CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents literature involving studies and theories related to the analysis of conversations in feature films with respect to the notion of conversational implicature.

The Purpose of Conversation

The purposes or functions of conversation are the same as those of language. Mainly, language is used to serve in human affairs. For the convenience of language analysis, Brown and Yule (1983, p. 1) describe the major functions of language with two terms: transactional and interactional functions.

Pridham (2001, p. 4) states that conversation is not just about passing on information or getting things done, but also how speakers relate to one another and choose to cooperate or not cooperate with one another. Halliday (as cited in Pridham, 2001, p. 5) attempts to separate conversations according to their purpose. However, in respect of the purposes of conversations, Pridham (2001, p. 5) claims that sometimes conversations are used to serve practical needs: to build our relationships with others, to regulate others' behavior, to learn about our world or ourselves, and to express our personalities, for instance.

The Cooperative Principle (CP)

Grice (as cited in Schiffrin, 1994, p. 194) proposes a way of analyzing implicatures based on a general principle and its maxims. The general principle, namely the cooperative principle (CP), is expressed as follows:

> Make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

Conversational Maxims (CM)

As cited in Levinson (1983, pp. 101-102), the cooperative principle is broken down into four more specific maxims, as follows:

The Maxim of Quality

Try to make your contribution one that is true, specifically:

(i) do not say what you believe to be false;

(ii) do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

The Maxim of Quantity

(i) make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange;

(ii) do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

The Maxim of Relevance

Make your contributions relevant.

The Maxim of Manner

Be perspicuous, and specifically:

(i) avoid obscurity;

(ii) avoid ambiguity;

(iii) be brief;

(iv) be orderly.

The cooperative principle (CP) and the conversational maxims (CM) allow speakers to direct the hearers of utterances to interpretations of their communicative intent, namely the speaker's meaning that goes beyond the logical meanings of what is stated (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 194). To illustrate how the cooperative principle and conversational maxims generate inferences beyond the semantic content of utterances, consider the following example from Grice (as cited in Schiffrin, 1997, p. 9).

A: Smith doesn't seem to have a girlfriend these days.

B: He has been paying a lot of visits to New York.

Grice's explanation for this example initially suggests that there seems to be a lack of obvious connection between A's and B's utterances. However, B's utterance can be interpreted as cooperative. The assumption that B is being cooperative and following the maxim of relation allows A to infer that B has implied that Smith has a girlfriend in New York (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 9). Grice also suggests that in a conversation, a speaker may or may not adhere to the cooperative principle. By not following the cooperative principle, the speaker may want to create an additional meaning or to emphasize some point or make it more obvious (Achara Pengpanich, 2008, p. 40).

Pratt (1977, pp. 159-160) mentions four cases in which a maxim is not observed or followed by a speaker as suggested by Grice. The four cases are as follows:

> 1) He [a speaker] may quietly and unostentatiously *violate* a maxim; if so, in some cases he will be liable to mislead. 2) He may *opt out* from the operation both of the maxim and of the CP; he may say, indicate or allow it to become plain that he is unwilling to cooperate in the way in which the maxim requires. He may say, for example, "I cannot say more, my lips are sealed." 3) He may be faced by a *clash*; he may be unable, e.g., to fulfill the first maxim of Quantity ("Be as informative as is required") without violating the second maxim of quality ("Have adequate evidence for what you say"). 4) He may *flout* a maxim; that is, he may *blatantly* fail to fulfill it. On the assumption that the speaker is able to fulfill the maxim and do so without violating another maxim (because of a clash), is not opting out, and is not, in view of the blatancy of his performance, trying to mislead, the hearer is faced with a minor problem: how can his saying what he did say be reconciled with the supposition that he is observing the overall CP? This situation is one which characteristically gives rise to a conversational implicature; and when a conversational implicature is generated in this way, I shall say that a maxim is being *exploited*.

Implicature

The term "implicature" is used by Grice to account for "what a speaker can imply, suggest, or mean, as distinct from what the speaker literally says" (Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 31). Furthermore, Gazdar (1979, p. 38) defines an implicature as a proposition that is implied by the utterance of a sentence in a context and is neither a part of nor an entailment of what being said. The key ideas of implicature were proposed by Grice in the William James lectures delivered at Harvard in 1967, and the concept of implicature, then, is developed in his theory concerning how people use language. (Levinson, 1983, pp. 100-101)

Schiffrin (1994, p. 367) significantly points out Grice's suggestion on the use of different kinds of information for implicature calculation. That is, implicature can be calculated with the use of the following information:

> (1) the conventional meaning of the words used, together with the identity of any references that may be involved; (2) the CP and its maxims; (3) the context, linguistic or otherwise, of the utterance; (4) other items of background knowledge; and (5) the fact (or supposed fact) that all relevant items falling under the previous headings are available to both participants and both participants know or assume this to be the case.

In a conversation where a speaker may not adhere to the cooperative principle or the maxims, the speaker usually expects the hearer to decode the implicature correctly and arrive at the speaker's intended meaning by using

the kinds of information proposed by Grice to help interpret the speaker's utterance.

Implicature is divided into two kinds: conventional implicature and conversational implicature. As cited in Brown and Yule (1983, p. 31), conventional implicature, according to Grice (1975), is determined by "the conventional meaning of the words used", whereas conversational implicature is derived from the cooperative principle and conversational maxims, which speakers normally obey.

Conversational Implicature

Conversational implicature is a single notion in pragmatics that accounts for the interpretation of utterances. Apart from the definitions of conversational implicature given in much of the literature, Yule (1996, p. 44) writes that all conversational implicatures are situated within conversations, where the listeners of the utterances make inferences in an attempt to maintain the assumption of cooperative interaction. Distinctively, conversational implicatures are deniable; sometimes they can be "explicitly denied" or, "alternatively, reinforced" in different ways. Speakers of utterances can always deny that they intend to convey their intended meanings, since the implicatures are known as part of what is communicated and not said.

It should be noted here that Levinson (1983, pp. 103-104) rather uses the term "inference" to refer to implicature at times. He also makes the clear distinction between the term "inference" and a few related terms. He points

out that the maxims generate inferences beyond the semantic content of the utterances and such inferences are conversational implicatures, where the term *implicature* contrasts with terms like *logical implication*, *entailment* and *logical consequence*. These three terms are generally used to refer to those inferences that are derived from logical or semantic content only. He states that implicatures are not semantic inferences. Inferences are based on both the content of what being said and some specific assumptions about the cooperative interaction.

Implicatures Arising from the Conversational Maxims

Schiffrin (1994, p. 195) notes that implicatures can be created in one of three ways: a maxim is observed or followed in a straightforward way; a maxim is violated because of a clash with another maxim; or a maxim is flouted. This corresponds with the suggestion of Levinson (1983, p. 104) that there are at least two distinct ways in which conversation implicatures are generated by the maxims. The first way is concerned with the matter in which the speaker is simply observing the maxims and the listener makes inference of what being said based on the assumption that the speaker is following the maxims. Another way, on the other hand, is concerned with how the speaker deliberately or ostentatiously breaches or flouts the maxims.

In addition, as claimed by Peccei (1999, p. 27), Grice points out that conversational maxims are not always observed and he, then, distinguishes "quietly violating a maxim" from the "ostentatiously flouting a maxim."

Peccei notes that violations are quiet because it is usually not obvious at the time of the utterance that the speaker has deliberately lied, has supplied insufficient information, or has been ambiguous or irrelevant. Violations might interrupt communication. Nevertheless, violations do not lead to implicatures. The situation in which a speaker flouts a maxim actually leads to implicatures, and it is obvious to the hearer at the time of the utterance that the speaker has deliberately and quite openly failed to observe one or more maxims.

Noticeably, conventional meaning as part of information needed for the calculation of implicatures does not play an important role in calculating implicatures that arise when the maxims are simply followed or when an implicature arises from a clash between maxims (Schiffrin, 1994, pp. 195-196). This can be illustrated by Grice's example (as cited in Schiffrin, 1994, p.196) below:

A: Where does C live?

B: Somewhere in the south of France.

B's answer is less informative than is required to meet A's needs. But if B does not know the exact location, he is afraid of trying to be more informative, as it may violate the maxim of quality: "Don't say what you lack adequate evidence for." B, therefore, implies that he does not know in which town C lives. (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 196)

On the other hand, we can see the role of conventional meaning most clearly in the calculation of implicatures that arise from a flouting of the maxims. In addition, Schiffrin (1994, p. 196) mentions that when one says

something that seems to violate one or more of the maxims (for example, by giving less information than seems to be required or saying something that seems to be false), the hearer still assumes that the speaker is following the general CP. They usually look for an interpretation of the violation that allows them to preserve the assumption of cooperation. Schiffrin remarks, "[I]t turns out that some maxim violations are apparent only because of semantic problems."

As stated by Schiffrin (1994, p. 196), Grice's example of a metaphor, "You are the cream in my coffee," for example, offers the clearest illustration of how the speaker flouts the maxim of quality. The hearer of such utterance knows that a maxim is being flouted at the time of the utterance because semantic properties of "human" (*you*) do not belong to the properties of "liquid" (*cream*).

Verbal Tools Used in Flouting Conversational Maxims

Figurative Language

As noted by Willis (1973, pp. 244-249), much of the language used in our daily writing and speaking is generally figurative and many people use figures of speech in their own writing and conversations, often without realizing it. Many originally concrete words have been given expanded meanings beyond the original, basic, core meanings of the words, and that is why people can hardly produce two or three utterances together without using figurative language. This is illustrated by some examples below:

She maintained a stony silence.

She is a sweet-tempered girl.

His high position gave weight to his proposal.

When her friends gossiped, she was all ears.

Simile

A simile is an explicit comparison of two objects, ideas, or situations with the use of *like* or *as* (Willis, 1973, p. 247). Simile can also be defined as the comparison of two things whose nature or properties are different in some way, but might have an outstanding characteristic or similarity in some way. For example:

His face was like a piece of stone sculpture.

Learning a new language is like building a new window in the mind.

Metaphor

A metaphor is the comparison of two things or expressions without the use of the word "like" or "as." Metaphor is used when a speaker or a writer wishes his or her audience to see an object or person as identical in certain ways to some other object or person. Similes and metaphors are both comparisons, and similes are often considered as another form of metaphor. A simile makes an explicit comparison, while a metaphor implies similarities between two things. There are also "dead metaphors," which refer to those metaphors that no longer create mental pictures or images in hearers' mind

because they have become overly familiar and are in common use. (McEdwards, 1968, p. 63)

Irony

Verbal irony refers to one of the figurative uses of language that occurs when a speaker's intention is in contrast with what he or she says on the surface. An ironic statement may reveal the explicit expression of one attitude with the implication of a very different attitude or evaluation. Verbal irony is perceived when there is knowledge of the speaker's intention shared by the speaker and his audience (Abrams, 1971, pp. 80-81). A speaker, for example, is using irony when he or she praises someone sarcastically, but with his intention of condemning him or her.

Personification

Personification is the figurative use of language to attribute human qualities to non-human objects or entities, in other words, to apply human qualities to non-human objects or entities. McEdwards (1968, p. 64) states that personification is "a natural outgrowth of metaphor." This is because the use of personification has made objects or entities human by giving them human qualities or characteristics. Human characteristics such as breathing, walking, singing, groaning, or thinking, for example, are given to the objects. That is how we have got some personifications like "evening is allowed to sing her restful song," "the trees whisper of their secrets" or "the mountains wrap themselves in mist for the coming night." Personification is useful when

explaining or illustrating a complex philosophical concept, since it makes the abstraction "concrete and visible" to readers or hearers.

Metonymy

McEdwards (1968, p. 67) claims that metonymy is closely related to personification. Nevertheless, metonymy is "the use of the name of one thing for that of another suggested by it or associated with it" (Willis, 1973, p. 246), For example, the use of *the White House* for *the President* or the use of *crown* for *royalty*. Metonymy can be used as a rhetorical strategy to describe something indirectly by mentioning something else associated with it or closely related to it.

Synecdoche

Synecdoche is a type of metonymy in which a part is used for a whole, or vice versa (Willis, 1973, p. 246). For example:

I'll go with you if you have wheels ("wheels" refer to a car)

We hired two extra trombones. ("two extra trombones" refers to trombone players)

The law arrived. ("the law" refers to a policeman)

Here comes the Navy. ("the Navy" refers to a sailor)

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is the use of the exaggerated form of statements or words for emphasis. When a speaker wants to emphasize the importance of a situation, he or she may "exaggerate certain aspects of it." The utterance "Everybody just loved my new hat," for example, can be taken literally that all humans are included and experiencing the emotion of love for an object, namely a hat. The hearer can interpret such utterance literally, but can also infer that the speaker thinks her new hat is the best she ever had, since the speaker expressed that using exaggerated terms. (McEdwards, 1968, p. 64)

Understatement

Understatement is the opposite of hyperbole. A writer or speaker may use understatement to create a particular emotion in his or her audience by saying "less than can be truthfully said or state an idea in negative term" (McEdwards, 1968, p. 65).

Pun

A pun is "a humorous use of a word or phrase which has several meanings or which sounds like another word" (Cambridge Dictionaries Online) or "a play on words that are either identical in sound ('homonyms') or similar in sound, but are sharply diverse in meaning". (Abrams, 1971, p. 139)

Oxymoron

"Oxymoron is a figure of speech in which two terms appear to contradict each other. Some examples have become so familiar that we hardly notice the contradiction, e.g. *deafening silence*". (The Poetry Archive)

The Role of Context in the Pragmatic Study of Conversation

As mentioned earlier, Grice (as cited in Schiffrin, 1994, p. 367) proposes that context, linguistic or otherwise, contributes to implicature calculation. Linguistic context, however, refers to the "text" in which the utterance is situated, whereas otherwise context refers to the situation in which the utterance is produced. These contexts contribute to the information that can be used as background knowledge that is similar to mutual knowledge, one of five items that is also required for implicature calculation.

Different approaches to discourse generate different assumptions about aspects of context that contribute to the production and interpretation of utterances. The pragmatic approach is a broad approach to discourse that deals with three concepts: meaning, context, and communication. Pragmatics mostly concern the analysis of a speaker's meaning at the level of utterance, which is usually situated in a context (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 9). In general, pragmatics views context primarily as "knowledge." One particular type of pragmatics, namely Gricean pragmatics, also views context as a "cognitive contribution" to utterance interpretation. In particular, the context that is proposed by Gricean pragmatics is a general principle that participants assume

one another to observe the cooperative principle. Nevertheless, Gricean pragmatics divides context into different sources of background knowledge, e.g., assumptions about human nature, text, situation, and the world. In any case, specific types of knowledge are not grouped into labeled units (Schiffrin, 1994, pp. 365-368). Additionally, Yule (1996, p. 3) writes about the role of context in the pragmatic study of conversation as follows:

> This type of study necessarily involves the interpretation of what people mean in a particular context and how the context influences what is said. It requires a consideration of how speakers organize what they want to say in accordance with who they're talking to, where, when, and under what circumstances.

Related Research Studies

Studying similar or related studies provides some guidelines for this study and suggests some significant trends of pragmatics-related studies.

A study that is somewhat similar to this study is a study of conversational implicature in the film *Taxi* conducted by Tukijan (2007). In this study, the identifications and the analysis of the conversational implicatures that occur in the film are conducted based on the two types of conversational implicature: generalized implicature and particularized implicature. The findings of the study showed that between the two types, generalized conversational implicature takes a slightly larger percentage (51.43%) than particularized conversational implicature (48.57%). The

findings also reveal that one single utterance can have more than one type of implicature; an utterance can have two of the same type of conversational implicatures; and an utterance can have three implicatures at the same time. However, there are some utterances to which the theory of generalized conversational implicature cannot be applied. The researcher states that the specific information about the context, some shared background knowledge, and the cultural schemata are needed to interpret those utterances to arrive at the speaker's intended meaning.

In addition, Kanyaruck Devakul na Ayudhaya (2005) conducted a case study on conversational maxims and their violations in "Beetle Bailey" comic strips. In this study, 157 comic strips are studied and analyzed in terms of cooperative principle, implicature, and the violation of conversational maxims. The qualitative approach is applied in this study and the descriptive method of research is employed in collecting and analyzing the data. In accordance with the data analysis, it can be seen that all conversational maxims are well-employed, whereas many of them are also "unfairly exploited for the advantage of cartoonists" (p. 73). The maxim of relation is observed the most, followed by the maxim of quality, the maxim of manner, and the maxim of quantity, which is observed the least. On the other hand, the maxims that are flouted or violated from the most to the least are the maxim of quality, the maxim of manner, the maxim of relation, and the maxim of quantity. Noticeably, the violations of the conversational maxim that appeared in "Beetle Bailey" are only the flouting of conversational maxim in different ways. The researcher, however, notes that the cartoon characters "intentionally

lie, give more or less information, say things irrelevant to the subject, and use the technical terms or ambiguous words" (p. 78). Moreover, the researcher also states that flouting conversational maxim is aimed to create humor by using figures of speech, for example, to express a speaker's opinion against the others.

Another pragmatic study that is also related to the study of conversational implicature is a study of speech acts in utterances. In an unpublished thematic paper entitled *An Analysis of Speech Acts in Drama Dialogues*, written by Suchada Sarabanchong (2005), the selected data was drawn from dialogues in a simplified version of the play *Romeo and Juliet* written by William Shakespeare. The data was arranged into adjacency pairs, which were analyzed in terms of speech act theory together with the interpretation of the speech acts indicated. According to the study, it can be seen that most of the illocutionary acts performed by the main characters are the act of requesting, while most of utterances are in declarative sentences rather than other sentence types. It is found that, in all sentence types, a number of utterances do not correlate with their communicative functions, and this suggests one of the distinctive features of indirect speech acts. Interestingly, it also shows that some sentences in the play convey indirect meanings that are distinct from what those sentences literally mean by the use of figures of speech, such as metaphor and overstatement (Suchada Sarabanchong, 2005).

In a research work, *A Study of Speech Acts in a Play Dialogue* (Charunee Charokram, 2004), 319 utterances occurred in the conversation of

characters in a play entitled *A Gala Dress* are analyzed, and the speakers' illocutionary acts are identified with communicative functions, mood, modality, and explicit and implicit speech acts. It is found that characters perform different kinds of acts that are not totally different, as some kinds of acts are performed repeatedly. In the same way, the communicative functions of the 319 sentences are not totally different since they are associated with their illocutionary acts, some of which are repeated. The researcher, however, states that she achieved the purposes of this study by "making use of knowledge of speech acts, performative verbs, performative prefix, meaning of words, mood, modality, context of utterances, and American culture for interpreting intended meaning of characters' utterances." Moreover, the result of this study also shows that each utterance has a purpose because it is spoken with an intention to communicate something and is intended to be understood or recognized by hearers.

Pragmatic approach is also employed in an analysis of character dialogue in the ancient tale "Sam Gok" (Daranee Jaiyen, 2008). Dialogues of the three key characters-Khong Beng, Jew Yee, and Gui Gae-are analyzed in terms of cooperative principle and conversational maxims. According to the discussion of the research findings, different conversational maxims are employed by the three key characters according to individual's speaking style. The repeated use of conversational maxims reveals the characteristics of the individual's talk. Moreover, the researcher also observes that the success of the conversations do not rely only on the characters' use of conversational maxims. The characteristics of the participants' personality also contribute to

whether one or more types of conversational maxims are employed. It depends on the speaker's conversational purpose. The speakers also violate the maxims sometimes, in order to convey something to the listeners.

Synopses of the Films

The following synopses of the three films in this study-*Bridget Jones's Diary*, *Sweet Home Alabama*, and *Two Weeks Notice*-are taken from the movie overviews on the web site "Yahoo! Movies"

Bridget Jones's Diary

> At the start of the New Year, 32-year-old "singleton" Bridget decides it's time to take control of her life and start keeping a diary. Now, the most provocative, erotic and hysterical book on her bedside table is the one she's writing. With a taste for adventure, and an opinion on every subject-from her circle of "smug married" friends, to men, exercise, food, sex, and everything in between-she's turning a page on a whole new life. Despite her efforts to get her act together, she finds herself caught between two men-a man who's too good to be true, and a man who's so wrong, he could be right. Meanwhile her new employers think she is nuts and her scatter-brained friends are absolutely no help whatsoever. (*Bridget Jones's Diary*, 2001)

Sweet Home Alabama

New York fashion designer Melanie Carmichael suddenly finds herself engaged to the city's most eligible bachelor. But Melanie's past holds many secrets, including Jake, the redneck husband she married in high school, who refuses to divorce her. Bound and determined to end their contentious relationship once and for all, Melanie sneaks back home to Alabama to confront her past, only to discover that you can take the girl out of the South, but you can never take the South out of the girl. (*Sweet Home Alabama*, 2002)

Two Weeks Notice

Millionaire George Wade doesn't make a move without Lucy Kelson, his multi-tasking Chief Counsel at the Wade Corporation. A brilliant attorney with a strategic mind, she also has an ulcer and doesn't get much sleep. It's not the job that's getting to her-it's George. Smart, charming and undeniably self-absorbed, he treats her more like a nanny than a Harvard-trained lawyer-and can barely choose a tie without her help. Now, after five years of calling the shots, on everything from his clothes to his divorce settlements, Lucy Kelson is calling it quits. Although George makes it difficult for Lucy to leave the Wade Corporation, he finally agrees to let her go-but only if she finds her own replacement. After a challenging search, she hires an

ambitious young lawyer with an obvious eye on her wealthy new boss. Finally free of George and his 24-hour requests, Lucy is ready to change course and join her devoted boyfriend on an adventure at sea. Or is she? Confronted with the fact that Lucy is literally sailing out of his life, George faces a decision of his own: is it ever too late to say "I love you"? (*Two Weeks Notice*, 2002)

Summary

The key ideas of implicature were proposed by Paul Grice in the William James lectures delivered at Harvard in 1967, and the concept of implicature is developed in his theory concerning how people use language. Grice also proposes that implicature can be calculated with the use of information, i.e., the conventional meaning of the words used, together with the identity of any references that may be involved, the cooperative principle and its maxims, the context, linguistic or otherwise, of the utterance, other items of background knowledge, and the fact (or supposed fact) that all relevant items falling under the previous headings are available to both participants and both participants know or assume this to be the case. The use of these kinds of information suggested by Grice greatly contributes to the implicature calculation. The CP and conversational maxims, however, can be employed as a framework of the analysis of conversational implicature, since

conversational implicature can be created from the way CP and its maxims are treated, as they are observed, violated, or flouted.