

**IMPLICATURES AND PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS OF
SARCASTIC MEMES ON X**

THESIS

By:
Qurrotul Aini
NIM 220302110142



**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM
MALANG
2026**

IMPLICATURES AND PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS OF SARCASTIC MEMES ON X

THESIS

Presented to
Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.)

By:
Qurrotul Aini
NIM 220302110142

Advisor:
Dr. Meinarni Susilowati, M.Ed.
NIP 196705031999032005



**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM
MALANG
2026**

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled **“Implicatures and Pragmatic Functions of Sarcastic Memes on X”** is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

Malang, 10 Juni 2026

The Researcher



Qurrotul Aini

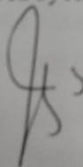
NIM 220302110142

APPROVAL SHEET

This is to certify that Qurrotul Aini's thesis entitled **Implicatures and Pragmatic Functions of Sarcastic Memes on X** has been approved for thesis examination at the Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, as one of the requirements for the degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.).

Malang, 10 Juni 2026

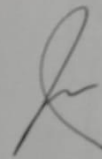
Approved by Advisor,



Dr. Meinarni Susilowati, M.Ed.

NIP 196705031999032005

Head of English Literature Department,



Dr. Agwin Degaf, M.A.

NIP 198805232015031004

Acknowledged by Dean,




Prof. Dr. Anisul, M.Ag.
NIP 197411042003121003

LEGITIMATION SHEET

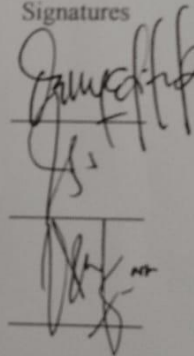
This is to certify that Qurrotul Aini's thesis entitled **Implicatures and Pragmatic Functions of Sarcastic Memes on X** has been approved by the Board of Examiners as one of the requirements for the degree of *Sarjana Sastra (S.S)* in the Department of English Literature.

Malang, 10 Juni 2026

Board of Examiners

1. Deny Efiti Nur Rakhmawati, M.Pd
NIP 198505302009122006
2. Dr. Meinarni Susilowati, M.Ed
NIP 196705031999032005
3. Vita Nur Santi, M.Pd
NIP 198306192011012008

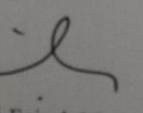
Signatures



Approved by

Dean of the Faculty of Humanities,




Dr. M. Faisol, M.Ag.
NIP 198110011012003121003

MOTTO

“Long story short, I survived.”
(Taylor Swift – Long Story Short)

*“Just because one day out of 365 feels bad
doesn’t mean your whole life is ruined.”*
(Ahn Keonho)

DEDICATION

With deep gratitude for the completion of this thesis, I dedicate this work to my beloved parents, my younger sibling, my entire family, myself, and everyone who has consistently offered me support, prayers, and encouragement throughout the process of completing this thesis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With deep gratitude, I offer my heartfelt thanks to Allah SWT for all his mercy, blessings, love, and assistance, which have always accompanied me every step of the way. All this is possible with the will and permission of Allah SWT. All praise is due to his will and permission that we provided me with good health and patience to go through many processes during the academic period which have finally resulted in the success of my thesis. It should be admitted that many difficulties arose during the process of preparing this thesis but with the help of Allah SWT, I managed to overcome all these processes and reach the final stage.

In addition to this, I would like to express my profound gratitude to the Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University of Malang, specifically to the Faculty of Humanities and the English Literature department where I was able to learn, develop, and accumulate a lot of experience during my studies. The conducive study atmosphere, assistance from the lecturers, and diverse learning opportunities have helped me a lot in my intellectual and personal growth.

I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Meinarni Susilowati, M.Ed., who has been kind enough to take out her time, effort, and mind in directing me during the process of writing this thesis. Not only did the directions, feedback, critique, and encouragement help me finish this study, but also taught me a lot of important things about the research and writing process. Her willingness to guide me despite her very tight schedule was an act of support that made me feel all the difference in the world.

I would also like to express my appreciation to Prof. Dr. Mudjia Rahardjo, M.Si., who acted as the academic supervisor during the Proposal Seminar, for offering a number of suggestions and criticisms which have been very useful in the formulation of this research work. The insights and criticism that he offered not only formed the basis of reflections but also helped me improve on the research.

In addition to that, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the examiners of this thesis, Deny Efiti Nur Rakhmawati, M.Ed., and Vita Nur Santi, M.Ed., for taking their valuable time in reviewing, critiquing, and suggesting improvements for this thesis. Their suggestions have indeed helped this thesis to become a better and superior work of academic research.

I dedicate this heartfelt thanks to my dear parents. Thanks to all the love, affection, prayers, sacrifice, support, and confidence that you have been giving me since childhood till today. It is impossible to measure up the struggle and sincerity of my dear parents in all phases of my life. There are prayers and sacrifices behind each success which are made without expecting anything in return. This thesis is dedicated to show my gratitude and appreciation towards my parents.

Additionally, I want to thank my friends for being there for me whenever I needed someone to encourage, assist, and support me while completing this thesis. They have been a great source of motivation that has kept me going and made me work hard to complete this research. Their help in different ways including

assisting in academic discussion, information sharing, and moral support during tough times has been invaluable to me and I will not forget about it.

Last but not least, I would like to show my appreciation to BABYMONSTER, CORTIS, especially Zhao Yufan, as well as to Wanna One. During the process of thesis writing that involves revisions, deadlines, and fatigue, their art served as an escape, allowing me to restore my energy and get motivated to move forward with the process. Their songs, shows, and determination helped me feel better during those moments when I was tired and lacked the motivation to keep going. In particular, Wanna One's comeback after seven years of disbandment was an unexpectedly joyful moment during the most hectic period of thesis completion. It somehow made me realize that even the longest wait can end up in something wonderful. Even though they may never see this, I still wanted to say thank you for being a source of power and healing during the thesis journey.

The Researcher

Qurrotul Aini

ABSTRACT

Aini, Qurrotul (2026). *Implicatures and Pragmatic Functions of Sarcastic Memes on X*. Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Advisor: Dr. Meinarni Susilowati, M.Ed.

Keywords: Pragmatic, Sarcastic Meme, Implicature, X

Sarcastic memes have increasingly emerged as one of the common ways through which people can communicate their attitudes, opinions, and experiences indirectly on social media. In contrast to direct communication where the meanings of messages are explicitly defined, the meanings of sarcastic memes depend on the contexts in which they are used as well as the understanding of such meanings by the audience. Hence, this research aims to examine how sarcastic meanings emerge in some specific memes on X and identify the pragmatic functions associated with such meanings. Qualitative descriptive research design will be adopted. The memes have been chosen via purposive sampling according to some selection criteria, including such characteristics as sarcasm, interaction of words and images, and presence of contextual information for their interpretation. The analysis was conducted according to the following stages: identifying the literal meaning of each meme, examining the relationship between textual and visual elements, interpreting the implicatures that emerged from their interaction, identifying the sarcastic meanings constructed through those implicatures, and determining the pragmatic functions realized through the sarcastic meanings. The results indicate that the sarcastic meaning is not transferred directly but constructed in the interaction of verbal and visual components and contexts. Implicature is a key factor in allowing readers to understand those meanings that are implied in memes but are not explicitly expressed. By contextualizing this meme, the reader will be able to deduce the sarcastic meaning behind it, which differs from the actual meaning conveyed. Moreover, such a finding highlights two pragmatic roles fulfilled by this sarcasm. Expressive purpose is utilized by users in order to express their feelings, attitudes, and judgments towards particular occurrences, whereas the humor purpose enables the user to give their criticisms and undesirable experiences in an enjoyable manner.

مستخلص البحث

عيني، قرط القرن (2026). الدلالات والوظائف التداولية للميمات الساخرة على إكس. أطروحة. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية في مالانغ، مشرف: الدكتور مينارني سوسيلواتي، ماجستير في التربية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: براغماتية، ميم ساخر، تداعيات، تويتر

تزداد ظهور الميمات الساخرة كواحدة من الطرق الشائعة التي يستخدمها الناس للتعبير عن مواقفهم وآرائهم وتجاربهم بشكل غير مباشر على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي. على عكس التواصل المباشر حيث يتم توضيح معنى الرسالة بشكل صريح، يعتمد معنى الميمات الساخرة على سياق استخدامها وفهم الجمهور لذلك المعنى. لذلك، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى دراسة كيفية ظهور المعنى الساخر في بعض الميمات المحددة على X وتحديد الوظائف البراغماتية المرتبطة بهذا المعنى. سيتم استخدام تصميم بحث وصفي نوعي. تم اختيار هذه الميمات عن طريق أخذ عينات هادفة بناءً على عدة معايير، بما في ذلك الخصائص مثل السخرية، وتفاعل الكلمات والصور، ووجود معلومات سياقية لتفسيرها. تم إجراء التحليل بناءً على المراحل التالية: تحديد المعنى الحرفي لكل ميم، وفحص العلاقة بين العناصر النصية والبصرية، وتفسير الدلالات الضمنية التي نشأت من تفاعلها، وتحديد المعاني الساخرة التي تم إنشاؤها من خلال تلك الدلالات، وتحديد الوظائف العملية المحققة من خلال المعاني الساخرة. أظهرت النتائج أن المعنى الساخر لا يُنقل مباشرة بل يُبنى من خلال تفاعل المكونات اللفظية والبصرية وسياقها. تصبح التضمينات من خلال الحوار مهمة للسماح بتفسير المعنى الضمني للرسالة الحرفية. التلميح هو عامل رئيسي يسمح للقراء بفهم المعاني التي تلمح في الميمات لكنها ليست معبر عنها صراحة. من خلال وضع هذا الميم في سياقه، سيتمكن القارئ من استنتاج المعنى الساخر وراءه، والذي يختلف عن المعنى الفعلي المراد نقله. علاوة على ذلك، يبرز هذا الاكتشاف دورين تحويليين يؤديهما هذا السخرية. الهدف التعبيري يستخدمه المستخدمون للتعبير عن مشاعرهم ومواقفهم وتقييمهم لأحداث معينة، بينما الهدف الفكاهي يتيح للمستخدمين نقل النقد والتجارب غير السارة بطريقة مسلية.

ABSTRAK

Aini, Qurrotul (2026). *Implikatur dan Fungsi Pragmatik Meme Sarkastik di X*. Skripsi. Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Pembimbing: Dr. Meinarni Susilowati, M.Ed.

Kata Kunci: Pragmatik, Meme Sarkastik, Implikatur, X

Meme sarkastik semakin muncul sebagai salah satu cara umum bagi orang untuk menyampaikan sikap, pendapat, dan pengalaman mereka secara tidak langsung di media sosial. Berbeda dengan komunikasi langsung di mana makna pesan dijelaskan secara eksplisit, makna meme sarkastik bergantung pada konteks penggunaannya serta pemahaman audiens terhadap makna tersebut. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meneliti bagaimana makna sarkastik muncul dalam beberapa meme tertentu di X dan mengidentifikasi fungsi pragmatis yang terkait dengan makna tersebut. Desain penelitian deskriptif kualitatif akan digunakan. Meme-meme tersebut dipilih melalui purposive sampling berdasarkan beberapa kriteria, termasuk karakteristik seperti sarkasme, interaksi kata dan gambar, dan adanya informasi kontekstual untuk interpretasinya. Analisis dilakukan berdasarkan tahap-tahap berikut: mengidentifikasi makna harfiah dari setiap meme, memeriksa hubungan antara elemen teks dan visual, menafsirkan implikatur yang muncul dari interaksi mereka, mengenali makna sarkastik yang terbentuk melalui implikatur tersebut, dan menentukan fungsi pragmatis yang terwujud melalui makna sarkastik itu. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa makna sarkastik tidak ditransfer secara langsung tetapi dibangun melalui interaksi komponen verbal dan visual serta konteksnya. Implikatur adalah faktor kunci yang memungkinkan pembaca memahami makna-makna yang tersirat dalam meme tetapi tidak diungkapkan secara eksplisit. Dengan mengontekstualisasikan meme ini, pembaca akan bisa menebak makna sarkastik di baliknya, yang berbeda dari makna sebenarnya yang disampaikan. Selain itu, temuan seperti ini menyoroti dua peran pragmatik yang dipenuhi oleh sarkasme ini. Tujuan ekspresif digunakan oleh pengguna untuk mengekspresikan perasaan, sikap, dan penilaian mereka terhadap kejadian tertentu, sementara tujuan humor memungkinkan pengguna menyampaikan kritik dan pengalaman yang kurang menyenangkan dengan cara yang menghibur.

TABLE OF CONTENT

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP	Error! Bookmark not defined.
APPROVAL SHEET.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
LEGITIMATION SHEET	iii
MOTTO.....	iv
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
ABSTRACT	ix
مستخلص البحث	x
ABSTRAK	xi
TABLE OF CONTENT	xii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
A. Background of the Study	1
B. Research Questions	7
C. Significance of the Study.....	7
D. Scope and Limitation.....	9
E. Definition of Key Term	10
CHAPTER II REVIEW ON RELATED LITERATURE.....	12
A. Pragmatics and Implicature	12
B. Sarcasm and Sarcastic Memes	13
C. Pragmatic Functions	14
D. Memes as Digital Communication.....	15
E. Previous Studies	17
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHOD	21
A. Research Design.....	21
B. Data Source.....	23
C. Research Instruments	24
D. Data Collection	25
E. Data Analysis	26

CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	29
A. Findings	30
B. Discussion.....	40
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION	45
A. Conclusion	45
B. Suggestion.....	46
BIBLIOGRAPHY	47
APPENDIX	51
A. Checklist of Research Data.....	51
B. Data Classification Checklist.....	51
C. Observation Checklist	52
D. Documentation of Data Collection.....	52
E. Research Data Source.....	52
F. Data Sarcastic Memes	53

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Over the past few years, social media has become a major platform where individuals communicate directly with the masses. Through short but meaningful expressions, users can express their attitudes, views and judgments of societal phenomena in several ways. The most notable type of digital communication in this regard is the meme, a discursive object that combines visual and verbal elements and conveys implicit, evaluative, and contextual meanings (Dynel 2024; Xie et al., 2022). Previous studies also show that internet memes function as pragmatic discourse that conveys implicit meaning in digital communication (Malik & Zahra, 2022). Recent studies highlight that memes function as multimodal communication that relies on shared context and audience interpretation (Xie et al., 2022; Sharma et al., 2020).

Memes on the Twitter (X) social networking site are not only about entertainment but also a form of social criticism, expression of attitude, and the negotiation of meaning during online interactions with the public. The nature of memes, which depends on inference, shared context, and pragmatic knowledge, supports their use as a useful medium for studying the construction and interpretation of indirect meaning in digital communication.

The decision to use X as a data source was made due to the fact that it offers a platform of public communications that is based on text. In other words, in addition to memes, one can see written commentaries on the Internet meme, as well as the actual discussion of its contents. Unlike video-based or image-based platforms, X enables users to disseminate memes in the context of public communication and thus helps to decode the context of sarcastic meaning. Moreover, the posts on X do not require users to communicate directly with the owners of the accounts; instead, they can be read publicly (Dynel, 2024; Xie et al., 2022).

Sarcasm is one of the forms of indirect communication that are prevalent in memes. In pragmatics, sarcasm is interpreted as an evaluative speech with implied meaning that is often contrasts with its literal expression, requiring contextual inference to be understood (Dynel, 2024; Kader et al., 2021). The interpretation of sarcasm requires not only the arrangement of speech, but also depends on the social context, interpreting rules, and mutual assumptions between the speaker and the audience. Based on this, sarcastic memes can be considered important objects to study in the field of pragmatics. The reason isn't just because memes are widely found on social media, but because the meaning contained in them often can't be understood just from the visible text. To figure out the actual purpose, the reader must consider the correlation between the text, the image, and the context in which the meme was created.

In most of the sarcastic memes, the message that the authors are trying to deliver does not reveal itself explicitly. It appears as a result of the contradiction between what is said and what the creators really wanted to say. Due to this fact, a reader cannot perceive the meaning of sarcastic memes literally; there must also be some level of inference taking into account the context and knowledge that the reader possesses. Thus, the example demonstrates that digital communication does not always presuppose the explicit presentation of meaning. Meaning can be created as a result of the interaction of several elements complementing one another (Grice, 1975; Dynel, 2024; Xie et al., 2022).

The reason why sarcastic memes have been chosen as the subject of analysis in the current study is that they are means of communication, which are widely utilized in everyday life and contain social evaluations via the mechanism of implication, thus becoming systematic means of communication. Besides being a form of humor, sarcastic memes are an evaluative form of communication that allows the speaker to make indirect criticism and express his/her attitude or evaluation within the framework of open communication. Memes can therefore be considered suitable for the study of the mechanism of implication in English digital communication on X (Dynel, 2024; Kader et al., 2021; Xie et al., 2022).

The current study is about memes as one of the forms of digital communication spread through social networks. In this case, the attention will be paid not to the author of the meme or their background information, but to the content of the meme. This approach is guided by the notion that the meaning of

digital discourse emerges mostly from the relationship among text, images, and context, rather than the identity of the author of such contents. Moreover, Internet memes can be considered communication artifacts whose meanings do not have to depend on the identity of the author since their meaning comes from context and pragmatic interpretations made by users (Xie et al., 2022; Dynel, 2024). The main objective of this research is to find out how the sarcastic meaning is created and works in communication.

The choice of memes as the unit of analysis was based on the fact that it includes several interrelated components, including text, image, and context. All these components contribute to the creation of meaning that is not always directly communicated. Therefore, in this research, the attention will be paid to the process of meaning-making and the communicative nature of the interrelation between the mentioned components of memes rather than to the identity of its author (Xie et al., 2022; Dynel, 2024).

Some recent researches have been conducted concerning the issue of memes and sarcasm in online communication, but some problems still exist. Firstly, Dynel (2024) notes that memes used in online communication on the website X are examples of pragmatic interaction. Nevertheless, the author does not provide a systematic explanation for how sarcasm is generated and what its communicative function is. Secondly, other researchers usually concentrate on recognizing sarcasm and classifying it computationally, without providing an explanation of how implicature is produced (Kader et al., 2021). Meanwhile,

research on memes often emphasizes humor or cultural transmission, without examining their role as indirect communicative acts that perform specific pragmatic functions (Fitriana, 2025; Fegasanti et al., 2025). In addition, Al-khalifa et al., (2023) carried out research on sarcasm on Arabic Twitter with the help of corpus-based sentiment analysis, but the research did not examine the sarcastic memes from the standpoint of pragmatics. On the other hand, Mohammed and Majeed (2023) analyzed the self-deprecating humor found in internet memes through Relevance Theory, but the authors' discussion revolved around the aspect of interpreting humor instead of the aspect of sarcasm and its pragmatic purpose. Moya (2023) analyzed the context-dependent formation of viral language used on X from the standpoint of sociopragmatics; nonetheless, sarcastic memes were not a focus of the investigation. In the same vein, Khokhlova et al., (2016) identify irony and sarcasm in social media texts based on linguistic analysis, while memes are not discussed in terms of multimodal communication. Similarly, Wahyuni et al., (2025) investigates the features of irony and sarcasm on Twitter; however, this particular study fails to explain the creation of sarcastic meaning in memes based on implicature. In addition, Grundlingh (2017) claims that memes can be considered speech acts, and Brody, Nicholas, and Cullen (2022) considers sharing memes as a way of socializing and having fun within interpersonal relations. However, no research specifically focuses on sarcastic memes on X and implicatures in particular. The abovementioned findings indicate that the previous studies mainly concentrated on the problem of identifying either sarcasm, humor, or memes as cultural phenomena. Nevertheless, there remains a lack of research

concerning the explanation of the process of meaning construction via implicature and its pragmatic functions in the digital medium. The purpose of the present research is to address this issue, paying attention to sarcastic meaning construction and pragmatic functions of sarcastic memes on X.

Despite the many contributions made by earlier researchers towards the topic of sarcasm and memes in digital communication, these studies tend to be more inclined to finding out sarcasm in the discourses or understanding their implicit meanings. The research demonstrates that meme meaning is created by means of context and common sense of people who use them. But little research has been done into the process of constructing sarcastic meaning using implicature and its contribution to the accomplishment of particular pragmatic purposes. This explains the underresearched area of the connection between the process of meaning-making and communication aims. Therefore, this research will explore not only the process of constructing sarcastic meaning in meme X, but also its communicative function.

Starting from that situation, this study tries to look at sarcastic memes from a slightly different perspective. The focus of the research isn't just on identifying sarcastic meaning, but also on the pragmatic functions that emerge from that meaning. In this study, implicature theory is used to explain how sarcastic meaning is formed, while the concept of pragmatic function is used to understand the communicative purpose carried out by that meaning. In other

words, this study doesn't just ask what a sarcastic meme means, but also why that meaning is used and what function it serves in communication.

This research is hoped to be able to make a contribution to pragmatic research, particularly pragmatic research of digital communication. Apart from understanding the process of meaning construction in sarcasm, this research also seeks to illustrate the possibility for meaning made through inference to serve some communicative purposes. Thus, this research attempts to uncover the pragmatic functions found in sarcastic memes on X and how such functions are realized.

B. Research Questions

1. How is sarcastic meaning constructed in the selected X memes?
2. What pragmatic functions are realized through the sarcastic meanings in the memes?

C. Significance of the Study

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in the development of pragmatic studies within the context of digital communication, particularly in explaining how sarcastic meaning in memes is constructed and functions as part of online discourse. This study employs the implicature theory proposed by H. P. Grice (1989) to analyze how implicit meaning is formed through contextual inference, while also emphasizing the role of pragmatic functions in understanding the communicative purposes of sarcastic memes. Unlike other

studies that concentrate on detecting or classifying sarcasm, the current study concentrates on highlighting the use of sarcasm as an evaluative mode of communication within online discourse (Kader et al., 2021; Dynel, 2024).

Moreover, this study was also be useful for sociolinguistics in examining digital discourse in terms of the role memes played as a means of linguistic practice in online public discourse in which meaning was created collaboratively. As recent studies reveal, memes can be seen as a form of multimodal discourse capable of expressing social messages in digital communication contexts (Xie et al., 2022; Sharma et al., 2020). By considering memes as an indirect form of communication, the current study bridge the discussion on implicit communication with language practices in social settings.

In addition to this, the current study makes another theoretical contribution by suggesting the meme as a pragmatic unit, especially when considering indirect expressions of evaluative meanings by means of sarcasm. In contrast to other works that consider memes as humorous content or cultural products, this study focuses on their communicative function in evaluating, criticizing, and expressing attitudes (Fitriana, 2025; Fegasanti et al., 2025).

In practice, the results obtained from this study may help in comprehending how the use of implicit meanings and evaluative communication strategies are employed in sarcastic memes. The research can serve as an example for other researchers studying linguistic and digital communication when applying pragmatics to the discourse analysis. The findings of the research may also be

useful for the improvement of language education and digital literacy, specifically with regard to sarcasm as an indirect communication strategy.

In addition, the present research adds to the knowledge of how sarcastic meaning is constructed and how the pragmatic function is realized in memes. In doing so, this study has helped comprehend the role of implicature and pragmatic function in the interpretation of implied meanings.

D. Scope and Limitation

The current study aims at studying the functions of sarcasm used in the memes communicated publicly on X in the context of pragmatic approach to communication. The object of research represents the memes produced by sarcastic discourse. It means that the focus of the research does not lie in the demographics of the social network users but in the memes themselves. The data for this research are made up of memes with both verbal and visual components. The main emphasis here is on the relationship between these components and context in achieving sarcasm. This research utilizes the concept of implicature suggested by H. P. Grice (1989) in order to reveal the process of creating sarcastic meaning based on inferences made from the context, and pragmatic function theory to reveal the communicative functions performed in the process of online communication.

Data are gathered from publicly available X accounts that publish memes in English language. Even though most of the users are Indonesians, emphasis is

placed on the use of English language in the context of digital communication. The data set is made up of three sarcastic memes that have been chosen using purposive sampling in accordance with the following criteria: (a) the memes include expressions that are sarcastic in nature in the English language; (b) the memes have been shared via X pages that are easily accessible by the public; and (c) there is enough context in the memes to interpret their meanings.

The research is conducted using a qualitative descriptive method that utilizes a limited data set, so the results of this research cannot be generalized statistically. Moreover, this paper does not deal with how frequently sarcasm occurs, as usually happens in computational methods, but is aimed at interpreting the meaning within the context. (Kader et al., 2021).

In addition, no comparative analysis is done about the usage of sarcasm among different platforms and user segments. Rather, the study focuses on how the meanings are constructed as well as the functional aspects of sarcasm within X as indirect communication.

E. Definition of Key Term

Sarcastic memes is an online meme characterized by the usage of sarcastic meanings using both visual and verbal communication forms.

Pragmatic functions is the goal of communication realized through the utilization of language in certain contexts.

Implicature is the implication or inferred meaning obtained from the context without being stated directly in meme in X.

Visual context is visual information in the meme that enables the reader to infer the meaning conveyed in the meme.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW ON RELATED LITERATURE

A. Implicature

Implicature, a concept developed by H. P. Grice (1989), is used to explain how implicit meanings are implied in the process of communication. Instead of depending on the literal use of language, people usually infer meaning using the context. In this case, the notion of implicature will be used to illustrate how sarcasm is constructed in memes. Implicature allows people to communicate messages implicitly, such as criticizing someone or evaluating something. This involves interpreting meanings from the interaction between language use, context, and common knowledge (Grice, 1989). The relevance of this concept still exists in modern linguistics because a recent study demonstrates that implicature is significant in understanding meaning inference in digital communication (Romadhon, 2024; Jundiyaturrahman et al., 2025).

Implicature plays an important role in the process of digital communication where meaning should be conveyed not only by written texts, but also through visual components and other contexts available in the online environment. Further elaborating on this, Hamza and Yunus (2022) point out that meaning expressed in internet memes is inferred using cyberpragmatic techniques through the processes of context-based interpretation and shared online knowledge. The study finds that meanings expressed in memes emerge through multimodal interaction as well as contextual inference (Xie et al., 2022; Sharma et

al., 2020). Xie et al. (2022) also highlights the importance of pragmatic interpretation of memes and its dependence on shared contextual information among the users of the Internet. Thus, in this study, implicature theory will be applied in order to analyze the formation of sarcastic meaning in internet memes.

B. Sarcasm and Sarcastic Memes

Sarcasm is usually understood as a form of indirect communication where the meaning is different, and sometimes even opposite, from what is said literally. In pragmatics study, sarcasm is often used to convey criticism, judgment, disagreement, or certain emotions without stating them openly. Therefore, being able to comprehend sarcasm is not solely dependent on the use of the language. The reader or listener must focus on the context in order to discern the true intentions behind the language used (Dyner, 2024; Kader et al., 2021).

Sarcastic meaning always arises through the gap between the literal and implied meanings. Context plays a crucial role in this process. A person can say something positive-sounding, while the intention was quite different. The person's intention was to show disapproval and criticize something. Understanding sarcasm is based on making inferences and pragmatic analysis. When communicating in digital space, there is evidence that the comprehension of sarcasm requires common knowledge about the context of digital media communication (Romadhon, 2024; Jundiyaturrahman et al., 2025).

In the social media context, sarcasm is not only conveyed through the written word; it can also be delivered through memes. Sarcasm memes tend to

make use of both imagery and texts in delivering their implied meanings. The meanings in the memes cannot easily be understood through the images alone or even through the texts alone; rather, they come from the interplay between the two, in conjunction with the background of the meme itself. In this regard, it could be considered a type of multimodal communication.

With these characteristics, sarcastic memes constitute a pertinent object for pragmatic research. By means of sarcastic memes, one can observe the construction and decoding of indirect meanings in the process of digital communication. Comprehension of sarcastic memes does not depend solely on the linguistic knowledge but is associated with the readers' ability to put together different available pieces and conclude about the meaning of the meme.

C. Pragmatic Functions

The language not only serves to transfer information and certain meanings but also to attain some communication purposes. The pragmatic purposes in language studies are referred to as the pragmatic functions. As defined by Leech (1983), pragmatic functions are about what the speaker aims to accomplish through language use in a certain situation. Therefore, pragmatic functions provide an understanding of what the speaker really meant by saying something, and not just its surface level meaning.

Such idea acquires significance particularly in the context of indirect communication. There are numerous instances where people may not always convey their opinions or emotions in an explicit manner. What is implied is then

interpreted from the broader context that surrounds the message. Therefore, interpreting what is being said not only depends on what is being conveyed but also how it is understood.

Sarcasm usage on the digital platform can also be seen as an example of the same. Several pieces of research have found that sarcasm can be used as a way to express attitudes or give judgments about a situation, criticize a particular condition, or provide humor without making an explicit statement (Fitriana, 2025; Fegasanti et al., 2025). Therefore, sarcasm has both meaning and communicative functions.

Pragmatic function shows up through the meaning that comes from the interaction between text, images, and context in sarcastic memes. At first glance, the meme can look very simple. But after analyzing the connection between those elements, implicit meaning is conveyed that comes with a communicative function. This is the reason why recognizing pragmatic functions is crucial in terms of understanding both the meaning of the meme and its purpose for communication through that particular meaning. In such manner, this study focuses on pragmatic functions as the key point of the analysis. Through determining the pragmatic functions of memes, this study explain how the sarcastic meaning of X memes works in order to fulfill communicative purposes.

D. Memes as Digital Communication

Internet memes can be defined as a type of digital communication involving the use of both images and text meant to communicate a particular

message. Aside from being used for entertainment purposes, memes have been used as a means of conveying opinions, criticizing society, and creating a sense of community in the online world. The circulation of internet memes is strongly reliant on common culture and audience knowledge, making their meaning rather implicit and situationally dependent (Xie et al., 2022; Sharma et al., 2020).

Memes can be understood as digital-cultural artifacts that evolve through processes of replication and modification by internet users. In this sense, memes function as a form of collective discourse that enables users to express attitudes, judgments, or responses to social issues indirectly. This makes memes not only informative but also evaluative and interactive as a medium of communication. Agustinah (2026) also claims that ironic memes are multimodal and that they can be used to construct identity as well as to function in digital literacy practices of online communities. Recent research also focuses on how memes constitute a multimodal form of communication which relies on both visuals and text for creating meaning in the digital world (Xie et al., 2022).

Memes can be considered a unique form of indirect speech act in pragmatics, which relies on implicature for meaning generation. In terms of online communication, the meme serves as an act of communication, which does not necessarily contain any direct meanings. Recent research indicates that the interpretation of the meme involves pragmatic inference using different contextual clues (Romadhon, 2024; Jundiyaturrahman et al., 2025).

Memes are also an evolving means of communication within the public sphere on social networking sites like X. According to Dynel (2024), the sharing of memes is an example of participation in the discourse, which includes meaning construction and negotiation. In this regard, memes are not only designed for individual use but are also meant to provoke responses and interaction from their viewers. Consequently, memes may be understood as multi-dimensional systems of digital communication that use images and language to convey information. In this research, memes are viewed as a unit of analysis for pragmatics, where the focus is on understanding how implied meaning, especially sarcastic meaning, is achieved using pragmatic operations.

E. Previous Studies

Some recent studies have explored memes and sarcasm in digital communication, yet there is an insufficiency in explaining the pragmatic significance of these phenomena. The majority of the studies on the phenomenon of sarcasm in social media mostly revolve around detection or identification. This is evident in the studies conducted by Kader et al., (2021) and Al-khalifa et al., (2023), who explore sarcasm through language pattern analysis or the development of computerized detection systems of sarcasm in online writing. Although these studies are insightful from a technological point of view, they fail to adequately explain the process of meaning construction in sarcastic communication. A similar case appears in the study conducted by Romadhon (2024). In his work on the implication in internet memes and jokes Romadhon

(2024) argues that indirectness in digital communication requires considerable inference from the context.

A number of other studies have been conducted to examine internet memes from the perspective of pragmatics. Qadouri (2024) analyzes internet memes with regard to stylistics and humor from the standpoint of pragmatics and multimodal analysis, while Malik and Zahra (2022) examine the speech act theory in educational internet memes amid distance learning.

Moreover, recent investigations have provided an understanding of the emergence of pragmatic analysis in digital communications. (Qadouri, 2024) studied internet memes using the pragmatic and multimodal methods of analysis, discovering that internet memes employ visual and linguistic features to create implicit meanings. Malik and Zahra (2022) explored internet memes concerning distance learning and concluded that speech acts and contextually-based meaning-making were essential for proper understanding. The current investigation is justified in its methodology as the literature demonstrates similar concerns about pragmatics and meaning in internet memes.

Moreover, the role of meme sharing in pragmatics is examined by Dynel (2024) as another aspect of pragmatic interaction in online discourse. This research considers memes to be the tool used in order to express indirect meanings and engage in social communication. Nevertheless, it does not offer a systematic analysis of sarcastic meaning creation as well as pragmatics in multimodal memes.

Sekarsari and Wijayanto (2024) explore the employment of X memes by college students with regard to their role in interpretation, humor, and indirect speech acts in online communication. According to the researchers, the use of X memes cannot be confined to their function as sources of entertainment; rather, they serve as important vehicles for expressing attitudes in terms of context interpretation. Nevertheless, this article does not examine sarcastic memes and implicature.

Studies on memes have also explored their communicative roles in online contexts. Recent research suggests that memes function as multimodal discourse that combines visual and textual elements to convey meaning and social attitudes (Xie et al., 2022; Sharma et al., 2020). These studies show that memes can serve as a medium for indirect communication. However, they do not specifically address how sarcasm functions as an evaluative strategy in digital interaction.

In addition, Brody et al., (2022) examine the role of humor in meme-sharing within interpersonal communication, highlighting how humor contributes to social interaction and relationship building. However, this study primarily focuses on humor and does not specifically address how sarcasm functions as an indirect evaluative strategy in online discourse.

Based on the review of previous studies, it can be identified that there is a research gap concerning the pragmatic functions of sarcasm in memes on X. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing how pragmatic functions

are realized through sarcastic memes on X and how implicit meaning is constructed through implicature processes in online interaction.

Overall, the literature review reveals that the issues of memes and sarcasm were widely analyzed from different perspectives, such as sarcasm recognition, humor analysis, multimodal communication, speech act theory, and pragmatic interactions in digital discourse. These investigations helped us to learn more about the nature of memes in the process of online communication. Nevertheless, only little attention has been paid to the explanation of how the notion of sarcastic meaning creation by means of implicature and its pragmatic functions are realized. That is why the current investigation pays attention to the analysis of sarcastic meaning creation by means of implicature and pragmatic functions implemented in sarcastic memes disseminated via X. The emphasis on this topic is anticipated to provide a practical account of how sarcasm in terms of meaning and function relate.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter detailed the procedure employed in the research to answer the research questions which were as follows: what are the pragmatic functions that are achieved through sarcastic memes on X and how these functions are realized when it comes to digital communication. The pragmatic theoretical framework used in this study, the implicit and contextual nature of the data, the goals of the research aimed at the interpretation of the meaning, and the focus on the pragmatics determined the choice of research methods.

The purpose of the study was to learn how sarcastic meaning was constructed in the form of implicatures within digital memes and how meaning was achieved through language use on social media. Thus, the qualitative descriptive method was chosen in the research, as it did not presuppose detailed analysis of the information but rather in the form of memes that were posted on X. This chapter included a description of research design, data sources, research instruments, methods used to collect data and phases of data analysis that were implemented in compliance with a systematic approach.

A. Research Design

The research method employed in this study was a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design in analyzing digital communication. A qualitative method was chosen because this study aimed to explore implicit

meanings and the pragmatic functions of sarcasm as they occurred in language use, rather than measuring frequency or statistical relationships between variables. The data consisted of sarcastic memes posted on X, which were analyzed through contextual interpretation.

The descriptive and qualitative nature of this research fits into the objective of the research to explain how the meaning in sarcasm is created using implicatures and how the pragmatic functions can be realized in memes, which represent digital communication. In this way, it becomes possible for scholars to understand the meaning of communication in its real context (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

The research is grounded in a pragmatic perspective that entails analyzing implicatures and the functions performed in the communicative process (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). Implicature theory proposed by H. P. Grice (1975) was used to explain how implicit meaning is inferred from context. This framework remained relevant in recent studies, which show that meaning in digital communication is constructed through contextual inference and shared understanding (Romadhon, 2024; Jundiyaturrahman et al., 2025). Therefore, the analysis emphasized the relationship between literal meaning, context, implicature, and communicative purpose in sarcastic memes.

Furthermore, sarcasm in this study was viewed as a form of digital communication practice in online environments. Meaning was constructed and interpreted within the context of social media interaction, where memes

functioned as a medium of indirect communication that facilitated the expression of attitudes, evaluation, and social interaction among users.

B. Data Source

The data used in this study consists of three English sarcastic memes taken from publicly accessible accounts, namely @sparkliw, @pelukgadis, and @vapefuls. These three memes were chosen because they show the use of sarcasm that can be analyzed through a pragmatic approach, especially related to implicature and pragmatic functions.

The researcher initially looked for a few public X accounts that frequently share memes. @sparkliw, @pelukgadis, and @vapefuls were among these accounts. The reason why they were chosen is that they frequently publish memes in English language that have sarcastic meanings. Memes published on these accounts were studied based on the research criteria. Three memes with the most evident features were selected for analysis.

The initial identification of sarcasm is done by looking at the text and image elements in each meme. A meme is considered relevant if it shows a difference between the message that's explicitly stated and the meaning that can be inferred from the surrounding context. This is one of the characteristics that is considered a major factor in the study of pragmatics as the message that the speaker tries to pass is not explicitly stated but inferred by the audience.

Using three memes as the research material corresponds to the qualitative approach adopted in this study as well. This study does not have a goal to generalize the phenomenon of sarcastic memes that can be found on X or to find out the frequency of sarcasm usage. It aims to explore sarcastic meanings and their pragmatic functions. With this goal in mind, having a limited but carefully selected amount of data is considered sufficient to answer the research questions and allows for a more in-depth analysis.

C. Research Instruments

The human instrument used in this research was the researcher herself. According to Creswell and Creswell (2022), the qualitative researcher has a pivotal role in the collection, organization, interpretation, and analysis of data. In the current study, the researcher will have to select memes, explore the relation between their verbal and visual parts, interpret implicatures, and determine the pragmatic functions achieved through each particular meme. Being significantly dependent upon the contextual comprehension of sarcasm and implicatures, the role of the researcher in this process is of great importance.

The framework that was employed in this research was based on Grice's theory of implicatures (Grice, 1975). The theory of implicature is utilized in explaining how the implied meaning of any message could be decoded from context comprehension. In addition, theories of sarcasm and pragmatic purposes of digital communication (Damayanti & Kaswadi, 2024; Al-khalifa et al., 2023)

are employed in decoding sarcasm and identifying the intended communicative purpose.

Using the above instrument, the data collected included the description of the communicative environment, the interpretation of the implicatures, and the explanation of the pragmatic role of sarcasm in this discourse. Data in the current study were obtained from documented instances of sarcastic memes on X.

D. Data Collection

Data collection was done through photographing some of the selected memes from X accounts, together with the text and context that accompanied them. In this case, since the study was using secondary data, the researchers did not have any role in the creation of the memes; instead, they gathered and analyzed the documents available for use in the research process. According to Creswell and Creswell (2022), qualitative studies give researchers the opportunity to obtain information from different sources, such as documents and audiovisuals. For this reason, memes available in the public domain in X will be used as documentary data.

Data selection was done using purposive sampling. This technique was chosen because qualitative research do not focus on having a large amount of data, but rather on choosing data that is considered most relevant to answer the research goals. Therefore, the memes used in this study were not picked randomly. Instead, each meme was chosen based on certain characteristics that were considered able to provide information relevant to the research focus.

In the process of selecting data, several criteria were used as a reference. First, the meme has to show a difference between the literal meaning and the meaning actually intended, indicating the presence of sarcasm. Second, the sarcastic meaning is not conveyed directly, but can be understood through the relationship between the verbal and visual elements in the meme. Third, the meme must have enough context to allow researchers to interpret the implicature and sarcastic meaning that appears. Additionally, the selected meme must be in English and published through a X account that is publicly accessible.

Once the selection criteria had been set, the procedure of data collection took place through several stages. First of all, the memes were found using the researcher's search through the posts that could be viewed in the publicly available X accounts. After that, the memes were filtered according to the specified selection criteria. Finally, the selected memes were captured in screenshots and accompanied by captions and context.

E. Data Analysis

This study was performed in several steps, which help to find answers to the research questions about the way sarcastic meaning is constructed and how the pragmatic functions are realized in chosen memes. The first step included establishing the literal meaning of each of the memes through studying the text and picture components. The communication context in which the meme occurs was also established in order to serve as a ground for the implied meaning of the meme.

The second phase examines the connection between verbal elements, visual elements, and the communicative context in which each meme exists. In this manner, the researcher can understand the implicatures resulting from the interplay of these elements. Another aspect examined is the connection between the text and visual elements to see whether there are contradictions or underlying meanings behind them.

The third stage focuses on explaining how the identified implicatures build the sarcastic meaning conveyed in each meme. The implicatures identified in the previous stage are used as a basis to understand how sarcastic meaning is formed. At this point, the researcher analyzes the gap between the literal meaning and the actual intended meaning. The reason why this stage is crucial is that sarcasm in memes is rarely overtly conveyed; rather, it is inferred from a particular context and the link between text and picture.

The final stage is identifying the pragmatic function realized through the sarcastic meaning found in each meme. At this stage, the focus is on the communication goals that are intended to be achieved through the use of sarcasm. These functions can include expressing attitudes, evaluating a situation, giving criticism, showing frustration, or creating a humorous effect. To identify them, the researcher observes how the sarcastic meaning works in each meme and what communicative purpose it serves.

Meaning interpretation in the present study was done on the basis of publicly observable cues. These included the text itself, its visual representation,

and the context in which it was being used. Meaning was not interpreted by considering the intent behind the creation of the meme but by drawing inferences from it within the social and linguistic context. (Grice, 1989; Al-khalifa et al., 2023).

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter shows what we found when analyzing sarcastic memes from three X accounts: @sparkliw, @pelukgadis, and @vapefuls. The role that their use of sarcasm plays in their impact on online discourse was investigated, particularly in terms of the meanings of the memes. We have also examined the role of context in interpreting their meaning, especially in understanding the humor and irony within the meme culture.

In this study, three memes will be used as research data, selected due to sarcasm and implications that can be analyzed through the theory of implicature. These memes also embody experiences typical for social media users. The memes were taken from three separate X profiles and the researchers will use the order of posting in the memes' analysis.

All the pieces of information were coded using (Data 01, Data 02, and Data 03). To make presenting the findings easier, a coding procedure was used for each meme chosen for analysis within this paper. Data 01, Data 02, and Data 03 were used to refer to the first, second, and third memes, respectively. Such labels were only used for reference purposes, without signifying any priority of one over another.

A. Findings

The following is my study of the sarcastic memes from my research. In here, I discuss the construction of sarcasm by using text, image, and context. I will also analyze the pragmatic function performed in each meme. Thus, this would explain the construction of the sarcasm in the memes.

Codes of data (Data 01, Data 02, and Data 03) can be used to present the research findings. Initially, the source of the meme is indicated, thereby disclosing the social environment or situation of the conversation in which the sarcasm took place. This is significant because comprehending the sarcastic message relies on the context in which the meme appears. The three memes selected for analysis have been collected from three distinct public X accounts.

Data 01

The first dataset to be utilized for analysis were memes that are sarcastic, created by @sparkliw on X. At the time of posting the X, @sparkliw who had around 13,557 followers and she was following 1,120 users on the platform X. The tweet received 401 replies, 433 likes, 106 retweets, and 1 quote. This meme is provided in video form. The extent of interactions indicates that the meme video receives much attention from users on X.

The creation of this meme is based on reality, as life can be considered stressful and full of difficulties. On X, people tend to use humor and sarcasm while talking about stressful situations because they consider such methods as

easier to communicate to other people. Life is represented as a mess, chaos, and distractors; whereas, the figure “Me” looks like a person who is at peace and does not bother about the surrounding environment. This meme reflects a common situation where people appear calm even though they are facing various pressures in their lives.



Figure 4.1 Meme 1

To put it literally, this meme has just two captions “My life” and “Me.” In the background of this image is shown a crowd of people causing a disturbance. On the other hand, in front there is an individual who seems to be having fun by listening to music. This meme shows the contrast between "my life" and "me." "My life" is used to describe all the difficulties, problems, and chaos a person experiences, whereas "me" indicates the indifference of the person towards those problems. This meme simply compares both terms without having any hidden meanings at all.

In contrast, the interaction between the verbal and visual components generates an implicature that cannot be understood from the textual elements alone. The chaotic crowd in the background symbolizes the various difficulties, pressures, and challenges that people go through. On the other hand, the figure labeled 'Me' seems to ignore the surroundings while focusing on listening to music. The interconnection between the two components allows one to understand that the figure presented in the meme encounters a number of issues in their life but does not want to pay attention to them.

The sarcastic implication contained in this meme arises due to the disparity between its textual and contextual components. Here, the phrase "My life" symbolizes the difficulties and problems being encountered by the person, while the word "Me" symbolizes the cool and composed personality of the individual. Through the disparity created by these two elements, there emerges an implication whereby the individual is seen to feign a cool attitude despite the difficulties being faced in his life. Here, rather than presenting the difficulty as it is, the meme uses this disparity to indicate a deliberate attempt to appear to be cool and composed.

In relation to the presented meme, the main pragmatic function that is realized via the realization of the sarcastic meaning is the expressive function. Such function emerges because the sarcastic meaning does not only reveal a life situation that is related to being stressed but also expresses the speaker's attitude towards such situation. In the context, the meme shows the life of a person that is full of chaos, stress, and problems but the character "Me" remains calm and keeps

listening to the music. Such combination of the elements creates the sarcasm because it is implied that the person pretends to be calm even when he/she encounters serious problems. Rather than saying the words expressing his/her feeling about stress, frustration, and fatigue, the person uses the sarcasm to express his/her emotional state. Therefore, the expressive function is realized through the medium of the sarcastic meaning. Regarding the context of the communication on X. Considering the aspect of communication on X, this indirect way of conveying helps users express their emotions.

The humorous context of the sarcastic meaning in the analyzed meme is based on the absurdity of an extraordinary difference between the chaotic life situations and the extremely calm attitude to them of the character. In fact, people experiencing difficulties all the time tend to display some signs of anxiety. Nevertheless, the mentioned meme demonstrates exactly the opposite, it portrays a person calmly listening to music despite the surrounding chaos. The unrealistically large difference between the real life context and what is being shown in the meme becomes the basis for the sarcastic and, hence, humorous effect. It should be stressed that in the case under analysis there is no laughing at the problem itself but rather an ironic portrayal of how people tend to look as if nothing is happening despite the emotions they experience.

Data 02

The second data source came from the X account @pelukgadis. The account had around 6,548 followers and followed about 1,088 X users. The tweet

was quite popular on X, receiving 527 likes, 417 replies, and 355 retweets. This popularity showed that the meme was well-received among social media users, especially in relation to their everyday lives.

The meme is rooted in the situation which a number of people go through very often. Many people tend to make a list of things they would accomplish after coming back home. But in most cases, tiredness after all the activities causes them to give in to sleep rather than complete their task list. The reason why such situations become the basis for memes on X is that they are believed to be relatable.



Figure 4.2 Meme 2

The meme contains the statement "I'll be productive when I get home," followed by "when I get home:". Pictorially, the meme displays a person relaxing

in bed. On the first impression, the meme portrays a person who plans on being productive, but ends up relaxing upon returning home.

The verbal text, “I’ll be productive when I get home,” clearly communicates the intention of the speaker to do some productive tasks after he or she arrives at home. On the other hand, the visual part portrays the speaker as lying comfortably on his or her bed without doing any productive tasks at all. This discrepancy between the two parts suggests that the speaker is not productive after reaching his or her destination because he or she is either tired or not motivated enough to do so. In light of this understanding, the sarcastic meaning of the message becomes evident.

The main pragmatic function conveyed by sarcastic meaning in the discussed meme is the expressive one. The reason for such a function is that the sarcasm can implicitly transmit emotions of the speaker concerning the gap between expectations and reality. Specifically, the text component of the verbal meme conveys the intention to become productive at home, but the image component represents the person lying in bed and not fulfilling the expected plans. Such contradiction results in the implicit implication that the speaker lacks energy or motivation to implement his/her intentions. Thus, instead of openly stating the emotions of tiredness, disappointment, or frustration, the person uses sarcasm. In other words, the expressive function occurs since the sarcastic meaning enables the speaker to express his/her emotions and attitude to the failure to meet self-established expectations.

In addition to the expressive role of the meme, its sarcastic meaning also performs the humorous role. The humor in this case derives from the discrepancy between the confidence expressed by the speaker about being productive and the actual reality depicted in the image. While instead of work and accomplishment of some intended actions, the speaker is lying down comfortably in bed, the image is used to create a humorous depiction of the common reality. Many people will agree that often when they make productive plans after returning from somewhere, they end up deciding to just take a rest, as they are tired. It adds a humorous component to the sarcastic meaning, as besides being negative, it is also humorous.

The sarcastic meaning in Data 02 is built through the contradiction between the speaker's intention to be productive and the reality shown in the visual elements. This contrast lets readers conclude that the speaker failed to carry out the planned tasks due to fatigue or lack of motivation. As a result, this sarcastic meaning serves two main pragmatic functions. First, it works as an expressive function by indirectly conveying the speaker's feelings of disappointment, tiredness, and frustration. Second, it acts as a humorous function by presenting this common everyday experience in an ironic and easy-to-understand way, allowing users on X to communicate about their personal struggles through entertaining sarcasm.

Data 03

The third dataset from the study was represented by a sarcastic meme shared on X by an account referred to as @vapefuls. The number of people who follow the account was roughly 5,508 and the number of people the account follows was roughly 988. The tweet was highly engaging among X users because of the number of likes which were 53,000, 45 comments, 108 retweets, and 12,000 shares. These exchanges indicated that many X users were able to empathize with the feeling of being polite about something that they didn't actually care about. This was because the meme also highlighted the fact that people use certain polite phrases like "interesting" even when they're really bored or uninterested.

The meme exists in the social media realm within a communication situation wherein a person feigns politeness despite lacking interest in the subject matter at hand. X has a history of using sarcastic language and memes that express reactions in indirect ways. Hence, this meme can be interpreted as an expression of a rather typical situation, wherein someone receives information that bores them but still responds appropriately from a social perspective.



Figure 4.3 Meme 3

This meme can be translated to: “when I send an ‘interesting’ message, this is what my face looks like.” From the visual standpoint, the image shows the animated character SpongeBob SquarePants looking bored and lacking enthusiasm. While looking at the message alone, there is no indication from the content itself suggesting that the person feels bored. Even the term “interesting” has a positive implication.

The sarcastic meaning of this meme is built through the interaction between textual and visual elements. First, from the text side, the use of the term ‘interesting’ is generally associated with a positive assessment and expresses interest in the matter. Nevertheless, this understanding is called into question by the expression on the face of SpongeBob, who appears to be bored and indifferent. In its turn, the implication emerging from the relationship between these elements suggest that the message was not meant seriously. In fact, instead of being interested in the matter, the meme implies a certain indifference or disinterest.

This way, sarcasm in this meme is created through the contrast between what is directly said and what is actually implied.

In this meme, the primary pragmatic function implemented via the use of sarcastic meaning is expressive. The reason why this function arises is the following, sarcastic meaning indirectly represents emotional attitude of the speaker rather than the meaning of the words themselves. In the context, the word ‘interesting’ implies paying attention and having some respect to the topic. At the same time, the image depicting bored look of SpongeBob is contrary to such an opinion and gives rise to sarcastic meaning implying that the speaker does not have any interest to the dialogue. Instead of stating that the topic is boring or not important at all, the speaker expresses his emotions related to the topic by means of sarcasm. Therefore, expressive function is accomplished due to implementation of sarcastic meaning as an indirect tool of conveying personal attitude to the topic. On X, this approach is used to communicate and enable individuals to show their displeasure without expressing them explicitly, thus ensuring that the message becomes soft and clear.

In addition to its expressive meaning, the sarcastic meaning of this meme can also be interpreted as having a humorous meaning. Contextually, the humor here is created via the contradiction between the positive meaning of ‘interesting’ and the clear boredom shown by SpongeBob in his face. People often tend to say such polite phrases as ‘interesting’ even though they find the discussion uninteresting. By creating an opposition between these two meanings in the form

of this meme, the creator has highlighted an ironic situation in which a person pretends to be interested but looks clearly disinterested. Thus, by presenting such a humorous situation on X, users express their boredom and also encourage other people to relate to a similar social situation.

Generally, the sarcastic meaning in Data 03 meme is created via the inconsistency between positive words, such as ‘interesting,’ and SpongeBob's bored facial expression. The reader can understand the actual meaning from this inconsistency since the person is actually not interested even if they look polite. Therefore, the sarcastic meaning has the following pragmatic functions. It allows expressing the feelings and attitudes of the person indirectly, but, at the same time, it is a joke related to a familiar social situation. In such a way, the sarcastic meaning allows users to communicate and share their experiences on X in a humorous way.

B. Discussion

The conclusions drawn from this research prove that the sarcastic implication contained in meme X is achieved via the process of implicature, not via the actual interpretation of the text elements of this meme. In all three data sets, the actual implication cannot be revealed solely by using the verbal expressions; instead, it needs the identification of the relation between verbal and visual elements of a message in the given context. These results support the implicature theory suggested by Grice (1975), where it is stated that the implication is the product of context interpretation and not an explicit meaning of

the text. These conclusions correspond to the explanations provided by Romadhon (2024), Xie et al., (2022), and Qadouri (2024). However, whereas the work carried out by Kader et al., (2021) and Al-khalifa et al., (2023) concentrates on the identification of sarcasm based on language and computation, this work sheds light on the pragmatic generation of sarcastic meaning via implicature. Thus, this research contributes to existing studies by offering a pragmatic account of sarcastic meaning generated on X.

Another critical observation concerns the way sarcastic meaning is constructed in the three datasets. Despite differences in the situation described by each meme, there is a contradiction between text and imagery used for implicature construction. For example, in Data 01, sarcastic meaning construction happens due to the contradiction between the depiction of chaos in the life of the character and his or her calm behavior. In Data 02, there is a contradiction between the speaker's intentions of being productive and lying in bed. Finally, Data 03 represents sarcastic meaning construction through the contradiction between the positive word 'interesting' and the bored expression on SpongeBob's face. This observation is consistent with the results provided by Qadouri (2024) who claims that the implied meaning in internet memes is created based on the interaction of verbal and visual elements. Similarly, Malik and Zahra (2022) found out that contextual interpretation has a significant impact on the meaning conveyed through memes. Nevertheless, the earlier studies have been more on the issues of contextual meaning or multimodality in general, but the present study

demonstrates how the interplay between text and visuals can lead to implicatures that ultimately generate sarcasm and perform pragmatic functions.

Additional investigation reveals that the prevalent pragmatic function of the use of sarcastic meaning is the expressive function. The three memes do not state the emotions and attitudes that they want to express but communicate them implicitly. In Data 01, sarcasm conveys the emotion and pressure experienced due to the chaos of life versus the calm expression of it. In Data 02, sarcasm expresses fatigue, disappointment, and frustration from the inability to meet one's own expectations. In Data 03, sarcasm expresses boredom and disinterest because of the gap between polite verbal communication and lack of interest on the face. These results are consistent with Dynel's (2024) research, which claims that memes are pragmatic interactions through which users express their attitudes and judgments. Likewise, according to Sekarsari and Wijayanto (2024), memes posted on X convey users' attitudes and personal experiences indirectly. In contrast to other studies on the topic, however, this research identifies the link between the expressive function and the sarcastic meaning that emerges due to implicature. Hence, this paper offers a deeper understanding of the connection between implicature, sarcasm, and the expressive pragmatic function in digital communication.

In addition to this expressional feature, the humor feature is identified in all the three memes. Humor is found not only due to the fact that the memes contain humorous content, but also because of the emergence of the sarcastic

content due to the contrast between expectation and reality. In Data 01, humor is provided by the exaggerated contrast between the disorderliness of life and the laidback attitude of the character. In Data 02, humor is generated through the contrast between the desire to be productive and the actual choice to take a break. Finally, in Data 03, humor is provided by the contrast between a positive expression and an obviously bored facial expression. These findings correspond to the explanation of Brody et al., (2022), who claim that humor in meme-sharing promotes interpersonal communication. Moreover, Qadouri (2024) identifies humor as one of the communicative features of internet memes. Nevertheless, contrary to these studies, this study demonstrates that humor is formed through sarcastic meaning produced by implicature and not merely because of its funny nature. These results indicate that sarcastic humor is dependent on how the context of conflicting verbal and visual components is interpreted.

The discovered data also emphasize the importance of Leech's (1983) idea that language is not merely informative but also communicative. Sarcasm has the expressive function, so the speaker can express emotions, attitudes, and judgments indirectly. Moreover, sarcastic meaning also allows showing humor since everyday situations can be shown in an amusing and vivid manner. The discovered data support the position of Dynel (2024), who regards memes as a type of pragmatic interaction in digital discourse. Nevertheless, unlike Dynel who mainly discusses memes as an indirect type of communication, this study goes one step further, and provides the definition of the main functions of sarcasm along with the ways of their emergence via implicature. It can be concluded that

sarcastic memes on X are not only humorous but also serve the purpose of communication.

In general, this research confirms the results of other research works concerning the necessity to interpret the context and the use of multimodal interaction in order to understand internet memes (Romadhon 2024; Xie et al.,; 2022; and Qadouri 2024). Nevertheless, unlike previous researches which concentrated on the detection of either sarcasm, humor, multimodal communication, or speech acts, in this research it is described how the meaning is created with the help of implicature and how it fulfills the pragmatic functions. This research can contribute to pragmatic research because it describes how the meaning creation and pragmatic function are interconnected.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

The present research attempts to explore the ways of sarcastic meaning construction in some English language memes published on the platform of X and the pragmatic functions that are performed by that particular meaning. It turns out that based on the analysis of three memes selected for this paper, the creation of sarcastic meaning is not done solely through verbal elements but results from the combination of different types of elements including verbal, visual, and contextual ones. This allows interpreting the messages that do not coincide with the literal one presented in the meme.

Moreover, the study indicates that the sarcastic connotation of memes serves a particular communicative goal. In the current research, two functions of pragmatics have been revealed: the expressive function and the funny one. The expressive function of pragmatics can be observed when sarcasm is utilized for expressing some personal attitude or judgment about something. At the same time, the humorous function is realized through sarcastic meanings that allow users to present personal experiences and evaluations in a light-hearted and entertaining way.

Overall, the results indicate that sarcastic memes are not only humorous materials that are posted via the web. They represent an indirect means of

communication, through which people are able to express their feelings, attitudes, and opinions about different things. Using the sarcastic meaning, people are able to express their experiences and points of view. In addition to that, it is also evident from the study that the interpretation of sarcastic memes relies heavily on contextual inferences.

B. Suggestion

The analysis in this study is based on three sarcasm memes from X using the concepts of implicate meaning theory by Paul Grice and pragmatic functions by Geoffrey Leech. Since this study is limited to only three memes, it would be recommended for future studies to conduct an analysis of sarcasm through the use of several memes.

It would also be useful for future research to examine sarcastic memes on social media websites like Instagram, TikTok, or Facebook and study the difference in terms of how sarcasm is interpreted on each platform. Another possible way forward is to adopt other pragmatic theories such as speech act theory, politeness theory, or relevance theory in analyzing sarcastic communication.

Fourthly, this research may be beneficial for developing pragmatic research, particularly in the realm of digital discourse. The audience is advised to be more aware of the significance of the context, inference, and implications in understanding the meanings of sarcastic statements on social media, as the intended meaning differs from the one stated.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Agustinah, E. (2026). *Kajian Linguistik dan Sastra Sarcasm Analysis Meme 'Adit , tolongin dit ' Using Pragmatic Studies Kajian Linguistik dan Sastra*. 5(1), 88–98.
- Al-khalifa, S., Alhumaidhi, F., Alotaibi, H., & Al-khalifa, H. S. (2023). *ChatGPT across Arabic Twitter: A Study of Topics, Sentiments, and Sarcasm*.
- Brody, Nicholas; Cullen, S. (2022). *Meme sharing in relationships: The role of humor styles and functions*.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2022). *Research Design - Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Damayanti, R., & Kaswadi, K. (2024). Exploring Sarcasm among Netizens on Instagram: A Social Media Phenomenon. *NOBEL: Journal of Literature and Language Teaching*, 15(2), 188–202.
<https://doi.org/10.15642/nobel.2024.15.2.188-202>
- Dynel, M. (2024). The pragmatics of sharing memes on Twitter. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 220, 100–115. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2023.12.001>
- Fegasanti, P. A., Pratama, H., & Wahyuni, S. (2025). *Pragmatic Analysis of Maxims Flouting Contained in PunHubOnline Memes on Instagram*. 15(1), 1–11.
- Fitriana, I. (2025). *e-Journal of Linguistics Textual Subversion in Memes : A Semantic-Pragmatic- Sociopragmatic Triangulation of Digital Discourse*. xx(x), 112–129.

- Grice, H. P. (1975). *Conversational Implicature*.
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pragmatics/>
- Grice, P. (1989). *Studies in the Way of Words*.
- Grundlingh, L. (2017). Memes as speech acts. *Social Semiotics*, 0(0), 1–22.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2017.1303020>
- Hamza, H. Q., & Yunus, L. L. (2022). *Implicature In Internet Memes : A Cyberpragmatic Approach*. 14(05), 6225–6234.
<https://doi.org/10.9756/INTJECSE/V14I5.774>
- Jundiyaturrahman, H. M., Akmal, H., & Suriadi, M. A. (2025). *Conversational Incongruity and Humor in Facebook Memes : A Pragmatic Study of Online Language Use*. 7(2), 458–482. <https://doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v7i2.458-482>
- Kader, F. B., Nujat, N. H., & Binte, T. (2021). *arXiv : 2209 . 06170v2 [cs . CL] 20 Sep 2022 Computational Sarcasm Analysis on Social Media : A Systematic Review*.
- Khokhlova, Maria; Patti, Viviana; Rosso, P. (2016). Distinguishing between Irony and Sarcasm in Social Media Texts: Linguistic Observations. *IEEE Xplore*, 9.
<https://doi.org/10.1109/FRUCT.2016.7584765>
- Leech, G. (1983). *Principles of Pragmatics*.
- Malik, A., & Zahra, T. (2022). *PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF INTERNET MEMES ON DISTANT LEARNING*. 8(June), 303–317.
- Mohammed, S. S., & Majeed, A. O. (2023). *Inferring the Target of Self-defeating Humour in Internet Memes : A Pragmatic Analysis*. 9(3), 22–30.
<https://doi.org/10.21928/juhd.v9n3y2023.pp22-30>

- Moya, O. C. (2023). *Análisis sociopragmático de la expresión viral “ porque patatas ” en Twitter : una aproximación longitudinal Sociopragmatic analysis of the viral expression " porque patatas " on Twitter : a longitudinal approach*. 6, 117–130.
- Romadhon. (2024). *e-Journal of Linguistics*. 18(2), 201–209.
- Sekarsari, A. A., & Wijayanto, A. (2024). *TWITTER MEMES FOR STUDENTS : AN INTERPRETATION AND THEIR PRAGMATICS*. 11(1), 1–22.
<https://doi.org/10.22219/celtic.v11i1.28543>
- Sharma, S., Alam, F., Akhtar, S., Dimitrov, D., Da, G., Martino, S., Firooz, H., Halevy, A., Silvestri, F., Nakov, P., & Chakraborty, T. (2020). *Detecting and Understanding Harmful Memes: A Survey*.
- Wahyuni, E. D., Suryanto, T. L. M., & Arviani, H. (2025). Deep Learning Multimodal Sarcasm Detection in Social Media Comments: The Role of Memes and Emojis. *Journal of Artificial Intelligence and Technology*, 5, 192–201. <https://doi.org/10.37965/jait.2025.0699>
- Xie, C., Benjamins, J., & Philadelphia, A. (2022). *Review of the Pragmatics of Internet Memes*. 307–310.
- قدوري, ح. ح. (2024). طئاسولا ددعتم بلوات ليلحت : تنرتنلا/ طلع قرخاسلا روص لا يف ةهاكفلا
Stylistics of Humor in Internet Memes : A Pragmatic and Multimodal Analysis.

CURRICULUM VITE



Qurrotul Aini was born in Probolinggo on December 29, 2002. She attended MAN 2 Kota Probolinggo for high school starting in 2018 and graduated in 2021. While in high school, she participated in a robotics extracurricular activity. Through this activity, she learned basic computer skills, such as using Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, and Blender to create simple animations. She continued her studies in 2022 in the English Education Program at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang and completed her studies in 2026. While attending university, he participated in the Student Work Study Program (KKM) in Wringinanom Village, Poncokusumo District, Malang Regency for 40 days as a form of community service. In addition, he also completed a Field Work Practice (PKL) program at Surya Buana High School in Malang to gain teaching experience and understand the educational environment firsthand.

APPENDIX

A. Checklist of Research Data

No.	Data	Meme Topic	Contains Sarcasme	Contains Implicature	Pragmatic Functions Identified	Status
1.	Data 01	Life pressure and coping mechanism	✓	✓	Expressive, Humorous	✓
2.	Data 02	Productivity vs. Exhaustion	✓	✓	Expressive, Humorous	✓
3.	Data 03	Hidden boredom	✓	✓	Expressive, Humorous	✓

B. Data Classification Checklist

Criteria	Meme 1	Meme 2	Meme 3
English language	✓	✓	✓
Contains sarcasme	✓	✓	✓
Contains conversational implicature	✓	✓	✓
Public twitter post	✓	✓	✓
Relevant to digital communication	✓	✓	✓
Contains contextual meaning	✓	✓	✓
Contains pragmatic function	✓	✓	✓

C. Observation Checklist

Observation Aspect	Meme 1	Meme 2	Meme 3
Literal meaning identified	✓	✓	✓
Incongruity detected	✓	✓	✓
Sarcastic meaning interpreted	✓	✓	✓
Pragmatic function analyzed	✓	✓	✓
Implicatuure explained	✓	✓	✓

D. Documentation of Data Collection

No	Twitter Account	Type of Meme	Screenshot Collected	Context Recorded
1.	@sparkliw	Video Meme	✓	✓
2.	@pelukgadis	Image Meme	✓	✓
3.	@vapefuls	Image Meme	✓	✓

E. Research Data Source

No.	Twitter Account	Number of Followers	Number of Data
1.	@sparkliw	13,557	1
2.	@pelukgadis	6,548	1

3.	@vapefuls	5,508	1
----	-----------	-------	---

F. Data Sarcastic Memes

Data 01



Data 02



Data 03



★ @vapefuls · 5 hari
when I text "interesting" this how i be
looking



45 12rb 53rb 692rb