printed materials while taking consideration on the availability, the relevance of each other and the difficulty of obtaining them as the first step. It then led me to use articles about humour in *Reader's Digest* magazines as the sources of data. Once the source of data is considered to be suitable for the analysis, the second step was sorting out which specific theories in the linguistic aspects that could be used to analyse the topic. Upon thorough selecting, it was then decided that the theory of maxim from the linguistic aspect of pragmatics and the additional theory of script incongruity are the best fitted for the analysis. After

both the data and the theories had been collected, the third step was started the analysis of the data according to the statement of the problem. Once all the data were analyzed, the last step was writing the paper of the analysis and finalized the thesis.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into four chapters, preceded by Table of Contents and Abstract. Chapter One is Introduction, which consists of Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is Theoretical Framework, which deals with the theories that are applied in the thesis. Chapter Three is Data Analysis, which contains the analysis of the topic. Chapter Four is Conclusion, which includes my comments, opinions and suggestions for further research. Lastly, the Appendix and the Bibliography are presented at the end of this thesis.