

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the jokes, I arrive at a conclusion that the role of background knowledge is significant to help us comprehend jokes. It is certain we will not be able to comprehend a joke thoroughly without being aware of the funny element of the joke. Accordingly, we need background knowledge to understand the joke. For example, the joke entitled “The Greedy Texan”, which tells about a Texan who pushes a Mexican out of the plane and says, “Remember the Alamo”. If we do not have any background knowledge about the phrase “Remember the Alamo”, we surely will not understand why the Texan pushes the Mexican and what motivates the Texan to say the phrase. Therefore, the background knowledge plays an important role to know the battle between the Texan and the Mexican known as “Remember the Alamo”. Therefore, we can understand the reason why the Texan throws the Mexican, which makes the joke become funny.

Aside from the background knowledge, the roles of pragmatic aspects are also significant to help us understand the funny elements of the joke. The pragmatic aspects are *referring expressions*, *say something off record*, *particularized conversational implicature* and *maxims*. The joke entitled “Racial Dog Name”, taken

as an example, contains pragmatic aspects such as *referring expressions* which refers to the word 'Nig'.

The pragmatic aspects also make the jokes interesting because jokes have implicit meanings. It needs our interpretation to understand what the joke writers are trying to tell us the funny element of their jokes. For example, the joke which tells about a family goes to Manhattan. The parent is perplexed at the Manhattan people's being busy doing their work. The parent calls Manhattan 'the city that never sleeps'. The parent uses say something off record showing metaphor. In this joke, we need our interpretation to understand the phrase 'the city that never sleeps', which means the Manhattan people are extremely busy as if they do not have enough to sleep.

In particular, it is found that each joke contains different pragmatic aspects. In a political joke, it is found that this joke uses referring expressions, maxim of relevance, say something off record indicating overstate, say something off record indicating rhetorical questions. It is concluded that most of this joke uses the referring expressions and maxim of relevance. It is because the referring expressions identify the nations, the government, or the politician that become the source of the joke. For example, the joke which tells about Bill Clinton's mishearing the word 'Le whisky' to 'Lewinsky'. The referring expression of the joke is 'Le whisky' and 'Lewinsky'. 'Le whisky' refers to a name of alcoholic drink, Whisky, and 'Lewinsky' refers to Bill Clinton's affair. The joke also violates maxim of relevance because the irrelevant topic between Bill Clinton and the waiter.

It is found that the pragmatic aspects in a profession joke are saying something off record showing rhetorical questions, referring expressions, or

maxim of relevance. It is concluded that this joke tends to use maxim of relevance is to build funny element of certain profession because the role of the profession is made to be irrelevant. In the analysis, there are two jokes which violate maxim of relevance but the purpose is different. First, the joke which tells about the bishop's job at church, the irrelevance is built because of the misinterpretation between the ministry and the little boy. The job of bishop that the ministry means is that bishop as a highest priest; on the other hand, the little boy thinks bishop as a piece in chess game. Second, the maxim of relevance in "Looking into Their Eyes" is caused by the driver's diverting the police's accusation. The driver does not want to be blamed for having drunk alcohol so he diverts the police's accusation to making the conversation become irrelevant.

In an ethnic joke, it is found that the pragmatic aspects needed are saying something off record giving 'hints', showing rhetorical questions and ellipsis, referring expressions, or particularized conversational implicatures. It is pointed out that say something off record is often used because it reveals something racist indirectly to refer to the point of culture. The purpose is to make it funny or to compliment themselves indirectly. For example, the joke entitled "Angering the Irishman" tells about three Englishmen, who want to make an Irishman angry. They mock St. Patrick using off record giving 'hints' to make the Irishman aware of the fact that they are mocking him indirectly. Another joke showing say something off record is the joke entitled "Beer Machismo". The Guinness' President's utterance, "Well if you all aren't drinking beer, then neither shall I." shows say something off record using rhetorical question and ellipsis, which indicate that Guinness beer is really 'beer' and different from other beers.

It is found that the pragmatic aspects in a blonde joke are referring expressions, and maxim of quantity. A blonde joke uses referring expressions to refer to the blonde people because it centers on the stereotype of blonde people such as dumbness, reliance on their looks more than their brain and sexually promiscuous. Those characteristics refer to the blonde people. A blonde joke also uses maxim of quantity in order to explain more to the reader how dumb blonde people are.

In a religious joke, it is found that the pragmatic aspects of this joke are referring expressions, say something off record showing rhetorical questions and ironic, or maxim of relevance. A religious joke tends to use say something off record in order to reveal something sensitive concerned with certain religion. For example, the joke about a Catholic priest and a rabbi is prohibited to do. The Catholic priest challenges when the rabbi will eat pork. The rabbi answers he will eat pork when the Catholic priest marries. The joke indicates irony because the Catholic priest must not marry as well as the rabbi is prohibited to eat pork. The rabbi's answer also uses rhetorical questions and not need to be answered.

It is found that the pragmatic aspect in an anti-joke or anti-humor is maxim of relevance. The joke can be categorized in this kind of joke because the punchline, the funny part of a joke, is irrelevant. Maxim of relevance makes the jokes funny because the irrelevance between the participants. However, in the anti-joke the irrelevance sometimes does not make the joke funny because it is a joke that is not funny; on the contrary, the punchline, the funny part of the joke is not humorous.

It is found that the pragmatic aspects in a kid joke are referring expressions and say something off record showing metaphor. The kid joke usually violates

maxim of relevance because children tend to be straightforward, innocent and their mind is different with adult's mind so that maxim of relevance is likely to occur.

In a practical joke, it is found that there is no pragmatic aspect in this joke because the joke is played physically not in verbally while Pragmatics is a study which interprets the speaker's meaning through the speaker's utterances so that there is no pragmatic aspect.

The last is a dirty joke. It is found that the pragmatic aspect of this joke is referring expressions. The referring expressions shows something taboo about sex. For example, the joke entitled "Three Nuns Meet St. Peter". Three nuns die and before entering the purgatory, they have to ask St. Peter's question. Two first nuns answer the question correctly and just one nun left. St. Peter asks "What was the first thing Eve said to Adam?" and the nun answers "Oh my, that's really hard." St. Peter allows her to enter the purgatory. The word '*that's*' refers to two meaning. First, refers to the St. Peter's question. Second, refers to Adam's penis, whereas the meaning 'hard' has two meaning either difficult or not soft.

On the whole, it is found that pragmatic aspects support background knowledge in understanding jokes. The role of background knowledge is significant to know what a joke is about through histories, influential people, certain culture, characteristics of group of people like the Nigger and the blonde people. Meanwhile, the role of pragmatic aspects is to help understand what the participant is trying to tell through their utterances in a joke so that we can understand jokes thoroughly. For example, the pragmatic aspect of the joke, which tells about the assassination of Tsar Alexander II of Russia, is particular conversational implicatures. Through pragmatic aspects, we know that the rabbi's

answer, “Why the Jews?” is to show that the Jews do not kill Tsar Alexander II of Russia and they have nothing to do with the assassination.

I hope this thesis make the readers aware of the significance of the role of background knowledge in understanding jokes as well as the role of pragmatic aspects help and make jokes interesting to read. After reading this thesis, I hope the reader, who is reading a joke, know the background knowledge of that joke and enjoy the joke through pragmatic aspects.