

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Research

In daily conversation, “human often to use ambiguous expression such as metaphor, irony, metonymy, euphemism even humor” (Minewaki et al, 2010: 1). “Humor is known as a state of mind as the quality of causing amusement and as the ability to understand and enjoy what is funny and makes people laugh” (Vuorela in Onyancha, 2015: 1). “Although humor is considered to be mere entertainment, it is a powerful resource to social commentary and transformation” (Black, 2012: 87). In other word, it can be said that humor represents as central aspect of everyday conversation and society are participating in humor as well.

However, humor apparently is not only to entertain people since there is another form of humor that is too savage and provokes strong, unusual emotion that is known as dark humor. The terms dark humor itself is known as “kind of humor or comedy that associated with race, religions and other sensitive materials which refers to certain community” (Early et al, 2010: 2). Thus, it can be said that dark humor is some kind of humor which intended to give sarcasm or mocking certain community for their race, religion or even culture. Further, in this research, the writer is interested to analyze dark humor since the writer noticed that the research of dark humor analysis (especially in Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia) is still in small number, which means only few researchers who analyzed the analysis of dark humor, especially in analyzing dark humor by using relevance theory. In that case,

in the investigations of linguistic study, the writer noticed that the topic of dark humor can be analyzed by using pragmatics.

Furthermore, the writer also found several examples that can be used as object of research which are related to the dark humor, one of them can be found in the famous TV series in America entitled *American Dad*. In short, *American Dad* is one of American animated sitcoms that showing a family consists of a father (CIA Agent), a housewife, a son, a daughter and one alien who live in Langley Falls, Virginia. In many episodes of each seasons, *American Dad* shows some humor which is then gone too far so that it is categorized as Dark Humor (such as there is an episode where one of the characters mocking Jewish tradition of Hanukkah and other characters mocking Christmas).

In accordance, the writer chooses *American Dad* as the object of research since there are a lot of dark humor that are formed and only can be understood if the audience know the context of the humor. In this case, it would be very great if the audience know about how the process of humor that are produced by the characters in the TV series of *American Dad*. However, in order to understand the context, the writer believes that the pragmatic approach is a proper approach to analyze this phenomenon. Moreover, “since pragmatic is the study of language use, thus human interaction is needed so that the interplay between meaning and context during communication can be applied” (Gauché, 2017: 12).

Therefore, the writer also finds out that in the pragmatic, one of the theories that can be used in order to analyze the process of humor is by applying relevance theory. Sperber & Wilson (1995) defined “relevance” in terms of contextual effect

and processing effort. “The goal of relevance theory is to explain how a hearer infers a speaker's meaning on the basis of the evidence provided” (Minewaki et al, 2010: 2).

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background of research above, the writer formulates the research question into:

1. What are the dark humor compilation that can be found in *American Dad* (season 15)?
2. How are the mechanisms of humor that are used in *American Dad* (season 15) from the perspective of cognition and communication?

1.3 Research Objective

Regarding to the research question, the purpose of this research is not only to describe the Dark Humor that can be found in the *American Dad* (season 15) but also to describe mechanism of humor that are used in *American Dad* (season 15) from the perspective of cognition and communication.

1.4 Uses of Research

1.4.1 Theoretical Use

Theoretically, this research provides the information about relevance theory by Sperber and Wilson (1995) and how it can be used to analyze dark humor in *American Dad* TV series. Also, the research further can help other researchers who

are interested in conducting the similar research of dark humor by applying relevance theory.

1.4.2 Practical Use

Practically, this research will help readers to understand how to understand humor that are commonly uttered and produced by the characters in the TV series or sitcom (Situational Comedy). Further, hopefully this research can help readers to know more about the important of learn linguistic for the aspect of understanding humor.

1.5 Scope of Research

The series of *American Dad* has so many seasons and episodes, however, the writer only focuses in limiting the object of research into season 15 (21 Episodes) of the TV series since it is the latest season that have complete episodes. Furthermore, the writer also only discussing the mechanism of humors in the TV series by using the relevance theory by Sperber & Wilson (1995).