

PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF INTERNET MEMES ON DISTANT LEARNING

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Original Article

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Abstract

This study is a pragmatic content analysis that explores the internet memes on e-learning or distant learning during the pandemic 2020-2021. The study examines the language and trends of different memes used for distant learning from three perspectives- the teachers, parents, and students. For its framework for analysis, this paper draws on the pragmatic notion of implicature, specifically the quantity implicature used in the memes related to distant learning. The study reveals that there are more meanings implicated in memes which may be meaningful as it is directly related to their context. Since covid was a global phenomenon, everyone went through the same challenges, hence the same meanings must be interpreted as implied by the meme generators. The implicature may be used through different linguistic devices such as sarcasm, irony, or hyperbole, to create a comic effect and convey the message at the same time. This study aims to provide a pragmatic study of the visual and textual nature of these covid-distant-learning memes. In doing so, it aims to establish a framework for future studies- a contrasting study of memes, a semantic and pragmatic view to further explore the nature of the linguistic qualities of internet memes.

Keywords: Memes, pandemic memes, implicature in memes, pragmatics of memes

Introduction

2020 has been recognized as a significant year in history, being hit by the coronavirus pandemic globally. It affected all aspects of life, from normal routine life to interference of work, private life, education, social life and all social norms. World Health Organization reports previous pandemics like the Spanish Flu (1918-1920), Asian Flu (1957-1958), Swine Flu (2009-2010), Ebola (2014-2016), but the way the Covid-19 has affected the world globally, has never seen or heard in history. This created an extraordinary situation, along with medical problems, global lockdowns and quarantine measures were adopted, and people were forced to stay home, cut off from normal social life.

Social media played a significant role during the lockdown globally. Since all communications were mostly through the internet, meme generators addressed the social context through memes, to mitigate the stress levels created by the social cut-off due to the pandemic. According to Karen Schubert (2003), a meme is a concept, a catchphrase that spreads from person to person. One of the very significant areas to get affected was the educational sector as in March 2020 the closure of educational institutions was announced, forcing a deviant means of education- e-learning or distant learning. A lot of challenges were faced by people including teachers, parents, and students. Like all other challenges, these challenges were also addressed through these memes.

Since memes are pragmatic, as the meaning is implicated through the context, the pandemic memes ranged from issues such as covid protocols, health, self-image, and education. There have been previous studies on memes, and how comic effects are created, but not much literature is

associated with the discussion of the thematic study of memes from the pragmatic perspective. This study hence focuses on memes used during covid about distant learning. It further delimits the discussion of the pragmatic notion of Implicature, and how different meanings are implicated through the use of these internet memes. "Implicature is 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", Paul Grice (1975). Hence it can be safe to say that the true unstated intention of a speaker could be the implicature, which is used a lot in internet memes where meanings are implicated through the theme of the picture.

Memes intend to use the visual given to emphasize the statement added. The implicature or meaning implied may be influenced by the context. To comprehend meaning, the background knowledge is required, which needs to be mutual between the reader and meme creator. Different social situations may influence the implicatures used in memes, and hence the covid in 2020 greatly influenced the memes on social media.

Since memes are context-dependent just like implicature, this study focuses on the context of the covid memes on distant learning and discusses what the implicatures may be, and how different meanings may be implicated. According to Kariko, (2016) memes reflect universal emotions like sadness, anger, or other cultural messages. Implicature arises when conversational maxims are either flouted or violated. When more meaning is conveyed in fewer words, this may be the case of quantity implicature- the main aspect of the discussion in the memes of this study.

Literature Review

The pandemic Covid-19 introduced a new style of living, where people had to cope with the "new normal". Within the new normal, worth mentioning is how education got severely affected when the closure of educational systems was announced as early as February and March globally. Access to educational institutions and education itself became difficult and created learning disruptions (Edeh Micheal Onyema et.al, 2020). With the total lockdown and deaths globally education had to evolve in the form of distant learning.

Distant learning

Although distant learning is not a novel concept dating back to 1858, when the University of London offered distant learning for the first time. Distant learning became common and obligatory for everyone during the pandemic due to the strict quarantine, giving rise to e-learning or online learning. According to Shtaleva (2020) With the rise of the complexities of technology, the production field becoming more intellectualized, professions disappearing, and new ones emerging - continuous education, self-education, and lifelong education are in high demand. Distant interactions permit us to develop new opportunities to train and retrain, educationists and students during internal and external study modes (N.R.Shtaleva et.al. 2020). Much of distant learning variables such as teacher's training and student motivation play an important part in learning outcomes which have been one huge concern for the parent body, students, and the teachers during the pandemic online teaching. These concerns have been continuously communicated to the masses with the use of social media.

Social Media

Social media today, has taken over classic media usages like tv and radio. The world wide web was introduced in 1991 which in today's world is called the modern internet or WIFI (The Evolution of Social Media: How did it begin, and Where Could It Go Next? 2020). Smith (2010) affirms how social media can spread information quickly, especially in hard times. He elaborates that a Pew Internet study in 2010 confirmed 31% of adults use online platforms like social networking sites, text

messaging, blogs, etc. This study discusses how the stresses of the pandemic have been mitigated with the use of a new social media platform called memes.

Facebook

This study focuses on the uses of memes during covid-19 on Facebook. Other studies have been made on the use of the language of memes on other platforms like Reddit and Instagram Twitter and 2Go. Mark Zuckerberg invented Facebook in 2004 which offered a means of communication on the internet. Smith (2018) comments on its popularity and reports the platform having by 1017 over 2 billion monthly users and according to Lamidi (2018) over a billion active users daily. Some Nigerian studies have been conducted on the use of memes on Facebook. Ajayati (2018) investigated the use of impoliteness strategies in Facebook posts. Filani (2018) studied humor in Facebook humorous posts.

Memes-A coping mechanism during the pandemic

The attitudes toward online teaching have been mirrored through the use of internet memes on social platforms like Facebook and Instagram. Richard Dawkins coined the term 'meme' in 1976. He considers memes as "viruses of the mind" (Dawkins 1993). In this way, according to Kevin Pauliks (2020), memes tend to transmit and spread. Knobel and Lankshear (2007) affirm that memes are cultural patterns that are contagious and are transmitted to different minds that shape a social group's mentalities. Davidson (2020) informs that a meme has to be retained in the memory for some time to be referred to as a meme. If it stays longer in the memory according to Davidson (2020) it may have more power to spread.

Milner (2012) defines a meme as an amateur artifact that recirculates and remixes by social media participants. Memes may carry traditional and modern definitions. According to Foster (2014), 'a unit of cultural transmission' (Ballard, 2018, p.4) and 'user-generated media online' (Foster, 2014, p.3-4). Hence memes may be the result of shared ideas and existing culture (Ballard, 2018). Foster (2014) confirms that memes have some shared characteristics such as simplicity, humor, and depiction of common people.

The memes that are best adapted or confirmed to the needs of the time tend to survive (Kevin Pauliks, 2020). Sa'ad (2018) believes that the proliferation of memes is because they are easily compensable due to their comic visuals and texts. Crystal Abidin (2020) discusses the role of meme factories like MGAG and SGAG. Commercial memes are used for advertising and hobbyist memes for a selected audience (Abidin, 2020). He further reports how these memes according to the CEO SGAG, Karl, are devised to entertain people who are miserable at home. This notion does confirm the idea that the comic relief of memes has made it easier for the masses to cope with the pandemic depression. Memes serve as a novice form of communication where there is a bond built between the messages and the individual which collectively may demonstrate cultural knowledge (Miltner and Highfield, 2017).

Memes have emerged as a new concept and may be considered a category of humor, (Sa'ad, 2018). Sa'ad (2018) confirms that two factors contribute to the widespread use of memes, the development and use of gadgets and the use of social media, and most of all, the internet users which have enabled people to share experiences immediately. Memes carry humor to mitigate overwhelming circumstances, and aggression and nurture relationships (Kazi, 2018). This study targets the use of humor about the challenges of online teaching and learning through internet memes. Comic relief is considered a function of humor that serves as a coping strategy (Martin, 2007

and Martin and Ford 2018). Kuiper et al (1993) assert the role of humor as a source of reframing negative experiences and providing positive emotions, even though temporarily (Martin, 2007).

Popularity of memes

Memes are most effective because of their brevity and visual representation. They are very quickly understood, related, and shared. According to Husted (2012) memes become a popular social media means because they travel very quickly to their target audience and are very fast evolving. Visual memes are niftier to reach their audience and gain new users efficiently than word memes (Ballard, 2018, p.13). It is believed that if memes can interact with their users, it can improve their success (Husted, 2012).

Furthermore, hyperlinks used in memes for sharing may be more engaging (Husted, 2012, p. 18). Some other important factors also contribute to the popularity of memes, their easy searchability, persistence, replicability, and an invisible audience (Rintel, 2013). Discursive exchanges regarding societal events are facilitated through memes, hence the humor in memes allows the audience to remain critically distant from the topic (Moebius, 2018, pp. 6f.)

Popular themes used in memes

At the onset of the Covid-19, the meme trend was more aligned with safety protocol, such memes were tagged as "crisis memes" (Rintel, 2013 p. 253). Initially, some memes mirrored the fear and anxiety of the masses in all different fields, ranging from health care workers, with excessive mask-wearing, to the shortage of toilet rolls in the supermarkets. Memes about social distancing and quarantine became common and further ranged in political topics, cultural topics, educational and common life issues like beauty, hygiene or weight gain. Lately, some research investigating memes has also been detected, some with political issues being discussed (Hatab, 2016); (Yang, & Jiang, 2015). Zubaida (2018) states that memes may not only be used for humor or satire, but also for some other specific purpose, like to persuade or for a campaign. This claim is validated in this research where distant learning memes are discussed which may be used for persuasion and motivation in addition to their humor.

Aubrey (2020) asserts how memes have played a major role in helping people to accept the new pandemic situation and how unusual circumstances have become, and most importantly that they are not alone. Researchers have studied that memes occurred timely as meme cycles (Tsafi Sebba-Elran, 2020), while discussing pandemic memes in Israel. Researchers believe that memes may be a blend of images and metaphors, can influence reality perception like the coronavirus, its threats, and solutions, and help to create social constructions (Blank2013, Borzsei 2013; Knobel and Lankshear 2005; Kuipers 2002: 461-465; Laineste and Voolaid 2016). According to Tsafi Sebba-Elran (2020), memes can be put into different categories, depending on their location, genre, topic, character, etc.

Mundi Rahayu (2021) has studied youth responses to covid protocol memes. Shifman (2014) elaborates on the language of memes called memetics, that they require the understanding and skills of subcultural standards. Boudana (2017) studied that iconic pictures have a tendency to get replicated, mutated, and spread.

Memes about distant learning appeared after the complete shutdown of the educational institutions in March 2020. There have not been many types of research discussing only a particular themed meme. Some researchers have been made to study gender roles on Instagram memes (Ahmed Al-Rawi, 2021). An investigation was conducted by Gal, Shifman and Kampf (2016) in which they studied 200 video memes, after 'it gets better' got viral – a video made in response to gay teen

suicide due to cyber-bullying. The majority of the memes, in the study of Shifman, & Kampf (2016) showed traditional gender roles. There has been an increase on the research of memes lately. Research on the language of memes (Davidson 2009; De la Rosa-Carrillo 2015), identity and discourse through internet memes (Milner 2012) cultural logic in memes (Shifman 2014)

Some memes focused on simpler issues, such as having a haircut. Michael G. Flaherty (2021) raises issues of self and time. He calls missing a haircut 'tip of the iceberg'. Ervin Goffman in his book *The Presentation of Self In Everyday Life* mentions self-being like a theatrical performance. But the quarantine put restrictions to any social interactions where no one could perform their social parts. Goffman believes that people pretend their identities when they have a different audience. But according to him, the pandemic distorted people's sense of time and created problems for people to stage themselves as these are interwoven (Michael G. Flaherty, 2021). Self-portrayal is also linked to the role of teachers in online memes. Memes following the theme of education have exploited different perspectives. From the teacher's perspective, the student's perspective, and the parent's perspective. This study focuses on all three angles.

Pragmatics in memes

Pragmatics according to Yule (2006, 112) is the study of what is meant by speakers and stresses on how pragmatics not only comprehends the meanings of words but also recognizes what is meant by speakers in their utterances. Pragmatics also takes into consideration what is intended in a conversation.

The popularity and widespread of memes are mainly due to the nature of their visual and textual content. The heavy use of metaphors, irony, and satire make issues faced in pandemics relatable and mitigate their effects as well. These figurative devices are used to say one thing with a different implied meaning. These facilitate the creation of humor in memes, making them one of the most popular social media visual content.

Grundlingh (2017) argues that memes are speech acts, for this reason, they are easily communicated and comprehended. Since memes contain both text and visuals (facial expressions also known as reaction shots) they can be considered non-verbal communication (Grundlingh, 2017). He further adds that speech act theories can be applied to memes (Grundlingh, 2017) as long as their context is comprehensible. He further asserts that the visuals in the memes provide the non-verbal context, it provides the background which is necessary to correctly interpret the meme (Grundlingh, 2017).

According to a study by Temitope Michael Ajayi (2020), it was first pointed out that more focus has been on the linguistic use of memes and less attention is given to the pragmatics of memes. Temitope Michael Ajayi (2020) proposed the study of The Common Ground Theory in Facebook memes as they exhibit sociocultural realities.

This study focuses on the pragmatics of Facebook memes in the time of the pandemic, further delimiting the use of memes for distant learning only. This study will further explore the use of implicature within distant learning memes used on Facebook during Covid-19. Paul Grice introduced the notion of Implicature in 1975. According to Grice, what is meant goes beyond what is said, which is used as a thematic framework for his study. There have been studies on maxims, but who implicature is different than maxims is, the implicated meaning conveyed is the implicature whereas maxims are the principles of a cooperative principle (P H Grice, 1975). The quantity implicature will be explored in this study, discussing how more meanings are conveyed or inferred than stated

linguistically. This research aims at the use of implicature in memes uploaded on Facebook from 2020 to 2021 on the subject of distant learning. It further elaborates on how different meanings are implicated in not so many words used in the memes. This study has been conducted to address the following research question:

1. How is implicature of quantity used in online memes to convey various themes?

Methodology

Research Design

We used the qualitative method for data analysis; hence the interpretivist paradigm is followed. Since according to this ideology, the reality is considered to have multiple layers, so is the study of memes considered to have multiple meanings and interpretations. Memes are considered to be multifaceted. Studying these phenomena in memes, it will help the researcher interpret and interact with the social context and the pandemic for these memes. They carry cultural concepts, like ideas, practices, or rituals; physical actions such as dances or planking and used for language itself as language is memetic, (Will Styler, 2018). The research will focus on how people interpret memes according to their social environment. The research studies the content of memes related to distant learning during Covid-19.

This research uses a pragmatic approach of Implicature coined by H.P. Grice in 1975. Paul Grice proposed the cooperative principle of conversation. Since memes are considered conversational, hence this study will focus on the use of the Quantity Implicature. According to Grice, interlocutors may communicate and infer more information than what is explicitly said. This may result in flouting the maxim of quantity, hence the quantity implicature. This study presents a more detailed content analysis of Facebook memes relating to distant learning during Covid-19. Three perspectives are discussed, attitudes from the teacher's perspective, parent's perspective, and student's perspective respectively.

Data Collection

To conduct this study, fifteen memes were manually extracted from the social media platform Facebook, related to distant learning during the covid-19. Purposive sampling has been used which is a non-probability sampling method. This may help the researcher to obtain a representative sample by using their sound judgment, which saves them time. According to Neetij Rai (2015), the main aim of purposive sampling is to take under focus some main characteristics of a population that may interest the study to best answer their research questions. These memes were extracted from public profiles, so no copyrights would be challenged. The time interval ranged from the years 2020 to 2021. The extracted memes were filtered through a thematic search on the web through google search, to fit the category of the study-distant learning in covid-19.

Theoretical Framework

In our analysis of memes, we focus on the pragmatics of memes, specifically how implicature is used, whether implicature is used through irony, sarcasm, or hyperbole, and how humor is created with the use of implicature in the memes. An implicature is something that is suggested or implied in an utterance. Implicatures are considered to convey more meaning than an explicit utterance. According to L.R. Horn, 'What a speaker intends to communicate is characteristically far richer than what she directly expresses; linguistic meaning radically underdetermines the message conveyed and understood. It is considered a procedure where interpretations or assumptions are made through what is conveyed. The Quantity Implicature is explored, where more meanings are conveyed through memes, or more meanings are inferred through meme pictures and language use.

Data Analysis

The use of internet memes has been a very acceptable means of communication, mainly due to the use of humor, a much-needed element during the pandemic lockdown. The careful collection of memes belonging to the theme of distant learning addresses how they mean different or mean more than is explicit in the words or the pictures used. According to Patton (1990), the generation of samples in qualitative research is often done purposefully, that is in a non-random way, concerning the study under investigation. These memes may also be inferred differently by the audience, but are all context-bound, sharing the same theme of e-learning. The following memes may use different linguistic devices to implicate meanings. The memes are sorted into different themes.

Parental role in distant learning

The following meme portrays a parent in a teacher's role. This meme was uploaded on March 23rd, 2020. Just when the educational institutions were declared to close down, the educational sector had to evolve, to cope with the new situation attributed to the Covid-19.

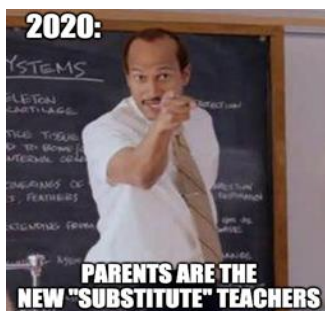


Fig.1 Parental Role in memes

Here the word "substitute" may be used as sarcasm, which is in truth a fact. The person pointing a finger may imply a role reversal, so parents would taste how it is like to teach children- not as easy as one would think. The quantity implicature is applicable since a lot more meaning is inferred than stated explicitly. This again reveals the actual context, how parents did feel, or what they went through to teach their children at home.

My kids are not listening to my home instructions So maybe it's not the "teacher's fault" after all?



Fig.2 Parental anguish in memes

This meme also shows the agony of the parents during covid-19 distant learning. This meme was uploaded on 24th March 2020. Parents are shown to be complaining and in agony, through hyperbole, the humor is created. The expression of the cat justifies, how now parents would realize that when students don't listen, it is not always the teacher who needs to be blamed. Hence there is probably an underlying message being sent across, the sharing of responsibility to teach children amongst teachers and parents. Again, the quantity implicature is used.



Fig 3. Perspectives of parents and people with no children

This meme was uploaded in September 2020. Here two categories of people are shown: people with children and people with no children. The parents are shown as being fatigued whereas people who do not have children are seemingly enjoying life, smiling and smirking probably at parents who are dealing with online teaching. Again, quantity implicature applies, as more meaning is conveyed in this meme as well. A meme can also be grounded, in a specific cultural context as displayed in this meme. The iconicity of the meme relies on the facial expressions and the situation.



Fig 4. Parents as educators during Covid

This meme is vividly hyperbolic, stressing the implicature of how homeschooling during the covid-19 lockdown affected parents with the fact of aging increasing in pace exaggerated. This meme is strongly iconic with its visual of an old lady shown as a 40-year-old and was uploaded in July 2021. It is funny how these memes exaggerate a fact, the difficulty parents faced, hence minimizing some stress levels through these humorous memes. The meaning conveyed may be simple, yet adhering to a mutual problem, faced globally.



Fig. 5 Parent's emotional state at school reopening

This meme was uploaded on September 2021, finally after the Covid-19 vaccine, and the opening of the educational institutions. The all caps FINALLY stresses how parents have been waiting more than anything, for schools to reopen. This hyperbolic expression adds humor and

empathizes with the teachers at the same time. There is no doubt the quarantine was a very challenging time during the Covid-19, where these humorous memes were used to minimize stresses faced by people in all cultures across the globe. The quantitative implicature applies. These memes also show how attitudes of parents kept changing, after a long battle with homeschooling, parents were thankful, the quarantine was over and normal education resumed.

Student role in distant learning



Fig 6. Students' online learning experience

Memes from the student's perspectives have been seen to be just as humorous. This meme was uploaded in April 2020, implying how students did not like the new learning method i.e, e-learning. Sometimes memes may make simple assertions as in this example. The picture itself here is hyperbolic, where both the children appear to be super excited, which contradicts the actual e-learning scenario. Here the reason for this excitement could also mean the children not being monitored by the teachers physically, hence enjoying an autonomous situation. The quantity implicature fits, as a lot of meanings can be implicated. It may also implicate that kids do not enjoy online learning, as the words suggest, but the image contradicts the words. Sometimes memes can be more abstract and multiple implicatures may be extracted.



Fig 7. Student's behavior related to e-learning

This meme was uploaded on February 2021. It shows the attitudes of students during the quarantine time. Taking studies seriously has been a global issue and is revealed through this meme. Here irony is used, how teachers and their efforts were not taken seriously during distant learning in Covid-19. It may implicate the students not taking a class seriously because the teacher is not physically present, to check on the students like in an actual physical class. The cat may hear some sounds, and on realizing going back to sleep may be taken as irony too, as being partly true.

Classes online

Teacher: How can I turn up the volume?

Me: Press Atl +F4

Teacher:
disconnects

Classmate:



Fig 8. Students more successful in the digital mode of learning than the educators

This meme was uploaded in March 2020, revealing how teachers had to face technical issues, being ridiculed by the student body, and the next generation being more tech-savvy than the mentors. The quantity implicature stresses the fact that educational institutes had to provide computer literacy training to their faculty, to meet the new trends and needs of the modern e-learning situation. Once the teachers did manage to become technically proficient, the fingers being raised ceased, and also learning was taken seriously.



Fig 9. The students learning experience during e-learning in Covid

This meme was uploaded on May 4th, 2020. A blank page shown in the picture implies that students have learned nothing during their online classes. Here again hyperbole or irony creates humor and the implicature, where a lot more is conveyed, the efforts of the parents and teachers being futile, rendering a failed learning experience during covid-19, according to this meme. There is no doubt, how much students suffered, especially younger children, who continuously required parent support at home. The language of memes can be used productively and creatively with the use of these figurative devices that help in creating the implicature for a comic effect.



Fig 10. Student's maturation process during the distant learning period

This meme shows children returning to schools after the corona lockdown. This meme was uploaded in July 2021, exaggerating how children have aged so much during the lockdown. This may just express a feeling. The quantity implicature here may be explained through the meaning conveyed that it was not only a stressful time for the parents or teachers but the students also. It also stresses how a healthy learning environment is important to nurture children. Social human interactions play a greater role in children's lives than acknowledged. Memes were also uploaded from the teacher's perspective. Sometimes they can be more abstract and not too easily inferred. This meme was uploaded in April 2020.

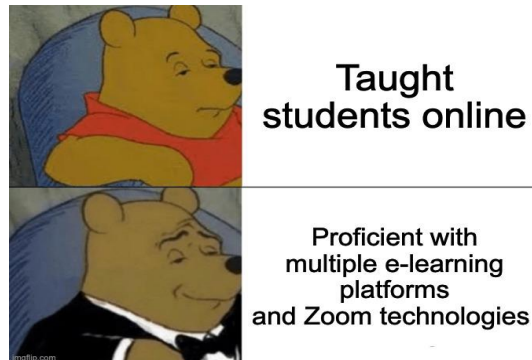


Fig 11. Teacher's role in distant learning

It reveals the teacher's attitudes, showing a dull and bored teacher without a one-to-one teaching experience, yet the learning and training achieved to make the teachers feel accomplished, shown by the more confident and better dressed Winnie the Pooh, implying changed attitudes of the teachers through the use of hyperbole in this meme. The dramatic element is parodied with sarcasm and implicature.

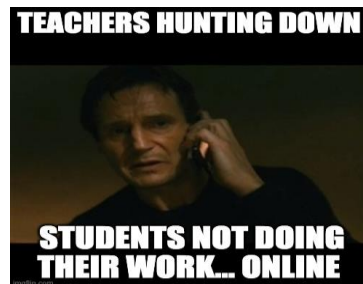


Fig 12. Teacher's facing challenges

This meme was uploaded in May 2020 showing the challenges teachers had to face. This meme is taken from a movie clip, showing a desperate teacher 'hunting' the students. The use of hyperbole here creates humor, setting a mediating tone, during the hard times faced by people in the pandemic era. It has been a struggle for teachers to get work done from the students, delaying meeting deadlines and course coverage being some of the main problems faced by the teachers during distant learning in Covid-19.

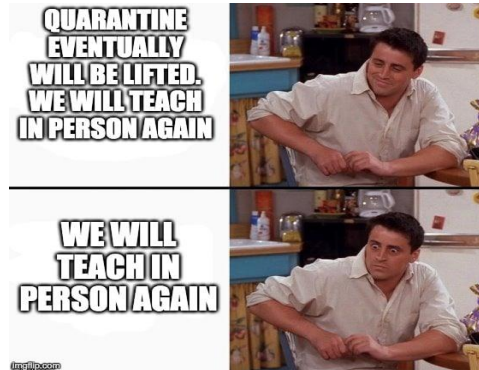


Fig 13. Teachers getting used to the new method of teaching

This meme was uploaded in February 2021, after almost an entire year of quarantine, teachers became habitual of the new educational system. Here the expressions speak louder than words. Realizing the quarantine being lifted makes the teacher happy, but then realizing that teaching will be resumed the conventional way, astounds and worries the teacher. Here two meanings can be implied, the pain of getting dressed and leaving the comfort of their homes, and secondly, dealing with students face to face realizing that homeschooling was not that bad an experience after all. Also adding that the teachers may finally have gotten used to the new system of distant learning.

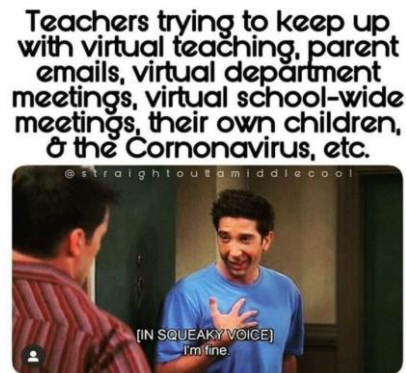


Fig 14. Teacher's mental state during virtual teaching

This meme borrows a scene from the comedy sitcom FRIENDS. It shows one character, as a teacher- justifying himself to the other character that he is fine. In a squeaky voice, emphasizing that he is not actually. According to the quantity implicature, again a lot is being conveyed than what the words imply. The challenges faced by teachers during the lockdown were uncountable. From learning virtual teaching methods, answering parent queries, school conferences, and also handling their personal lives, hence the character looks disoriented but says that he's fine.



Fig 15. Teacher's loss of control over students

This meme was uploaded in March 2021, comparing how once in a normal class teachers would rebuke students to use their phones, but during the lockdown, they emphasized using their gadgets, as learning was completely gadget dependent. The student body is shown to be laughing at the new scenario, also implicating how teachers may not be able to control the students since they are no longer physically present during the distant learning times.

An overview of the significant findings of the study shows that these memes as mentioned in previous studies do help to mitigate the severity of Covid-19 depression with their humor (Asma Zahoor, 2020). The use of implicature through hyperbole, sarcasm, or irony implies more meanings than uttered by actual words.

CONCLUSION

The use of internet memes has been used long before the Covid-19. Memes are a means of communication, which worked very well during the isolation time in the pandemic, serving as a one-sided conversation. A plethora of themes can be distinguished amongst the one-year time frame of Covid-19 from January 2020 to April 2021. This study focuses on the theme of distant learning from three perspectives, the teachers, the parents, and the students. The researcher has targeted a content analysis from the pragmatic view discussing the use of pragmatic implicature.

The objectives have been gained successfully by the application of Gricean Implicature in this study. This study discusses how Facebook memes imply different meanings, and how these meanings are inferred by the reader according to their intention. Furthermore, it also discusses how implicature is used, focusing on the use of quantitative implicature through the use of hyperbole, sarcasm, or irony. These memes are affected by the context, how education was affected by the pandemic, and how education affected the students, the parents, and the teachers.

After the data is analyzed, it is concluded that every meme carries an element of humor. Almost all the memes use either hyperbolic expressions, sarcasm, or ironic phrases to implicate meanings. In addition, the visuals used, such as funny facial expressions, comparative pictures like before and after situations, or exaggerated emotions depict the implicatures used as well. All the implicatures though are connected, through a common theme, that of distant learning during the Covid-19.

This also stresses the effects of the context on the generating of memes. These memes are easily inferred by the readers, mostly because the pandemic was global, and everyone was going through the same situation worldwide. Globally educational institutions closed down, and people faced challenges in all fields. In education, distant learning continued, where everyone had to learn to

cope with the new digital mode of learning. The challenges, behavioral reactions, and attitudes were well addressed in the memes as discussed in this study.

This study concludes on how internet memes are a powerful means of communication and how far they played a role in managing the stress levels of people during Covid quarantine. The memes use implicature that is context-dependent, they may be considered as a weapon to bring out humor (Nova Rina, 2020). There have been recent studies of internet memes discussing pragmatics or semantics or semiotics of the memes. The memes are positively accepted because of the use of humor. The memes used on social networks reflect universal emotions with contained humor (Kariko, 2016; Putra & Triyono, 2018).

The pandemic no doubt has been a challenging time for people globally, yet education had been one of the lesser problems since the main issue was health and fatality. These memes may also be suggestive of advising the parents, students, and teachers to not take their problems faced so seriously, as e-learning proposed solutions, and these three bodies accustomed themselves to the new type of learning and trained themselves to become tech-savvy towards the end of the isolation time, resorting back to normal face to face education with the reopening of the educational institutions.

The implication of this study is the qualitative analysis of Facebook memes. Future studies can be carried out discussing other pragmatic notions such as presupposition or the use of deixis in the Covid-19 memes about distant learning. This study can provide solid help for further investigation of the pragmatics of internet memes.

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