



**AN ANALYSIS OF IMPLICATURE  
AS SEEN IN A NUMBER OF INTERNET MEMES**

**THESIS**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of the Problem .....	1
1.2 Identification of the Problems.....	6
1.3 Limitation of the Problem.....	7
1.4 Formulation of the Problem .....	7
1.5 Purpose of the Research.....	7
1.6 Significance of the Research.....	7
<b>CHAPTER II</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS</b> .	<b>9</b>
2.1. Literature Review.....	9
2.1.1. Discourse Analysis.....	9
2.1.2. Conventional Implicature.....	11
2.1.3. Conversational Implicature .....	13
2.1.3.1. Cooperative Principles .....	15
2.1.4. Previous Studies.....	16
2.2. Theoretical Frameworks .....	19
2.2.1. Meaning and Inference .....	19
2.2.2. Presupposition.....	20
2.2.3. Cooperative Principles .....	23
2.2.3.1. The Violation of Gricean Maxims .....	24
2.2.4. Contexts .....	26

2.2.4.1.	Background Knowledge Context .....	28
2.2.5.	Internet Meme .....	29
<b>CHAPTER III_METHOD OF THE RESEARCH.....</b>		<b>32</b>
3.1.	Source of Data.....	33
3.2.	Technique of Collecting Data .....	34
3.3.	Technique of Analyzing Data .....	35
3.4.	Technique of Representing Data.....	36
3.5.	Table of Implicature.....	37
<b>CHAPTER IV_FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS.....</b>		<b>38</b>
4.1	Implicature in a number of Memes .....	38
4.1.1	Masculinity .....	38
4.1.2	Personal Experience.....	41
4.1.3	Loneliness .....	44
4.1.4	Social Events.....	47
4.1.5	False Analogy .....	56
4.1.6	Sarcasm .....	58
4.2	Context Influences .....	60
4.3	Discussions .....	71
4.3.1	Internet Meme and Social Phenomenon .....	72
4.3.2	Internet Meme and Sarcasm.....	72
4.3.3	Internet meme and Satire .....	73
4.3.4	Table of Implicature in Memes and Contexts Influences .....	74
<b>CHAPTER V_CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION .....</b>		<b>88</b>
5.1	Conclusion .....	88
5.2	Suggestion.....	89

**BIBLIOGRAPHY ..... 91**

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Hayqal Idham



# AN ANALYSIS OF IMPLICATURE FOUND IN A NUMBER OF INTERNET MEMES

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## Abstract

The main purpose of internet meme is to entertain the reader but not all people can easily interpret a meme and what the meaning behind that. This research aims at describing implicature or implied meaning in a number of internet memes by using Grice's theory (1975) which focus on implicature and depicting how the contexts influenced the implicatures of the memes. Implicature is used to describe when something is implied or suggested rather than what is merely stated in an utterance or what it originally means. This analysis discusses what is implied in a number of internet memes and which context(s) is involved and how its influence determines the implied meaning of the meme. A total of 20 data have been completely analyzed by the writer. The data are taken from three meme websites; they are *9gag.com*, *knowyourmeme.com* and *memecenter.com*. In this analysis, the writer uses qualitative method. The results show the six points based on its idea and representation; the memes implies (1) masculinity, (2) personal experience, (3) loneliness, (4) social events, (5) false analogy and (6) sarcasm. And, the most memes are dominant with the conventional implicature with the social context's influence.

***Keywords: meme, implicature, conventional implicature, social context***

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Problem

In everyday's life, people always communicate to interact with one another. It is the basic of being a human considering human is a social being that needs society to survive. So it is safe to say that no one can live and survive alone in this world. Communication can be divided into two, the first one is verbal communication and the second one is non-verbal communication. Due to the importance of it, there have been many discoveries that researchers and philosophers had found until today. And there are many ways to convey what is in someone's mind, one of them is through implicature.

It is clear that implicature plays a major role in language change, triggering both syntactic and semantic changes. This happens because people do not always say things directly but tend to imply them. Grice (1975) defined implicature as a technical term in the pragmatics subfield of linguistics, which refers to what is suggested in an utterance, even though neither expressed nor strictly implied (entailed) by the utterance. Based on these definitions, implicature can be defined as unstated meaning by speaker which represents true intention of speaker. Implicature or the implicit meaning of a statement, sentence or utterance can be seen by analyzing it.

Context is needed in order for the implication to work. It requires various factors, for instance, a presupposition between the speaker and the hearer. Presupposition, according to Levinson (2000), concerns the way in which propositions already presumed in a discourse context are usually not stated or questioned, but encoded in a more ‘background’ way. What time the conversation or the statement occurs, whether it is at night, midnight, or noon, where the conversation takes place and which cultural environments influence the utterance. In other words, presupposition is to assume something beforehand.

Specifically, there are two types of implicature. The first one is conversational Implicature and the other one is Conventional Implicature. In conversational implicature, there is a term called as Grice’s cooperative principle. Basically, cooperative principle describes how an effective communication can be achieved in a common daily conversation. Grice then formulated cooperative principle into four conversational maxims. They consist of maxim of relevance, maxim of quality, maxim of quantity and maxim of manner. Each of those maxims serves a specific principle in order to explain how a conversation can be successfully achieved between the speaker and the hearer. Conventional Implicature, on the other hand, is independent of the cooperative principle and its four maxims.

Breaking the rule of cooperative principle or Gricean maxims consist of “flouted” (with the listener being expected to be able to understand the message) maxims and “violated” (with the listener is expected not to know

the message obviously) maxims. Relatively, the violation of cooperative principle can be applied to analyze the implicature of all kind conversations, starting from daily verbal conversation, movies and TV show dialogue, to a textual conversation in the Internet such as text that contained in a picture which termed as Internet Meme. These so called Memes were spreading on the Internet like wild fire. Meme was originally brought up since the vastly increased usage of Internet. Quoted from Karen Schubert's definition in her article "*Bazaar goes bizarre*", "an Internet Meme is an activity, concept, catchphrase or piece of media which spreads, often as mimicry from person to person via the internet". As observed by the writer, a meme can often be extremely hilarious if there were presupposition or common sense between the writer and the reader, but at the same time it can also be sarcastic and often satirical. The humor contained in internet meme exists not only because of the presupposition between author of the meme and the viewer, but it also caused by the implicature contained within the message of the meme.

Furthermore, there are two types of internet meme widely known among internet users. They are image meme and short video meme. But the most popular one is image meme due to ease of access and wide availability. Hence the analyst, in this case, has a special interest and intrigued to analyze the Implicature contained in Image Memes along with the context that influences the implication.

Overall, meme provides a strong new way to combine creativity, art, message, and humor in the internet culture. A meme can be generated by the internet users themselves. They are free to choose which image which suits their idea and what caption do they want to add to express their ideas. According to *pcmag.com*, a well known website, the term Internet meme itself can be existed in the form of an image, video, story or joke that is voluntarily passed from one Internet user to another via e-mail, blogs and social networking sites. Meme is considered as a form of art, Internet memes are created to promote individuals, groups, movies, art, music and products, as well as to perpetrate a hoax or just to be funny. They can disappear in days or last for years.

An example of implicature as seen on meme is shown as follow:



In example (1), judging by the enormous productions of the meme as seen in *9gag.com* and other internet meme sources, this genre of meme is one of the most used meme in the world. This meme is known as "grumpy cat meme" and usually has variants of captions which are made by the meme's website users. This meme, in particular, has a caption which says "life is like a box of chocolates. I don't like chocolate." The implied meaning of the caption is that the meme writer does not like the life he is living.

The person creating this meme intends to use the picture of an angry cat as the emphasis of his statement. An Implicature or implied meaning tends to be influenced by certain context(s). In order to understand the meme, one has to possess mutual background knowledge with the meme creator. The writer is convinced that social context, which refers to the social circumstances, is in play in the influence of the implicature of the meme. It is common knowledge among any people and society that chocolate symbolizes delicacy, sweetness, pleasure and good, positive things. It is also most people's favorite food.

On the other hand, this meme is also influenced by the physical context. The picture on the meme is showing a cat having an unhappy expression or anger. This expression affects what is stated by the writer of the meme and emphasizes the statement, which in this case, discontentment.

Based on the example above, the writer focuses only on analyzing the implicature which is based from Grice's theory of Implicature (1975).

Implicature is one of many means of communication. It is also very dependent upon the context that is in play. On the other hand, internet meme is a kind of social media phenomenon that has begun since the vast usage of internet and has been lasted for years until this day. It is also a new way communicate or to deliver ideology or thoughts to people through a very unique way using picture and a few words or caption. Therefore, the writer finds many data that is related concerning implicature.

## **1.2 Identification of the Problems**

There are two kinds of meme and many aspects of language that can be used in analyzing these Internet Memes. The two kinds of memes are namely short video meme and image meme. On the other hand, there are numerous linguistics theories that can be applied to analyze the data. they consist of Discourse Analysis, Figurative Language, Code Switching, Implicature, Speech Acts. Moreover, contexts such as physical context, social context, etc, can also be put into consideration.

However, the writer in this case focuses only on analyzing the Implicature of the meme. There are two types of implicature. One is conversational implicature and the other is conventional implicature. Due to the richness of implicature that can be found in the data, in this research the writer uses four types of contexts derived from Crabtree (1991) in order to uncover the implied meaning or the Implicature contained within each of the memes.

### **1.3 Limitation of the Problem**

There are many linguistics theories that can be used to analyze the meme. They can be implicature, context, cooperative principle, speech acts, etc. There are also many kinds of meme. they include image meme and short video meme. However, in this research the writer narrowed the analysis of the problem focusing only on analyzing image memes that has hidden meaning using contexts, Grice's theory of implicature and with the help of Grice's theory of maxims.

### **1.4 Formulation of the Problem**

The research questions of this research are shown as follows:

1. What implicature that can be found from the text of Internet meme?
2. What context(s) influence the Implicature of the meme?

### **1.5 Purpose of the Research**

This research aims to accomplish the following purposes:

1. To find out the implicature that is contained in each of the memes
2. To describe the contexts that influence implication of the memes

### **1.6 Significance of the Research**

This research will hopefully give contribution to linguistics field in general, especially to students as well as lecturers of the Faculty of Humanities in Bung Hatta University. The research's result can contribute as additional reference regarding the implicature to the future researchers.



Then, this research will help lecturers in order to give example about the implicature theory to the students and as a thesis sample in future classes.