

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Pragmatic may be roughly defined as the study of language use in context (Birner, 2013, p. 2), one of them is speech act itself. In conversation specifically in modern chatting within social media, it is common for speaker to be concerned about how well conveyed a message can be. Features can be used in this type of communication are alphabets, number, symbols, emojis (commonly known as emotion symbol in social media), pictures for descriptive purposes and memes. Memes usually contain picture or illustration and texts which fulfill the purpose of conveying message in its most precise expressive level. At the moment, researcher realizes that even memes can perform illocutionary act, like how normal conversation does. Austin was the first one who wanted to capture the fact that there is more in the function of language than semantics. According to Austin (as cited in Birner, 2013, p. 186), there are three types of acts that can be performed by every utterance: locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act.

As much as words can affect people's thought, meme can do the same thing can even empower the words within it. Many people may see meme as media of humor but it is not as simple as that. Unlike words, meme has illocutionary act with its force boosted by the illustration of the meme itself. To some people, the normal satires might turn out to be very offensive satire in meme and cause them to be actually very offended by it. Due to this reason, it is better that for people to know

that meme does not just act as a feature to offend. Therefore, the researcher attempts to analyze the text within memes.

Discussing about illocutionary act in meme, '*Speech Acts in Written Advertisements: Identification, Classification and Analysis*' by Simon and Cartis, an international article from Procedia, also researches about speech acts. Unlike the journal which aims to analyze type of speech acts on written advertisements, this research aims to analyze types of illocutionary acts in texts typed on the memes. The source for current research is strictly meme, which is in a way unique. Unlike the previous research which relies on classifying on the most specific type of speech act, this research classifies implicated meaning, extracted from the text, with Searle's classification of types of illocutionary in 1976.

This research is necessary to be done because meme is a continuous feature that many people are using it now. The problem with meme is that not everybody can take it properly especially when some people find meme offensive just because someone inserted deliberately offensive message and they just conclude the whole idea of meme is used to offend people. One of these problems is that meme, according to Dyer-Barr in 2010 (as cited in Williams et.al., 2016, p. 424), may contribute to the climate of racial discrimination that can exist in online communities. The "victims" who are experiencing "offenses" from meme will be motivated to cause greater problem in social media thus causing real chaos within the cyber world. As the access to information has been made easy through internet, people who take in the information too seriously will likely to be misled and caused greater chaos in real world. A small misunderstanding of this is like lighting a small

fire to a forest, it needs to be cleared out by all means. The researcher thought of this because power of words is not to be underestimated especially meme possesses ability to convey message at the most precise expressiveness.

Within illocutionary act, an utterance is imbued with illocutionary force or what the researcher prefers calling it “power of words”. Normally, people think that illocutionary force only applies on utterances or live speeches but in reality, that is not entirely true. For instance, when a person reads a certain funny commentary in magazine, the person will definitely laugh because despite it is just a written text. This shows that even written texts possess illocutionary force that humors people. Meme also does the same thing. Like words uttered through conversation, texts inserted within memes also possess illocutionary force and have their own meanings. Meme also has a trait that modifies the illocutionary force.



Figure 1.1.1 The most interesting man in the world

Source: <http://knowyourmeme.com/photos/542533-the-most-interesting-man-in-the-world>

Line	Rule	Current Meme	Implicated Meaning
First Line	I don't always X	I don't always accidentally step on the cat	Stating the unlikely possibility of stepping a cat

Second Line	But When I do, Y	But when I do, I spend the next five minutes giving him an elaborate and thoughtful apology	Promising to performing apologize if situation arise
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The meme “The most interesting man in the world” is part of a series on Advice Animals. The captions that follow are typically two phrases: “I don’t always X” at the top and “But when I do, I Y” at the bottom. The context of this meme is to create anticipation of what people claim will do if they actually do something they don’t usually do. From the picture, we can see that the first line is assertive type of illocutionary act because the person believes that he hardly does so. Unlike the first line which is pretty much the same with the rest of the similar meme, the second line is sometimes different. In this case, the second line is commissive type of illocutionary act rather than assertive type despite the fact that it is just unvoiced texts, this line commits the speaker to do something if it happens again. This categorization is done based on Searle’s 1976 classification.

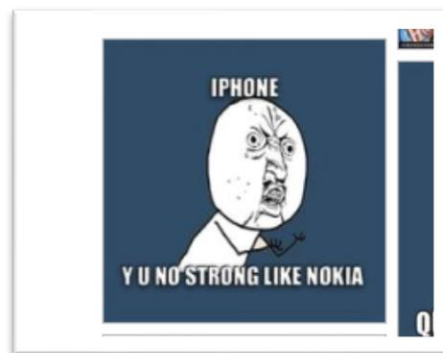


Figure 1.1.2 ‘Y U No’ Guy

Source: <http://knowyourmeme.com/photos/428938-y-u-no-guy>

Text in Meme
 iPhone, Y U No Strong Like Nokia
 (iPhone, why are you not strong like Nokia?)

Implicated Meaning
 Complaining about why iphone is not as durable/strong as nokia

This meme is known as ‘Y U No’ guy which was part of rage comic series and popular back in 2010. The phrase “Y U No” means ‘why didn't you’ or ‘why don't you’ in standard English and is normally followed by “complaint” phrase. The context of this meme is used to bring someone’s attention on a particular subject or issue. Example like this one, it may literally just question, through pragmatic approach, it means about complaining why I-Phone is physically less durable than Nokia which is known to be the most durable phone. An act of complaining is categorized as expressive type. However, the illocutionary force in this case seems to be more powerful than what a normal complain does. This may have to do with the context of the regular use of this meme bringing someone’s attention on the subject. It becomes especially true when I Phone creator is mentioned.

According to the description above, the researcher is interested in finding out more about types of illocutionary acts of meme and their modification of illocutionary force especially from knowyourmeme.com, one of the famous sites that hosts a great number of meme communities and resources. Meme, according to Dawkins (as cited in Díaz, 2013, p. 83), is known as the unit of cultural transmission. By the justification of this definition, it goes without saying that every meme has different types of illocutionary act from one to another. Though every meme is intended to be funny in the end, but each of them has different illocutionary acts despite most of the perlocutionary acts for all memes are to make people laugh or to perform satire against somebody. A meme in use of communication can be various in meaning and intention depend on how it is used and when it is used. It

relies heavily on context since each of them has different context too. It is still unclear to researcher that what types of illocutionary act that can be found in meme.

1.2 Identifications of the Problem

Based on the description of background of the research above, the problems that can be identified above are as following:

1. The meaning of each meme found in “knowyourmeme.com”
2. The types of illocutionary act within each meme found in “knowyourmeme.com” based on Searle
3. The modificationss of illocutionary force done by meme context found in “knowyourmeme.com”

1.3 Limitations of the Problem

Based on the identification of the problem above, the researcher limits the problem in order to make the research more specific. The limitations of the problem are as following:

1. The types of illocutionary act within each meme found in “knowyourmeme.com” based on Searle
2. The modifications of illocutionary force done by meme context found in “knowyourmeme.com”

1.4 Formulations of the Problem

Based on the limitation of the problem listed above, the problems are formulated as following:

1. What are the types of the illocutionary act within each meme found in “knowyourmeme.com” based on Searle?
2. What are the modifications of illocutionary force done by meme context found in “knowyourmeme.com”?

1.5 Objectives of the Research

Based on the formulation of the problem listed above, the researcher is trying to:

1. To find out the types of illocutionary act within each meme found in “knowyourmeme.com” based on Searle
2. To find out the modifications of illocutionary force done by meme context found in “knowyourmeme.com”

1.6 Significance of the Research

The researcher believes that this research has theoretical significance and practical significance. The theoretical significances in this research are to be a contribution to linguistic study, a reference to those who wish to further their research regarding to such topic and a starting research that will lead an opening to new research regarding to analysis of speech act in modern entertainment literature light comic and light novel. As for the practical significances, the researcher hopes

that readers can enlighten those who are not knowledgeable about intention of memes and are able to put in practice in understanding memes in the internet directly.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

Based on what the researcher described in background of the research, the representative key terms that will be commonly encountered by readers are as following:

1. Meme : The unit of cultural transmission (Díaz, 2013, p. 83)
2. Illocutionary act : The act performed in saying something (Riemer, 2010, p. 109)
3. Speech Act : The usage of language to accomplish something is known as speech act (Panenova & Hana, 2011, p. 2)