CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Relevance Theory: The Concept of Relevance

In contrast to the traditional domains of linguistics such as phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics, which primarily analyze linguistic structures, pragmatics offers a broader perspective on language by incorporating non-linguistic communicative elements. At its core, pragmatics, including the speech act theory pioneered by Austin (1962), investigates the intricate relationship between language and action. Specifically, pragmatics explores how the context in which language is used influences the interpretation of utterances. By emphasizing the interplay between linguistic meaning and contextual assumptions, pragmatics aims to enhance our theoretical understanding of utterance interpretation. Moreover, to fully grasp the complexities of this process, extensive empirical research on utterance interpretation across diverse communication settings and contexts is imperative. This combination of theoretical advancements and empirical investigations is essential for advancing our knowledge of pragmatic phenomena in language comprehension.

To overcome the constraints of prior linguistic models, Sperber and Wilson (1995) formulated the Relevance Theory, which offers a comprehensive framework for understanding communication. This theory asserts that linguistic communication involves more than just the transmission and reception of encoded information; it encompasses a cognitive process of drawing inferences based on contextual cues. According to Sperber and Wilson, when a communicator captures the listener's attention, it signals that the information being conveyed is relevant and beneficial to the listener's interests. This concept aligns with the cognitive principle of relevance, which posits that human cognition is naturally oriented towards maximizing the relevance of incoming information (Sperber & Wilson, 1995: 260). By emphasizing the role of relevance in communication, the Relevance Theory provides a nuanced perspective that goes beyond mere message transmission and sheds light on the dynamic and inferential nature of linguistic understanding.

Relevance plays a pivotal role in shaping the inputs of cognitive processes, encompassing a wide range of stimuli such as thoughts, utterances, actions, memories, smells, and more. It serves as a guiding principle that directs our cognitive attention towards information that is deemed significant and meaningful in a given context.

2.2 Measurement of Relevance

Relevance, in relation to contextual effect and processing effort, can be understood as the presence of contextual impact resulting from an assumption within a given context. As Sperber and Wilson (1995) state, an assumption is considered relevant if it exerts some influence on the context in which it is applied (p. 122). However, relevance is not a binary concept, as some assumptions may possess varying degrees of relevance. The significance of an assumption is determined by the interplay between the impact it has on cognitive processing and the effort required to obtain the desired result. This interaction establishes a scale of importance for the inputs. Consequently, the degree of relevance is determined by the cognitive effects produced by an assumption, with greater effects indicating higher relevance. Similarly, the level of relevance is inversely proportional to the amount of processing effort required, meaning that assumptions requiring less cognitive work are deemed more relevant. By considering both contextual impact and processing effort, the concept of relevance provides a framework for evaluating the relative importance of assumptions in cognitive processes.

For example:

A : How much is the apple pie?
B1 : 18 dollars.
B2 : 2 dollars cheaper than pecan one.

It is evident that B1 requires less processing effort compared to B2 due to its linguistic simplicity and clear contextual reference. B1 directly provides the requested information without any additional implications or contextual dependencies. In contrast, understanding B2 necessitates inferring the implied context, specifically the price of the pecan pie. Consequently, the relevance between the question A and response B1 is greater than that between A and B2. This example demonstrates how the processing effort and contextual clarity influence the perceived relevance of the given responses.

Contextual effects arise when new added knowledge interacts with an existing context. The amount of processing effort is determined by the amount of effort expended by the listener to create a proper background to interpret the statement. For optimal relevance, the listener should make every effort to gain understanding that meets their expectations, and communication should follow the communicative principle of relevance, “Every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance.” (Sperber & Wilson, 1995: 260)

Furthermore, Sperber and Wilson claimed that an utterance is most relevant under two circumstances which they defined as the presumption of optimal relevance: (a) the ostensive stimulus is relevant enough for it to be worth the addressee’s effort to process it, and (b) the ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator’s abilities and preferences. (Sperber & Wilson, 1995: 270)

Here the ostensive stimulus is a behavior. It can only be explained on the assumption that the speaker wanted to give evidence of their intention to convey some information. Therefore, it is essential for both the speaker and the listener to mutually adapt and align explicit and implicit information with the anticipation of achieving optimal relevance.

2.3 Implicature and Explicature

Sperber and Wilson defined implicature as the original premise that any non-explicit assumption conveyed must be implicit. However, the content of implicatures must be inferred entirely. They must be intended by the speaker and understood as meant by the hearer to be inferred (Sperber & Wilson, 2002). Sperber and Wilson (1995: 182) also devised the concept of explicature to reinforce the Gricean concept of implicature as a means to highlight the fact that pragmatic inferences furthermore contribute to what is explicitly conveyed and not only to what is implied. An explicature is described as the 'explicit' assumption of an utterance, which is a development of a logical form encoded by the utterance (ibid.: 182).

Forceville and Clark (2014) also acknowledged that while pictures communicate in a fundamentally distinct manner from language, pictures can indeed convey explicit information that originates from both linguistically and non-linguistically encoded sources. Furthermore, certain aspects of pictures generate communicated assumptions that exhibit some characteristics similar to explicatures.

2.4 Application of Relevance Theory

It is important to note that the implicature investigated in this research differs significantly from the implicature proposed by Grice. It is also important to note that the data that this research looked at had a strong visual component. The visual component contributes to the understanding process. In addition, taking into account the fact that nonverbal communication tends to be less explicit than verbal communication, the visual elements in the scenes may lead to different inference processes in different viewers (Forceville, 2005). The scenes' verbal component is usually comprehended in conjunction with the situation taking place, thus there’s no guarantee that the intended interpretation will be picked up by the addressee.

Sperber & Wilson (2002: 261) proposed three tasks in the comprehension process:

a. Constructing an appropriate hypothesis about explicit content (explicatures) via (i) decoding, (ii) disambiguation, (iii) reference resolution, (iv) enrichment, and (v) deriving implicatures.

b. Constructing an appropriate hypothesis about the intended contextual assumptions (implicated premises).

c. Constructing an appropriate hypothesis about the intended contextual implications (implicated conclusions), conclusions deducible from the input and the context together, but from neither input nor context alone.

2.5 Queer Theory, Literary, and Sapphic

According to Gieseking (2008), "queer" is frequently used as a catch-all phrase by and for people who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, intersex, and/or transgender, as well as by and for people who use the term as an alternative to LGBTQ+ identities. Depending on their race, class, life experiences, and generation, some people regard the word to be insulting. In recent years, heterosexuals who identify as queer to describe their sexuality or gender have become more common. Thus, queer theory is a system of beliefs that contends identities, particularly those related to a person's gender, sex, and/or sexuality, are not constant or predictable. Jagose (1996) put it simply as queer theory does not dictate the eradication of existing categories of gender, sex, and sexuality, though many people assume that it must. Within queer theory, what is sometimes described as a rejection of binary contrasts is perhaps better described as social constructionism with respect to those contrasts.

The term "queer literary criticism" refers to a variety of textual scholarly methods that examine and challenge heteronormative meaning connections and structures (Spargo, 2016). It came forth as a result of the political action of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people in the 1980s and the post-structuralist deconstruction of essentialist understandings of gendered and sexual identities. Queer criticism tends to include texts from popular culture and media as well as literary texts within historical, social, and discursive formations and relations.

Chandra McCann on her article (via *Autostraddle*, 2021) explained that "sapphic"—also known as woman loving woman (WLW), or girls loving girls (GLG)—usually refers to a woman or woman-aligned person of any sexual orientation who is attracted to other women and/or women-aligned individuals. It also is an umbrella term for many identities, including those who are lesbian, pansexual, bisexual, or queer. It is employed to encourage solidarity among women and non-binary individuals of all identities who are drawn to women and individuals who identify as female. It can also serve as an identity, which is especially helpful for people who are attracted to women but may be unsure of their attraction to other genders.

The term “sapphic” itself refers to the Greek poet, Sappho of Lesbo (via *etymonline.com*). Sappho wrote poems of self-reflection as well as passion, some of which were directed at the women who attended her school on the Greek island of Lesbos around 600 BCE. Even though most of the poems are only fragments, they have been highly regarded for centuries. They were written in a distinctive rhythmical pattern known as sapphic verse. Later admirers, such as the Roman poets Catullus and Horace, paid tribute to her by using the sapphic meter in their own works. Sappho gave the island of Lesbos its name, as did lesbianism, which writers referred to as sapphic love. Around the year 1500 CE, the adjective "sapphic" arose in English, initially to describe Sappho's poetic meter and style but then evolved in encompassing lesbianism as a broad subject.

2.6 Research Method

2.6.1 Types of Research

The research conducted in this study is a descriptive qualitative research approach. This approach aims to systematically describe and analyze a specific area of interest, providing factual and accurate information to support the analysis. The focus of this research will be on analyzing the characters of Debbie Ocean and Louise Miller in the context of their implicatures. By examining the implicatures that occur between these characters, the study aims to uncover and interpret the implied meanings and messages conveyed through their interactions. The descriptive qualitative approach allows for a detailed examination of the linguistic and contextual aspects of their communication, providing valuable insights into the dynamics of their relationship and the subtextual layers of meaning present in their conversations.

2.6.2 Data Source

The data employed in this research consists of primary data, encompassing all the utterances of the characters in the movie. The script transcription was collected by downloading it from www.subscene.com. Additionally, to ensure accuracy, the writer cross-referenced the script transcription by directly watching the movie. The parameters of choosing implicatures that occur in the movie are those of Debbie Ocean and Louise Miller themselves and those of correlation to their relationship.

2.6.3 Population

The population represents the entire focus of the research. Arikunto (2002:108) defines population as all the elements that constitute the object of the research. Researchers must establish the population when conducting a study. Hadi (1980:56) also defines population as a group of individuals or items from which data is gathered. The population of this research is the utterances of all characters in the Ocean's Eight movie that contain implicature regarding the relationship of Debbie Ocean and Louise Miller.

2.6.4 Data Collecting Method

The data in this research was collected using the "Metode Simak" (Observation Method). As described by Sudaryanto (1993:133), this method involves the researcher carefully observing and paying close attention to the language usage being studied.

The writer employed the *Teknik Simak Bebas Libat Cakap* (SBLC) or non-conversational observation technique in the Observation Method. With the SBLC technique, the writer refrained from participating in the conversations or dialogs from which the data was collected. Instead, the writer acted solely as an observer, paying close attention to the conversations without directly engaging with the interlocutors. This approach allowed the writer to gather data without directly influencing its formation (Sudaryanto, 1993:134).

2.6.5 Data Analysis Method

The writer employed the "identity method" to analyze the data, aiming to identify specific aspects of investigation. This method requires establishing the equivalence of the nonlinguistic aspect under study (Sudaryanto, 1993:13). As sub-methods of the identity method, the writer utilized the "referential identity method" to identify words referring to something or someone in the conversation. The "pragmatic identity method" was employed to analyze data containing pragmatic aspects, such as implicature. Additionally, the writer used their linguistic experiences to identify the data effectively. To accomplish this, the writer optimally utilized their role as a speaker of the language, without directly participating in the conversation. This highlights the significance of the "reflective introspective method" in the analysis process.