

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study, problems of the study, the objectives of the study and the definition of key terms.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

One of the language functions according to Hymes (cited in Soeparno, 2003, p. 8) is to control the human behaviour or feelings which can be sad, angry, happy and so forth. Especially for the happiness, besides in a normal conversation, we also use this language function in jokes. With a joke, we can make someone laugh and keep others to be entertained and happy. Based on Elizabeth (2012), jokes have a generic meaning of verbal humour, including one-liners, riddles, and other things that make us laugh; but the joke is also a form, a funny, made-up story with a punch line told by one person. Therefore, to make people laugh, the speaker should be able to talk humorously.

We often hear a conversation between two or more people in the western television shows such as Oprah Winfrey Show which is followed by laughter from the audience, but sometimes we feel confused with what makes them laugh. We do not know exactly the meaning of their conversation or their jokes. It may happen because we do not fully understand about their language expression or because of our ignorance about the situation and condition where the conversation takes place.

In linguistics field, there is a pragmatics study to make us easier to understand the meaning behind the words. Wisniewski (2007) defines that pragmatics is the study of meaning of words, phrases and full sentences, but unlike semantics which deals with the objective meanings of words that can be found in dictionaries, pragmatics is more concerned with the meaning beyond the words uttered by the speaker, or with intended speaker meaning as it is sometimes referred to. In every utterance, a person does not always tell right away the purpose of what he means. Or in other words, these words contain the implicit meaning. Davies (2010) states that implicature can be defined as the difference between what the words mean in an utterance according to the rules of semantics and grammar, and what the speaker's intended meaning is.

In a conversation, a cooperation between the speaker and the hearer is required, so the intention of the speaker can be accepted well by the hearer. As what is said by Grice (cited in Grundy, 2000, p. 73), speakers intend to be cooperative when they talk. In the cooperative principle, the information must be required at the appropriate time with acceptable manner.

Grice (cited in Davies, 2010, p. 26) has elaborated the Cooperative Principle in four sub-principles, called conversational maxims: 1. Maxim of Quantity (be informative), 2. Maxim of Quality (be true), 3. Maxim of Relation (be relevant) and 4. Maxim of Manner (be clear). These are principles that should be followed by speakers in their conversation to achieve a successful communication. If they cannot fulfill the conversational maxims, miscommunication between the speaker and the hearer will occur.

One of the terms which refers to a condition where the speaker does not fulfill or obey the maxim is called flouting maxim. According to Tan (1999), flouting occurs when the speakers disobey one or more maxim, but still fulfill the other maxims in order to let the hearer knows that their flouting is on purpose. This can be seen on a comedy show. They do flouting maxim by giving too much information, lying, being irrelevant, being ambiguous or etc. They did it to make the audience laugh.

In her thesis, the researcher chooses the TV series entitled “How I Met Your Mother” because the comedy has many humorous utterances which some of them is caused by the flouting maxim. Those humorous utterances in the conversations have the humorous sense and can cause the audience laugh. Then, when the characters flout the maxims, the audience may have understood the implication and then laugh at it.

“How I Met Your Mother” is also interesting because its story, which is set on 2030 and focus on Ted Mosby who tells about how he met the mother of his children in New York City with the help of his four best friends. This TV series provides a humour which is take on everyday challenges and generally speaking, bears a wealth of positive life lesson, all conveyed in a way that induces a laughter.

Furthermore, the researcher chose the character of Ted Mosby as the main object because Ted Mosby is the central character and also the narrator on “How I Met Your Mother”. Besides that, compared with the other characters of the series which are a bit more consistent, Ted Mosby is always changing

his personality. Ted is the most mature of the group, preferring more elegant and has high class interest, but Ted Mosby also often acts immature, such as partaking in wild activities with Barney and it makes the audience laugh and feel entertained.

“How I Met Your Mother” began airing in 2005 and in this 2012 “How I Met Your Mother” has aired in eight seasons. The season analyzed by the researcher in this thesis is the sixth season of “How I Met Your Mother” which is the newest season that has been released in Indonesia. Moreover, Justin (2011) gives an opinion that compared with the fifth season, “How I Met Your Mother” in the sixth season has a lot of good episodes. It means that “How I Met Your Mother” successfully shows their existence again in entertaining their fans with a good humour and stories.

Based on the explanations above, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled **HUMOROUS EFFECT CAUSED BY FLOUTED CONVERSATIONAL MAXIMS IN THE TV SERIES “HOW I MET YOUR MOTHER”**.

**1.2 Problems of the Study**

1. Which flouted maxims cause humorous effect in the conversations between Ted Mosby and the other characters?
2. How can the flouting of the maxims cause humorous effect?

### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

- 1. To find out the types of flouted maxims which cause humorous effect in the conversations between Ted Mosby and the other characters?
- 2. To find out how the flouting of the maxims can cause humorous effect.

### 1.4 Definition of Key Terms

- 1. Pragmatics** : a way of investigating how sense can be made of certain texts even when, from a semantic viewpoint, the text seems to be either incomplete or to have a different meaning to what is really intended (Crystal, cited in Moore, 2001, p. 1).
- 2. Implicature** : the difference between what the words mean in an utterance according to the rules of semantics and grammar, and what the speaker's intended meaning is (Davies, 2010, p. 25).
- 3. Cooperative Principle** : the way in which people try to make conversations work (Moore, 2001, p. 7).
- 4. To Flout the Maxim** : the way in which the speaker can fail to observe one or more maxim by blatantly fails (Thomas, cited in Justová, 2006, p. 19)
- 5. Maxim of Quality** : the maxim when the speaker should be truthful. They should not say what they think is false, or

make statements for which they have no evidence (Moore, 2001, p. 7).

**6. Maxim of Quantity** : the maxim when the speakers' contributions

should be as informative as is required for the conversation to proceed. It should be neither too little, nor too much (Moore, 2001, p. 7).

**7. Maxim of Relation** : the maxim when the speakers' contributions

should relate clearly to the purpose of the exchange (Moore, 2001, p. 7).

**8. Maxim of Manner** : the maxim when the speakers' contributions

should be perspicuous: clear, orderly and brief, avoiding obscurity and ambiguity (Moore, 2001, p. 7).

**9. Humour** : funny or amusing feature, funny quality,

amazing treatment, mood, state of mind (Holt, cited in Yuliana, 2007, p. 9)

**10. Humorous effect** : a response when people realize and are able to

simply enjoy the incongruent situation, in a form of laughter, which includes ambiguity, logical impossibility, irrelevance or inappropriateness (Wamsler, 2007, p. 23).

