

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Laughing constitutes one method to become healthy. Researchers find out the advantages of laughing. Those are reducing stress, lowering blood pressure, making us relaxed and happy as well as helping the process of healing. Therefore, laughing is the best medicine and thus makes us live longer. There are various ways to get laugh and one of them is through enjoying a joke.

A joke is something that makes us laugh because it is silly and ridiculous; besides, it is sometimes illogical. There are some kinds of jokes. The first is a political joke. A political joke is a joke which is concerned with satire and usually involves nations, politicians and governments.

The second is a profession joke. The kind of joke is a joke portraying certain professions such as lawyers, doctors, teachers, etc.

The third is an ethnic joke. An ethnic joke is a joke which is intended to make fun of cultures, races, or countries in the world. This type of joke is often racist and frequently offensive but is not intended to hurt or insult the victim. (http://www.ahajokes.com/ethnic_jokes.html)

The fourth is a blonde joke. This joke tells about the stereotypes of blonde people, both women and men. The stereotypes of blonde women that will be revealed in this joke are unintelligent, sexually promiscuous, or both. The blonde jokes are also found as offensive as the other stereotypes jokes are.

The fifth is a religious joke. A religious joke is a joke which tells about religion and God. The joke is also based on the stereotypes associated with people of certain religions. For example: *Nun jokes* and Jewish jokes, joke on classical religious subjects such as crucifixion, Adam and Eve, St. Peter at The Gates, etc. joke that collide with different religious denominations: “A rabbi, a medicine man, and a pastor went fishing...”; letters addressed to God. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joke>)

The sixth is an anti-joke or anti-humor. The form of this joke is usually riddles. Anti-joke or anti-humor is a joke that is not funny; on the contrary, the punchline, the funny part of the joke, does not happen. For example, “Why did the chicken cross the road?” and the answer is “To get to the other side.” The effect of anti-joke is common and mundane. Anti-joke writing usually prefers a full stop to an exclamation mark to make the effect of the joke dry and the tone is not humorous. (<http://www.articleworld.org/index.php/Anti-humor>)

The seventh is a kid joke. A kid joke is a funny joke for people of all ages, either for kids or for adults. The joke is typically made by children and young adults because of their straightforwardness or innocence, which make people laugh. (http://www.ahajokes.com/kids_jokes.html)

The eighth is a practical joke. A practical joke is a joke played by someone to make the victim feel embarrassed, humiliated, or discomfort. (<http://www.answers.com/topic/practical-joke>) The example of a practical joke is she

glued the teacher's book to the desk (Longman, 1998: 1049) or someone put a custard pie in somebody's face.

Last but not least is a dirty joke. "Dirty joke is a joke about sex or something disgusting." (Longman, 2000: 774). They reveal about taboo things and sometimes about sexual activities.

Understanding a joke is not as simple as it appears to be. Many jokes need interpretation of what the speaker or the writer is trying to tell through their utterances. As a result, we need knowledge about it. The knowledge is Pragmatics, which is concerned with the meaning of the writer's or speaker's saying in order that the reader can interpret the meaning. (Yule, 1996: 3) Pragmatics is also needed to help build the funny element of the jokes.

A lot of jokes have implicit meanings and come from the cultures, nations, or groups, which we are not familiar with; accordingly, the role of background knowledge is very significant as it is the way to comprehend a joke. The definition of background knowledge itself is "Our ability to arrive automatically at interpretations of the written and the unsaid". (Yule, 1996: 85) In interpreting jokes, we initially will have to find out the topic of the jokes and then try to find the background knowledge about the particular topic. If we do not have adequate background knowledge about the topic of the jokes, we will not be able to comprehend the jokes thoroughly.

There are some other aspects of Pragmatics to help understand jokes, such as *referring expressions, say something off record, particularized conversational implicatures, and maxims*. Referring expressions identify something to the reader. Say something off record shows 'hints', use metaphor, overstatement, rhetorical questions, being ironic, or use incomplete utterances. Maxim is a rule to make our conversation

required by the other; whereas, particularized conversational implicatures is the further meaning which is not stated and needs certain knowledge to understand it.

To know further about how significant background knowledge and pragmatic aspects in understanding jokes, I intend to analyze, *“The Role of Background Knowledge and Pragmatic Aspects in Understanding Jokes”* in my thesis. By understanding the significant role of background knowledge in jokes and knowing the pragmatic aspects in jokes, I hope the readers know where the pragmatic aspects in jokes and they can comprehend the jokes thoroughly and indirectly they may get information about other cultures, nations, or groups.

Statement of the Problem

The problems that I will analyze:

1. What is the linguistic form that makes the joke funny?
2. What is the role of background knowledge to help understand the joke?
3. What is the role of Pragmatic aspect that helps the joke to become funny?

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of constructing the research are:

1. To know the linguistic form that makes each joke funny.
2. To know the role of background knowledge to help understand the joke.
3. To know the role of Pragmatics aspect that helps the joke to become funny.

Methods of Research

In gathering the data, I look for some jokes in the Internet and magazines. Then I select the jokes which need background knowledge and pragmatic aspect to

understand it. Afterwards, I classify and analyze the jokes. Finally, I write a research report.

Organization of the Thesis

My thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter One is the Introduction, which contains the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is the Theoretical Framework; it deals with the explanation of the linguistic area and the approaches used in analyzing the data. Chapter Three is the analysis of the jokes that I have gathered, and Chapter Four is the Conclusion, in which I write my personal comments and opinions of the findings. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and Appendices.