

# A Pragmatics Study on Jokes and the Implicature in Broadcast Messages

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**Abstract**—The study of implicature which is one of the discussions of pragmatics is such an interesting and challenging topic to discuss. Implicature is such a meaning which is implied in such an utterance which is not the same as its literal meaning. The rapid development of information technology results social networks as media to broadcast messages. The broadcast messages may be in the form of jokes which contain implicature. The research applies the pragmatic equivalent method to analyze the topics of jokes based on the implicatures contained in them. Furthermore, the method is also applied to reveal the purpose of creating implicature in jokes. The findings include the kinds of implicature found in jokes which are classified into conventional implicature and conversational implicature. Then, in detailed analysis, implicature in jokes is divided into implicature related to gender, culture, and social phenomena. Furthermore, implicature in jokes may not only be used to give entertainment but also to soften criticisms or satire so that it does not sound rude and harsh.

**Keywords**—Implicature, broadcast messages, conventional implicature, conversational implicature.

## I. INTRODUCTION

THE study of implicature which is one of the discussions of pragmatics is such an interesting and challenging topic to discuss. It may lead to many aspects concerning meaning related to external factors of linguistics as the meaning of such an implicature is mostly based on the context and the speakers who utter it.

Due to the rapid development of information technology, messages are easily broadcast in social network. As a matter of fact, social network is a means of digital communication which makes messages possible to deliver easier and faster. Joke is one of the interesting topics to spread in the form of broadcast messages. It may contain implicature which makes joke funny and witty. More facts about implicature of jokes which occur in broadcast messages are analyzed in this research. The result conveys such linguistic phenomena in relation to social communication based on gender, culture, and custom.

Meaning and message in language could be delivered by various ways depending on many reasons. In other words, the same meaning could be conveyed by using various kinds of sentences and styles. One of the examples of this phenomenon is the message implied in such a joke. Words and sentences in a joke are arranged in such a specific way to produce humorous effect upon the readers. Apparently, Jokes may not

only be used to give entertainment but also to soften critics or satire so that it does not sound rude and harsh.

As implicature is included into pragmatic analysis, we have to relate the analysis to pragmatic analysis of meaning when we try to analyze the implied meaning of such an utterance or message. Various aspects of external linguistics must be taken into consideration in describing the pragmatic meaning of such an utterance. In short, it can be said that pragmatics is the general study of how context influences the way we interpret utterances. Lyons stated that context determines utterance-meaning at three distinguishable levels in the analysis of text [1]. First, it may tell us what sentence has been uttered – if a sentence has indeed been uttered. Second, it will usually tell us what proposition has been expressed – if a proposition has been expressed. Third, it may serve to tell us that the proposition in question has been expressed with one kind of illocutionary force rather than another. It refers to the understanding that context is relevant to the determination of what is said. Hence, certain context may create implicature based on the aim of the speaker. Cruse defined implicature as propositions or assumptions not encoded, completely or incompletely, in what actually said [2]. Apparently, implicature is often found in broadcast messages and it may produce humorous effect as we can see in the following riddles:

- “U cannot Taste me, until u Undress me?” – Banana
- “U cannot Eat me unless u Lick me” – Ice Cream
- “U cannot Play wid me unless u Blow me” – Balloon
- “U cannot Enjoy me unless u Suck me” – Lollypop
- “U make me Wet & put me in ur Mouth everyday” – Toothbrush
- “U cannot Eat me unless u Spread me” – Butter
- “U cannot Kiss me unless u Praise me” – Women...!!!

The riddle which is one kind of jokes, contains implicature which is related to sex. For instance, the activities of undressing someone before doing sexual intercourse and peeling a banana before eating it are pragmatically similar. Hence, if we comprehend the meaning pragmatically, it is obvious that the riddle contains implicature.

The study of implicature contributes the new perspective of meaning in pragmatics. Zwicky stated that implicatures allow us to introduce ideas into a disposition [3]. Therefore, they are very useful in fulfilling various goals. In addition, Levinson stated that implicature provides some explicit account of how it is possible to mean (in some general sense) more than what is actually ‘said’ (i.e. more than what is literally expressed by the conventional sense of the linguistic expressions uttered) [4]. Hence, implicature is a deeper

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meaning implied in such utterances which is different from what is uttered.

The research of implicature is may be related to culture, custom, and common sense owned by different speech communities. As a matter of fact, the implicature in one speech community could be meant differently in other speech community. Related to this matter, Leech introduces the concept of socio-pragmatics in which the Cooperative Principle and the Politeness Principle operate variably in different cultures or language communities, in different social situations, among different social classes, etc. [5]. Moreover, implicature might be different due to the different aims of the speakers who utter it.

As it is closely related to culture and society, the study on implicature is always developed. People may create various kinds of sentences which contain implicature to produce the witty, funny, entertaining, and interesting utterances. One of the products is a joke.

In digital era, communication becomes easier and faster. Messages are broadcast everywhere by using sophisticated technology in communication. Hence, popular media of social network such as BlackBerry Messenger, Yahoo Messenger, Facebook, Skype, and many others come to existence. Apparently, people use social media not only to deliver formal matters but also to share informal topics like jokes and gossips. Some jokes which are broadcast in social media may contain implicature.

There are more facts about implicature which occur in broadcast messages that are analyzed in this research. The result provides such linguistic phenomena in relation to sociocultural communication. Therefore, the research discusses more phenomena concerning implicature in jokes which are published in social media. Furthermore, the research also seeks for more kinds of implicature and style of jokes. The study leads to the broader study of pragmatics in general.

## II. PURPOSE

Since there are various kinds of jokes found in social media, the research is aimed to describe the style of jokes. Furthermore, the implicature which is contained in joke is also analyzed in the basis of pragmatics. Therefore, the research may give scientific contribution on the study of pragmatics related to the development of information technology and social media communication.

## III. RESEARCH METHOD

The research is aimed to find the style of jokes based on the implicature which is contained in them. Then, the research also discusses the purposes of creating implicature in joke which is published in broadcast messages.

In this research, equivalent method is used to analyze the data. To describe the style of jokes, referential equivalent method is applied. Meanwhile, pragmatic equivalent method is used to analyze the implicature that occurs in jokes published in the form of broadcast messages. The data of the research are taken from BlackBerry Broadcast Messenger and

Facebook as both of them are popular social media which are used by people worldwide.

The appropriate method which is applied to analyze the data is equivalent method. Specifically, the technique which is used to conduct the analysis on this matter is pragmatic equivalent method which analyzes the meaning based on the external factors of linguistics [6]. By using this technique and the appropriate theories of pragmatics, the implicature in jokes are analyzed in detail. Meanwhile, referential equivalent method is applied to classify the styles of joke based on each characteristics.

## IV. FINDINGS

The kinds of implicature found in jokes are divided into conventional implicature and conversational implicature. Cruse clearly proposed the idea of conventional implicature as the name given by some to non-truth-conditional aspects of meaning which are conventionally attached to particular linguistic forms [2]. Hence, the implied message in conventional implicature is commonly understood by such a speech community as it is build based on the convention among the members of the speech community.

Some terms or utterance might contain a particular implied meaning based on the convention of the speech community who create them. It derives what is basically called as conventional implicature. In other words, conventional implicature is such a kind of implicature which is typical for particular language, culture, and society.

The idea of conversational implicature is slightly different from conventional implicature. Generally, conversational implicature is created for certain purposes so that the meaning might be closely related to the context in which it occurs and the speaker who utters it. Cruse explained the criteria to identify conversational implicatures as follows:

- 1) Context dependence. It deals with the phenomena that an expression with a single meaning can give rise to different conversational implicatures in different contexts.
- 2) Defeasibility/cancellability. In fact, conversational implicatures can be cancelled by additional material without contradiction or anomaly.
- 3) Non-detachability. In this case, the same propositional content in the same context will always give rise to the same conversational implicature, in whatever form it is expressed (that is to say, the implicature is tied to meaning, and not to form).
- 4) Calculability. Basically, a conversational implicature must be calculable, using statable general principles, on the basis of conventional meaning together with contextual information [2].

The detailed discussion of pragmatic analysis on jokes in this research covers two aspects. The first aspect to discuss is the classification of the style of jokes found in broadcast messages. Then, the research also analyzes the implicature which occurs in jokes in pragmatics perspective.

## V. DISCUSSION

The analysis of data in this research covers two aspects. The first discussion is concerning the styles of jokes which are classified based on certain categories. In this case, the categories are defined based on the implicature which occurs in jokes. Some appropriate examples are presented to make the discussion clearer and more understandable.

Based on the data which are collected from the social media, the styles of jokes are classified based on some categories. Basically, the categories are determined by analyzing the kinds of implicature which occurs in the jokes. The classification includes gender basic jokes, cultural basic jokes, and jokes describing social phenomena.

### A. Gender Basic Jokes

Jokes may contain implicature which is related to gender. Basically, implicature related to gender could be classified into conventional implicature as the concept of gender is various in different language and culture. In Western culture, women are considered more superior than men in certain ways. It is exemplified in the following joke:

Boss hangs a poster in office.

"I AM THE BOSS DO NOT FORGET"

He returns from lunch, find a slip on his desk.

"Ur wife called, she wants her poster back home....!!

The datum contains implicature related to gender. It obviously describes that a wife is superior upon a husband. In the joke, a wife is symbolized as a boss. Hence, the joke contains the implied message that a husband must obey his wife just like employees obey their boss. In other words, we can say that a wife is more dominant than a husband in a family. A similar example is provided in the following joke which is broadcast in BlackBerry Messenger:

World's shortest Joke

Doctor : Howzur headache

Patient : She's out of town. ;)

The joke implies a message that a wife is often a trouble to a husband. It also describes that in Western culture a wife plays a greater role in the family. Next, the following joke is taken from Facebook. It is the example of a joke which contains implicature related to gender which focuses on a man:



Fig. 1 Gender Joke [7]

The message implied in the joke is that a man tends to seek for more than one woman in his life. Having more than one woman increases the masculinity and prestige of a man.

### B. Cultural Basic Joke

Joke which is created based on cultural aspects may contain conventional implicature which is generally known by people worldwide. The example is provided in the following illustration:



Fig. 2 Scottish Cultural Joke [8]

The illustration describes the culture in Scotland. The joke leads the reader to Scottish traditional clothes called Kilt which is clothes for male with pleats at the rear and it is knee-length. It is a tartan patterned garment which is most often made of woolen cloth. Since Kilt is similar to a female skirt, it makes people confused to determine the toilet based on sex as it is illustrated in Fig. 2. The next illustration of joke which contains implicature related to culture is shown in the following picture taken from Facebook:



Fig. 3 Afghani Cultural Joke [9]

The picture describes how the car is possibly designed for women in Afghanistan. The implicature occurs as in Afghani culture, a woman is not allowed to drive by herself. Moreover, a woman must wear traditional clothes called *Burkha* when she is out of home. *Burkha* which is also known as *Chadri* in Central Asia is an outer cloth which looks like an envelope. It is worn by women in some Islamic traditions to cover almost all parts of their bodies when they appear in public. The face-veil portion is usually a rectangular piece of semi-transparent

cloth whose top side is sewn to corresponding portion of the head-scarf, so that the veil hangs down loose from the scarf, and it can be turned up if a woman wishes to reveal her face (otherwise the *whole* face would be covered). In other case, the *niqab* part can be a side-attached cloth that covers the face below the eyes' region. It is all illustrated by the car in the picture which turns out to be the main topic to burst laughter. Let us compare and find the similarities between the picture of the car and the real *Burkha* shown by Figs. 3 and 4. Thus, Fig. 3 is such kind of satire which implies the message that it is impossible for Afghani women to drive a car by themselves. Somehow, the design of the car produce a humorous effect upon the readers. Apparently, it is such kind of an interesting way to express a satire or even a protest.



Fig. 4 Burqa Cultural Joke [10]

### C. Jokes Describing Social Phenomena

Social phenomena could be expressed by using joke. The following joke contains implicature which describes such a social phenomenon of romantic relationship from time to time:

- 1970's : Love me, but don't touch me.
- 1980's : Touch me, but don't kiss me.
- 1990's : Kiss me, but don't do anything more.
- 2000's : Do anything, but don't tell anyone.

The joke tries to express such a social phenomenon that romantic relationship tends to be sexually more active in every decade. As a matter of fact, people do not care much about social norms anymore nowadays. The other example of implicature which shows social phenomenon is found in the following broadcast joke published in BlackBerry Messenger:

Relationship these days are Harder now because  
 Conversations have become Textings,  
 Arguments have become Phone calls,  
 And  
 Feelings have become Status Updates....

The rapid development of information technology makes communication faster and easier. Nevertheless, it also creates condition in which people hardly conduct a face to face communication. It obviously describes the social phenomena that commonly happen at present.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Jokes which are published as Broadcast messages in social network may contain implicature. Apparently, creating implicature is one of the effective ways to produce humorous

effect. The kinds of implicature found in jokes are classified into conventional implicature and conversational implicature. Then, in detailed analysis, implicature in jokes is divided into implicature related to gender, culture, and social phenomena.

The implicature in jokes is analyzed by taking into consideration some external aspects of linguistics such as social aspect and cultural aspect. Furthermore, context also plays an important role to determine such an implied meaning in jokes.

The further research on implicature of jokes which is related to sociolinguistics is recommended to have more pictures of language in use. The research on implicature may give an important contribution to the study of pragmatics and linguistics in general.

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