

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided into some subject matters. In this chapter, the researcher explains about the background of the research following the previous studies, statement of the problem, research objectives, research significance, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Research

Media plays an important role as a medium for representing social reality, making it a significant object of study. Popular culture, including animated series, functions as a site where meanings about society are produced and circulated through representation (Hall, 1997) . Films or series are also considered significant because they not only reflect reality but also contribute to the social construction of meaning through media representation (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, as cited in. Passos & Saraiva, 2024)

Popular media can simplify, exaggerate, or even criticize social phenomena. The Simpsons is a well-known animated series that has aired continuously since 1989 and has been watched by various generations. This indicates that its popularity is not only due to its long broadcast history, but also to its ability to evolve along with changes in time and audience preferences. Over time, The Simpsons has adjusted its style of humor, story themes, and forms of social criticism in order to remain relevant to contemporary social, political, and cultural contexts. As a result, its stories often address social issues, politics, and global events, and it is even frequently considered to contain “predictive” elements.

Each dialogue frequently contains language play and implicit meanings, making the series a rich source of pragmatic data. The Simpson Season 36 is selected as the focus of analysis because it is the newest season, characterized by modern humor filled with sarcasm, hyperbole, and irrelevant remarks that often

flout conversational maxims. This phenomenon of numerous indirect meanings that are difficult to interpret without pragmatic analysis is what motivates the researcher to investigate how the dialogues construct humor and convey implicit messages.

The application of flouting maxim theory is appropriate because *The Simpsons* frequently and deliberately violates the cooperative principle to convey meanings that are not articulated directly. These deliberate departures from conversational norms guide viewers to infer humor, irony, or social criticism, which are central characteristics of the series. Examining instances of maxim flouting in *The Simpsons* therefore provides insight into the linguistic mechanisms through which humor is produced. Such analysis also has practical implications, for example for subtitling and audiovisual translation, so that the subtle nuances of the comedy are retained across languages.

As an animated situation comedy, *The Simpsons* presents numerous humorous interactions in which characters intentionally flout conversational maxims. These instances of maxim flouting not only generate humor but also serve various communicative purposes within the interaction. Therefore, in addition to identifying the types of maxim flouting, this study also examines their communicative functions by adopting Graham et al. (1992) framework of humor functions, which includes positive affect, expressiveness, and negative affect.

Without analyzing the maxim flouting and its function in *The Simpsons* Season 36, the hidden meanings, irony, and social criticism in the series may be difficult to fully understand. This may lead to humor being misinterpreted or understood out of context. In contrast, this study offers a more systematic understanding of how humor and implicit meaning are constructed through maxim flouting. A comprehensive explanation of these mechanisms not only helps readers interpret the series' communication patterns more accurately but also contributes to the development of pragmatic analysis in the study of popular media.

Previous studies indicate that research on flouting maxims in *The Simpsons* still contains several important limitations. Iskandar (2010) investigated the application of Grice's maxims in *The Simpsons* Season 5. The study aimed to identify the types of maxims that appeared in the dialogues and explain how the

characters violated those maxims. This study is highly relevant because it used the same television series as the present research.

However, it focused on Season 5 and examined maxim non-observance in general rather than specifically analyzing maxim flouting and its functions. Krisdwiyan & Hanidar (2022) examined the production of conversational humor through maxim flouting in the sitcom *The IT Crowd*. This study made a significant contribution to understanding the relationship between maxim flouting and humor, particularly in scripted television discourse.

Padmatantri & Sutrisno (2020) highlights the importance of contextual understanding in interpreting humorous and sarcastic language. Although the research contributes to the study of pragmatic meaning in *The Simpsons* franchise, its primary focus is sarcasm rather than the flouting of conversational maxims. Wattimury et al. (2023) analyzed humorous spoof texts in the English textbook *Look Ahead 2* by examining the occurrence of maxim flouting, forms of humor, and functions of humor. This study is particularly valuable because it not only examines maxim flouting but also explores the forms and functions of humor generated through pragmatic strategies. However, the data were derived from written educational texts rather than audiovisual media.

Furthermore, Tahir (n.d.) investigated how the Cooperative Principle and conversational maxims were represented in educational materials and language instruction. The study emphasized the educational value of understanding conversational maxims and their practical application in language learning. While the research provides a broader perspective on Gricean theory, its focus on educational curriculum differs from the analysis of humorous discourse in entertainment media.

Although many studies have examined Gricean maxims, there is still limited research on maxim flouting and its functions in contemporary animated television series. Previous studies related to *The Simpsons* have mainly focused on earlier seasons or other pragmatic aspects, such as sarcasm. In addition, few studies have explored how maxim flouting is used to create humor in the latest seasons of the series. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the types of maxim

flouting and describing the communicative functions of humorous utterances containing maxim flouting in *The Simpsons* Season 36.

1.2 Statement of Problems

With regard to the focus of the study described above, the main research questions can be formulated as follows:

1. What types of flouting maxims are found in *The Simpsons* Season 36?
2. What communicative functions from the maxim flouting in *The Simpsons* Season 36?

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the problems outlined in the background and research questions, this study is intended to achieve the following purposes:

1. To classify all utterances of maxim flouting in selected representative episodes of *The Simpsons* Season 36.
2. To describe the communicative functions emerging from the maxim flouting in *The Simpsons* Season 36.

1.4 Research Significance

This research is expected to yield several significance, both theoretically and practically (Djuharie, 2021). Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the development of pragmatic studies, especially those related to Grice's Cooperative Principle. By identifying the types of maxim flouting and describing their communicative functions in *The Simpsons*, this study enriches the understanding of how humor, implicit meaning, and communicative strategies are shaped within satirical and comedic discourse. Particularly, the findings are anticipated to offer new perspectives for linguistic scholarship in explaining how conversational norms are intentionally violated to create social critique, humor, and character identity, thereby expanding the theoretical scope of pragmatics within media contexts.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid ambiguity and to ensure consistency in interpretation, this study provides operational definitions of several key terms. These definitions function as conceptual boundaries that guide the analysis and clarify how each term is understood within the scope of this research. The terms below are taken from established pragmatic theories relevant to the investigation of maxim flouting, speech acts, and humor in *The Simpsons* Season 36. By defining these core concepts in advance, the study ensures that the discussion remains focused and that the analytical framework is applied systematically. The following key terms are therefore explained as the basis for the subsequent analysis.

a) Pragmatics

Pragmatics refers to meaning in context, the study of how meaning is interpreted in relation to context, speaker intention, and shared knowledge between interlocutors (Thomas, 1995). It focuses on meanings that go beyond literal utterance interpretation and relies on how listeners infer what speakers actually mean in interaction.

b) Cooperative Principle

In order for a person to interpret what someone else says, some kind of cooperative principle is assumed to be in operation (Grice, 1975).

c) Conversational Maxims

Conversational maxims are four guidelines proposed by Grice—Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner—that help speakers communicate clearly, truthfully, sufficiently, and relevantly (Grice, 1975). These maxims serve as rules that support cooperative and efficient communication.

d) Flouting Maxim

Flouting a maxim occurs when a speaker intentionally violates one of the maxims in an obvious way so that the hearer looks for an implied meaning beyond the literal words (Grice, 1975). Flouting typically produces implicature, often for humorous, ironic, or expressive effect.

e) Humor

The ability to be amused by something seen, heard, or thought about, sometimes causing you to smile or laugh, or the quality in something that causes such amusement (Cambridge University Press, 2025)

f) The Simpsons (Season 36)

The Simpsons Season 36 is the animated series used as the data source in this study. As a beloved animated comedy, it portrays the daily lives of the Simpson family and the broader community of Springfield, a typical American town. This particular season was selected because its dialogues frequently contain maxim flouting, irony, exaggeration, and context-dependent humor, making it exceptionally fitting for a comprehensive pragmatic analysis. (Matt Groening, 2024)

