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**A Pragmatic Analysis of Implicatures in Covid-19 Coronavirus  
English Jokes: A Neo-Gricean Approach**

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**Abstract**

The present study aims at examining implicature in covid-19 Coronavirus jokes in the light of a neo-Gricean approach. For carrying out a meaningful analysis of jokes, an eclectic model is adopted. The data of the study consist of (25) electronic coronavirus English jokes. Only (10) are selected for data analysis. The analysis deals with jokes in terms of their types, principles breaking, and humor devices utilized to infer the meaning of the intended implicature. The jokes are analyzed according to Horn's (1989/2004) neo-Gricean principles and Attardo's (1997) Neo-Gricean distinction between two levels of cooperation: the illocutionary Cooperative Principle (ICP) and the Perlocutionary Cooperative Principle (PCP). A neo-Gricean type of principles breaking is conducted by adopting Thomas (1995). While humour devices are analyzed according to Dynel (2009). The data of the study were collected from WhatsApp, Facebook and some other network sources.

Data analysis revealed that the (Quantity) Principle is more frequently broken than the (Relevance) Principle. The analysis showed that the 'violation' of principles was more utilized type of breaking. In addition, 'flouting' and 'opting out' were also utilized in coronavirus jokes. As for humour devices, 'sarcasm', 'irony', 'teasing', and 'self-denigrating' were mostly used in Coronavirus jokes. This indicated that the major concern of the joke teller is criticism through humour.

**Keywords:** implicature, humor, jokes, neo-Gricean

## 1. Introduction

Humor is an overriding tool to achieve many purposes. Specifically, during Covid 19 pandemic, people tend to resort to humor to create laughter in an attempt to cope with the situations they encounter and to connect with the world outside through the Internet. "One of the ways to mitigate the isolation and worries is through creating or telling jokes" (Rochmawati, 2017:150).

Accordingly, the present study briefly sheds light on humor in general and jokes in particular as well as the implicature following a neo-Gricean approach. Humor is defined as "the quality in something that makes it funny... or the ability to understand and enjoy funny situations or to laugh at things." (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English: 698). It refers to all concepts that involve amusement, laughter, and ridicule. A joke, which is part of humour, is considered as a type of communication and entertaining that has the function of bringing people together through laughter; therefore, its language is universal. In addition, the joke is "socially and culturally shaped, and often quite particular to a specific time and place" (Kuipers, 2008: 1).

Jokes have two main parts: the set-up (sometimes called build-up) and the punch-line (Dyner, 2009: 1285; Sherzer, 1985: 216). The set-up is usually a narrative and/or a dialogue while the punch-line is the last part of the joke (ibid). In addition, jokes fall into three basic types, namely, universal, cultural and linguistic ones. Universal jokes refer to humorous utterances which are defined by the utterance context, whereas cultural jokes depend on shared cultural Knowledge to be comprehended and appreciated. While linguistic jokes depend on the linguistic aspects of the utterance including morphology, phonology or syntax of certain languages (Schmitz's, 2002).

Since jokes are mostly concerned with the intention of the speaker, it is important to link them to what is unsaid and intended. This is referred to as implicature. An implicature, is broadly defined as something the speaker suggests or implies with an utterance, even though it is not literally expressed. It is a term coined by Grice in (1975) which is an intended utterance produced by a given writer or speaker to produce some effect on specific audience through recognizing that intention. Implicatures can aid in communicating more efficiently than by explicitly saying everything interlocutors intend to communicate (ibid).

Grice believes that a distinction can be made between what is said and what is implicated, that is unsaid (Grice, 1989: 41). It is also common that a humorous text should include implicature and that some aspects must be unsaid. So a joke is ruined if it is explained and nothing left implicit in it. Therefore, implicature is a necessary hidden

aspect in jokes which must be recovered at the end of a text, i.e. the punchline (cf. Koestler, 1964: 36; Attardo, 2017: 185). Dolitsky (1983: 40) suggests three kinds of information that should be unsaid: shared knowledge which is known for both, information that is irrelevant to the context, and what is very relevant but unwilling to let other people know about. She believes that it is necessary for the speaker, in a humorous interaction, to hide information from the hearer, that is making it implicit.

With the aforementioned perspectives in mind, the present study is concerned with examining implicatures in Covid-19 coronavirus jokes to identify the meanings they imply, particularly the joke-teller's humorous intention according to a neo-Gricean approach. The concern in this study is that humorous implicature is not easily understood and analyzed in newly electronic and culture-loaded jokes. In other words, because of the double or triple-tiered meanings of jokes, they are not easily comprehended and interpreted. Such jokes need to be analyzed at more than one level and by more than one model. Besides, one of the factors affecting the comprehension and understanding of the perlocutionary force of the jokes by the reader is the lack of face-to-face interaction, which includes the tone of the voice and facial expressions that can clarify the intended meaning of the jokes and make it easy to catch the humour intended in the joke. In the light of the problem stated above, this study has the following research questions:

1. Which of the neo-Gricean principles are broken according to the breaking typology in coronavirus jokes?
2. Which humour devices are used in creating the implicature intended in the Coronavirus jokes?

The significance of this study stems from the fact that Gricean theory is considered insufficient and failed to explain how to address and integrate humorous utterances including jokes (cf. Thomas, 1995; Alexander, 1997; Nemesi: 2015). In fact, humour is a challenge to Grice's theory since it is full of linguistic aspects and the intention behind it is to create an effect at the perlocutionary level rather than just transferring information (Nemesi, 2015: 250). Second, this study examines newly coined jokes, that is Covid-19 coronavirus jokes, which have never been analyzed pragmatically so far. Third, this study seems to be the first of its type to apply an eclectic neo-Gricean model specifically Horn's to deal with covid-19 coronavirus jokes.

## **2. Literature Review**

This section is a review of the previous studies that dealt with jokes pragmatically. Starting with Raskin's (1985) "Semantic Mechanism of Humour", he suggests alternative cooperative principles which are distinct from that of Grice (1975) and based on

different maxims (Nemesi, 2015:253). Those new cooperative principles run “parallel with those of the ‘genuine’ CP that narrowly focused on bona-fide communication”. (Nemesi, 2015:253). In addition, such studies consider the breaking of the maxims as the breaking of CP (Kathoff: 2006:2). Raskin (1985) suggests Humour Cooperative Principle (Raskin, 1985: 103) and three joke Maxims: Quantity, Quality, and Relation joke maxims. According to this theory, even when the maxims violate Grice’s CP principle, they are still communicative (Hoicka, 2014: 223). Raskin’s humour CP is just Grice’s CP and maxims but put in the context of jokes-telling (Mooney, 2004:904)

The next study is that of Taghiyev (2017) on “Violation of Grice’s Maxims and Ambiguity in English Jokes”. The study aims at finding out the connection between Grice’s maxims violation and the humour that is stimulated by the types of ambiguity. The study focuses on Grice’s CPs and the way they are violated and categorizes the ambiguity in English verbal jokes. For the analysis, the researcher chooses randomly (10) English linguistic jokes, whereby five jokes are lexical- semantic and the other five are structural-syntactic ones. Those types of jokes were analyzed to show which Grice’s maxims were violated and which type of violation occurred. The conclusion of this study is that humour is achieved in linguistic jokes through either lexical-semantic ambiguity or structural-syntactic ambiguity in which Grice’s maxims are violated (Taghiyev, 2017:287)

Another study on jokes is that of Al Kayed (2019) which conducted a Pragmatic analysis of Jordanian Jokes. It examined Arabic jokes from the perspective of conversational implicature. For the analysis, (6) jokes were taken from WhatsApp and Facebook to identify the implicature that resulted through the violation of Grice’s maxims. The researcher concluded that in order to produce laughter and transfer meanings that are social and economic, the Jordanians violate Grice’s maxims. This type of humour is used to mitigate the effect of satire or criticism. In addition, the author concludes, to understand and interpret the jokes selected for analysis, cultural knowledge is very crucial.

On a different note, Rochmawati (2017) examined English jokes, with a focus on the pragmatic and rhetorical strategies used in the written Jokes. This study adopted Austin’s (1975) Speech Acts Theory, Grice’s CP (1957) and Burger’s (1993) rhetorical techniques to analyze humour in written jokes. The researcher described the way in which the rhetorical and pragmatic strategies were used in the jokes to generate humour. The data were analyzed qualitatively. Findings of the study indicated that there was a relationship between the Speech Act Theory (1975) and CP (1957), and the rhetorical techniques

suggested by Burger (1993). The findings suggest an alternative reading and richer understanding of how written jokes employed pragmatic and rhetorical strategies clarify their rhetorical objectives and humor functions.

### **3. Theoretical Framework:**

#### **3.1 Review of the Relevant Theories**

The approach of this study is basically neo-Gricean; therefore, only the relevant theories, that are concerned with humor, specifically jokes, will be addressed in this section. It is worth noting that since Grice is considered as 'the father of pragmatics' (Thomas 1995:56), Grice's major notions and concepts are highlighted briefly.

##### **3.1.1 Grice's Model**

Grice produces three major concepts, namely, implicature, CP, and Conversational maxims. Implicature is what is implicated in the utterance and not explicitly expressed and required the interlocutor to interpret it. Two types of implicature are distinguished: conventional implicature that has the same implication no matter what the context is and is tied to certain lexical items or linguistic structures like 'however', 'but', and 'even'; and Conversational implicature, which is produced directly by the speaker according to the context. Consequently, the same expressed meaning can have different implications on different occasions (Grice, 1975: 24-26).

In addition, Grice proposed the CP, which runs like this: "Make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Grice, 1975: 45). According to the CP, both speaker and hearer converse with the willingness to deliver and interpret a message. The speaker and hearer cooperate in order to arrive at an efficient communication (Thomas 1995: 63). To interpret the meaning behind utterances, i.e. implicature, Grice divided the CP into four maxims called "Maxims of Conversation" (MOC) which are a set of rules people should follow or observe to achieve effective communication (cf. Dornerus, 2005: 3). See Table (1) below.

When a speaker breaks a maxim, the hearer looks for the implicature since s/he assumes the CP to be in operation. Breaking the maxims is often used intentionally in order to arouse humour or to avoid discomfort. To break a maxim "is the prototypical way of conveying implicit meaning" (Grundy 1995: 41). According to Grice, there are five types of maxim breaking: Flouting, violating, opting out, infringing, and suspending. Violation occurs when a maxim is covertly violated, by lying or misleading others. Opting out is when the speaker clearly states the unwillingness to communicate. Another way is that when a speaker is faced by a 'clash' of maxims when it is difficult for a speaker to fulfil one maxims without violating another

one. The last way is ‘flouting’ (Grice, 1975: 49) (See Table 1 below). So a speaker might observe or follow the maxims and might also violate them, sometimes flout them, opt out of them, or could encounter a clash between two maxims. Flouting or exploiting a maxim is the most interesting one. Basically, by flouting a maxim one is violating it and then it is recovered as the speaker is observing another maxim (Attardo, 1997: 755).

### **3.1.1.1 Problems with Grice’s theory**

The insufficiency and failure of Gricean theory to deal with humorous utterances, including jokes, is critically spotlighted by many scholars. For instance, Nemesi (2015: 250) states that “humor poses a challenge for Grice’s approach because of its rich linguistic repertoire and, more fundamentally, because its purpose is not so much to convey information, as to achieve a perlocutionary effect” (cf. Alexander 1997: 65). The Gricean approach to humour has to be revised to arrive at a practical approach that fits the different types of humour within an “adequate (and not an idealistic) pragmatic theory.” (Nemesi, 2015: 249). In the same context, Attardo (1997: 753) believes that there is a systematic ambiguity in Grice's definition of the CP since there should be a distinction between two levels of cooperation, i.e. LCP and PCP.

Most importantly, Thomas (1995: 87-92) gives a summary to the key problems with Grice's model. One of the problems is that some sentences carry more than one interpretation and consequently the interlocutors have difficulty to discover the maxims and the intended meaning. A difficulty is also faced in distinguishing types of maxims breaking and the different nature of Grice’s maxims and their consequences. In addition, there exists the problem of overlapping among the maxims. Finally, the method to calculate the implicature which Grice suggests is not clear.

### **3.1.2 Neo-Gricean Theories**

As a result of the above mentioned problems, pragmatists, including Levinson (1983) and Horn (1989/2004), introduce a neo-Gricean model of pragmatics which is different from the post Gricean model\_ (see Sperber and Wilson, 1995: 260). Although the neo-Gricean model is still connected to Grice’s theory, it is different from it. For the purpose of this study, the following subsection focuses on three major neo-Gricean theorists, namely Horn’s (1989/2004), Attardo (1997), and Thomas (1995).

#### **3.1.2.1 Horn's Principles**

Following Grice’s (1989: 371), Horn (1989/2004) gives priority to the Quality maxim and considered it as ‘unreducible’ arguing that it is difficult to satisfy the other maxims without satisfying the Quality maxim (Horn, 2004: 13). Thus, Horn (ibid) proposes a bipartite

model, which replaces all of Grice's maxims (except the maxim of Quality) with two fundamental neo-Gricean pragmatic principles.

1. The Q[quantity]-principle ('Make your contribution sufficient; say as much as you can') (essentially 'Say enough', generalizing Grice's first sub-maxim of Quantity and collecting the first two 'clarity' sub-maxims of Manner)

2. R[elation]-principle ('Make your contribution necessary; say no more than you must'), ('Don't say too much', subsuming the second Quantity sub-maxim, Relation, and last two sub-maxims of Manner and Brevity) resulting in Q- and R-implicatures, respectively"

Despite the fact that all of his proposed rules are inspired by Grice's CP and CMs, Horn's (1989/2004) model basically maximizes the information content (Q Principle) and minimizes the form (R Principle) (Cummings, 2010: 333). See table (1) below:

Table (1) Grice's (1975) and Horn's (1989/2004) Models

Grice (1975)	Quality Maxim -Don't say for which you believe to be false. - Don't say that for which you lack adequate evidence.	Quantity Maxim -Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of the exchange) -Do not make your contribution more informative than is required	Relevance Maxim Be relevant	Manner Maxim -Avoid obscurity of expression -Avoid ambiguity -Be brief -Be orderly
Horn (2004)	/	Q[uality] Principle -Make your contribution sufficient -Say as much as you can.	R[elation] Principle - Make your contribution necessary -Say no more than you must ('Don't say too much')	/

### 3.1.2.2 Attardo's (1997) PCP

According to Attardo (1997), in order to disambiguate and explain the systematic ambiguity in Grice's definition of the CP, a distinction between two levels of cooperation should be taken into consideration. More specifically, Attardo proposes the Perlocutionary Cooperative Principle (PCP) to help analyzing some inferences that the Gricean CP cannot (Attardo, 1997: 753). Attardo's PCP runs like that: "Cooperate in whatever goals the speaker may have in initiating a conversational exchange, including any non-linguistic, practical goal" (Attardo, 1997: 766). According to Attardo (1997: 758), the distinction between locutionary cooperation (LC) and perlocutionary cooperation PC is

only an expansion of Grice's basic idea, i.e. CP. It is worth noting that PC is "the amount of cooperation two speakers must put into the text/situation to achieve the goals that the speaker (and/or the hearer) wanted to achieve with the utterance" (Attardo, 1997: 756). Besides, Attardo stresses that understanding any sentence always involves LC but PC must be assumed when we take the speaker to be sincere in regard to some goal outside the conversation (ibid).

In conclusion, it is obvious that every sentence requires two "passages" of the CP, the first one is concerned with decoding the intended meaning at the locutionary level, whereas the major concern of the second is to ensure that the intended effect is achieved at a perlocutionary level. Effective inference is assured at both the LC and PC levels by the observance of the CP. From this it follows that every sentence may fail to follow the CP at either level (Attardo, 1997: 758).

### **3.1.3 Thomas'(1995) Breaking Typology**

One of the various approaches (NEED CITATIONS) to taxonomies of maxims breaking is that of Thomas (1995). Thomas (1995) criticizes Grice's terminology as being inconsistent since the term 'violation' stands for all maxims breaking subtypes (cf. Attardo, 1997: 755). Thomas, like Grice, examines the maxims and their non-observance but, unlike Grice, she provides instances of the categories of maxims breaking (Thomas, 1995). However, Thomas work does not fully reproduce Grice's categories. She applies the term 'flout' to all types of maxims breaking (cf. Mooney, 2004: 906).

Thomas's (1995: 72) taxonomy classifies non-observance (i.e., not following) of the CP into five types: flouting, violating, opting out, infringing, and suspending. In Thomas model clashes are left out because she believes that clashes result in flouts (Thomas, 1995: 65–66). Flouting is done overtly "blatantly". Violations are covert "quietly and unostentatiously". Infringements are unintentional violations that occur because of imperfect use of language as with second language learners and children. Opting out is generated when the speaker is unwilling to interact. As for suspension, its breaking does not generate any implicature (Thomas, 1995: 76) (See Table 2 below). Since the most systematic response to the inconsistency in Grice's terminology is that of Thomas's (1995) (see Mooney, 2004: 906), the researchers adopt her taxonomy. In addition, the researchers also propose to use "breaking" (non-observance, nonfulfillment) as the superordinate concept with a classification of the types of breaking the principles.



Table 2: The various Approaches to Taxonomies of Maxims Breaking (Mooney, 2004: 907)

Grice (1975)	Wilson and Sperber (2000)	Thomas (1995)
Violation (Unsuccessful violation)	Overt violation	Violation
Opting out	Overt suspension	Opting out
Clash		
Flout	Covert violation (flouting)	Flout
		Suspension
		Infringement

It is very common in jokes and humour research to claim that jokes include the breaking of at least one of the maxims of cooperation. Researchers are also concerned with finding out which of the maxims breaking results in humour. According to Attardo (1993:544), any of the maxims can be broken to produce humor and that humorous utterances share some aspects. He adds that although jokes include breaking of maxims and the CP, they still result in successful communication and consequently cooperative.

### 3.1.4 Dynel's (2009) Humour Devices

Joke tellers resort to rhetoric devices so as to produce a joke that stimulates humour. These devices are sometimes called “rhetorical techniques”, “rhetorical strategies” (Berger, 1993), “pragmatic types of humour” (Dynel, 2009), “forms of humour” (Dynel, 2011: 7), and “humour devices” (Rochmawati, 2017: 151). Dynel (2009) mentions pragmatic types of humour which “are not mutually exclusive and thus certain overlaps between them can be observed and the categories can be combined in particular instances of humour” (Dynel, 2009: 1296). They include: witticism, stylistic figures (irony and puns), allusions (distortions and quotations), register clash, retorts, rhetorical questions, teasing, banter, putdowns, self-denigrating humour, and finally, anecdotes.

This study adopts the term “humour devices” to refer to those rhetorical strategies the joke tellers resort to in creating humour. Adapting Dynel (2009), the only humour devices that are related to our study of jokes under investigation are: irony, sarcasm, teasing, and self-denigrating, since some of the devices can be combined and others overlap. In what follows, the humour devices addressed in this study are briefly identified and highlighted.

### **1. Irony**

The most frequently used humour device is irony (cf. Attardo 2000). There have been many definitions for irony. The definition adopted in the present study is that of Burgers et al. (2011: 190) which states that irony is “a literal evaluation that is implicitly contrary to its intended evaluation. If an utterance is read ironically, the valence of the evaluation implied in the literal utterance is reversed in the ironic reading”, (cf. Burgers and van Mulken, 2017: 385).

Irony sometimes overlaps with humour. However, not all types of irony can be considered as humorous since there are ironic utterances which are not humorous (Dynel, 2009: 1289). By using irony, the speaker can express his/her evaluation which could be positive or negative (ibid).

### **1. Sarcasm**

Sarcasm is very closely related to irony and it is considered as simply a rude, insulting, cruel, and less interesting type of irony (Haiman, 1998: 20). In addition, irony does not have to be intentional while sarcasm is required to have intention that people may be ironic in an unintentional way. In addition, sarcasm is an overt and intentional irony which the speaker resorts to in order to express verbal aggression. Therefore, sarcasm is “a general term referring to an aggressive remark that carries humour” (Dynel, 2009: 1289).

### **2. Self-denigrating humour (Self-Criticism)**

The most unusual humorous device is that when a person directs the criticism towards him/herself. This is represented by “the ability to laugh at one’s inabilities or problems” (Dynel, 2009: 1294). This humour device has been termed self-denigrating. The humor lies in that the speaker admits making a mistake and also admits his/her failure that leads to relaxation. The speaker shows the positive self-perception which is regarded as a good trait in the society nowadays.

### **3. Teasing**

Teasing is a humor device which focuses on the personal appearance, habit, and characteristics of the interlocutor. It is different from sarcasm in that the intention of the speaker is not to insult or offend seriously (Martin, 2007: 13). When teasing is used, it is not meant to be actually aggressive but is used just to provoke humour (cf. Dynel, 2009: 1293).

In this study, the selected jokes under investigation include various humour devices. The researchers link those humour devices with breaking of Horn’s (1989/2004) Q and R principles, Thomas’s (1995) taxonomy of Principles breaking, and Attardo’s (1997) LC and PC as an eclectic model to investigate the relationship between the intention of the joke teller and the production of humour. Larrazabal & Korta (2002) believe that in the analysis of humorous utterances, it

is essential to combine both pragmatic and rhetorical elements in order to reveal the intention of the speaker. Based on what is previously stated, Dynel (2009) humour devices are utilized in this study.

#### **4. . Methodology**

##### **4.1 Approach and Data of the Study**

This study is qualitative in nature. It adopted a corpus-based analysis approach to identify the hidden meaning intended by the implicatures conveyed by Covid-19 coronavirus jokes based on Neo-Gricean approach. The data of the study comprised 25 English jokes on Corona virus extracted from social media websites, such as Facebook and WhatsApp. Only (10) are selected for data analysis.

As this study is basically pragmatic, only universal and cultural types of jokes were analyzed excluding linguistic jokes since the latter are based on specific features in the phonology, morphology or syntax of particular languages. Taking these types under consideration, it is necessary to find out the link between the jokes types and the Neo-Gricean model. As for the neo-Gricean type of breaking according to Thomas (1995) only the violation, flouting, and opting out are selected because they are directly connected to jokes. The humour devices analyzed based on Dynel (2009) in this study are only irony, sarcasm, teasing, and self-denigrating.

##### **4.2 Model of Analysis:**

The model of analysis adopted in this study is an eclectic one. In order to understand jokes properly, initially, the analysis needs to show whether the theme of jokes under investigation is universal, whose implicature is more easily understood, or cultural that needs better projection to arrive at the intended meaning of an implicature in a joke. Since Grice's approach to humor has been regarded inadequate as evident in continuous published studies (cf. Thomas (1995: 87-92) Attardo (1997: 753) Alexander 1997: 65) Nemesi (2015: 250). Therefore, a Neo-Gricean model was adopted in this study. The analysis was conducted according to Attardo's (1997) Neo-Gricean distinction between two levels of cooperation: the Locutionary Cooperative Principle (LCP) and the Perlocutionary Cooperative Principle (PCP) to help analyze some inferences that the Gricean CP has not successfully dealt with. Based on Thomas' (1995) neo-Gricean typology of principles breaking, the analysis utilizes Horn's (1989/2004) neo-Gricean principles (Q and R Principles) because knowing which of the principles are broken and the types of breaking the conversational principles would determine the joke teller's intended meaning (implicature). In this analysis, Dynel's humour devices (2009) were also taken into account since such devices create humour in the joke and is applicable to determining the implicature.

Based on the model above, the selected jokes were analyzed in terms of the following:

1. The type of the jokes (universal and cultural jokes).
2. The conversational principles (Q&R) from Horn's (1989/2004).
3. The type of principles breaking according to Thomas (1995) which includes (Violation, Opting out, Flouting).
4. Dynel's (2009) humour devices including (Irony, Sarcasm, Teasing, and Self-denigrating).

## 5. Results and discussion

This section presents the analysis of of the data on the coronavirus jokes based on the eclectic model detailed in the aforementioned theoretical framework. This section presents the results of the the data analysis and discussion. In this paper, via addressing every example's intended meaning along with its structure and type.

1. **“Don't worry, the Corona Virus won't last long... It was made in China.”**

Joke Type	Universal
Horn's Principles Breaking	Violation of Q Principle
Humor Devices	Sarcasm

Joke (1) above is universal, for it is –widely known that the Chinese industry is, generally, of low quality. According to Attardo's (1997) two passages of cooperation, the LC in this joke is in the intention of the joke teller to convey an implicit message by making reference to the assurance that the Corona virus will soon disappear since it is made in China. While the PC is the humorous effect achieved in the punchline that results in the joke. For this purpose, the joke teller violated the Q principle by not providing the required information (to generate the conversational implicature).

Based on the adopted theories, the type of Thomas' (1995) principles breaking is the violation of the Q principle, which indicates that the joke teller intends to criticize the Chinese industry via utilizing sarcasm as the best humor device in this context (Dynel, 2009). This is because it pokes fun at social policy; in this case the Chinese industry is being criticized. Accordingly, the message implied in the above joke is multi-functional, i.e. it is an indirect accusation of China which has initially caused and spread this deadly virus. Secondly and most importantly, the message also entails that the Chinese industry is of bad quality.

**2. “Why is the metro in Rome the safest place to avoid the virus? Because the waiting time is longer than the incubation time.”**

Joke Type	Cultural
Horn’s Principles Breaking	Violation of Q Principle
Humor Device	Irony

In example (2), the joke is a cultural one since it is specific to the metro service in Rome. As for Attardo (1997), the LC is in the intended implicature generated by breaking the Q principle (Horn, 2004) via the use of violation. At the PC, the humour arises when the joke teller utilizes irony (as the humor device preferred) since what is really meant is the opposite of what is stated (Dynel, 2009). This joke pokes fun at the transportation service, specifically the metro, which is not good at Rome. People take a lot of time waiting for it.

Thus, the joke teller's intended meaning is that the metro service in Rome is so bad as people take a lot of time waiting for it. The humorous intention lies in ironically describing the metro in Rome as the '*safest place*' to avoid coronavirus since "*the waiting time is longer than the incubation time*". Thus, this long waiting time is enough to kill the virus!

**3. “Having trouble staying at home? Shave your eyebrows off.”**

Joke Type	Universal
Horn’s Principles Breaking	Violation of R Principle
Humor Devices	Teaser

The joke in example (3) is universal, for it is known that human’s personal feelings and emotions are often reflected through moving the eyebrows. In this joke Attardo’s (1997) understanding of the intended meaning is achieved at the LC level and is produced by violating the R Principle, based on Horn (2004) and Thomas (1995), by not providing relevant information. This leads to the generation of the conversational implicature that arises humour at the PC level once the reader makes the connection between staying at home and shaving the eyebrows. According to Dynel’s (2009), the joke teller resorts to 'teasing' as a humor device since it is directed to the listener's habit of expressing his/her personal emotions through the movement of the eyebrows. In this case, the joke teller does not intend to insult or offend the listener, as is the case with sarcasm and irony (Dynel, 2009).

Thus, the implicature driven from the above joke is that being at home creates disagreement among people staying home because of the quarantine. Since peoples' emotions is often reflected through their eyebrows, the joke teller provides them with such ironic advice. The humor lies in advising people not to control their emotions, but they rather have to avoid any disagreement caused by the eyebrows by shaving them!

**4. “Corona is like your wife. Initially you try to control it. Then you realize you can't. Then you learn to live with it.”**

Joke Type	Universal
Horn's Principles Breaking	Flouting of the R Principle
Humor Devices	Sarcasm

In example (4), the joke is universal since the sarcasm on the husband-wife relationship used in the joke is common to all. Also, the joke teller, who is most likely a male, flouts the R Principle by saying too much, and not being brief and orderly (Horn, 2004). The humor device utilized in the joke is sarcasm (Dyner, 2009) since it is directed towards women (with the intention of offending) via implicitly describing them as being dangerous, intimidating and uncontrollable.

According to Attardo's (1997), the implicature intended at the LC level in the said joke is that marriage institution is severely criticized by implying that wives, in general, are difficult to control and could be as dangerous as the coronavirus. At the PC level, the humor is achieved when the joke teller implies that husbands have no choice but to live with their wives regardless of whether they love each other or not. Husbands are forced to live with their wives because they are bound in marriage contract, which makes it inevitable for them but to cope with this kind of life.

**5. “If I get quarantined for two weeks with my wife and I die. I can assure you it was not the virus that killed me.”**

Joke Type	Universal
Horn's Principles Breaking	Opting out of the Q Principle
Humour Device	Sarcasm

In example (5), the joke is universal, for it is concerned with a husband-wife relationship, which is almost the same everywhere in the world. Besides, Q Principle is opted out (by not explicitly stating his opinion) to generate the intended implicature at the LC level, based on Attardo's (1997), since the joke teller has provided much

more information than needed (Horn 2004). At the PC level the humour is achieved by employing sarcasm as a humor device to criticize women (Dynel, 2009) since this joke is directed towards women as being difficult to cope with.

Obviously, the implicature in the above joke is that the joke teller who is also a male, intends to say that his wife is as deadly as coronavirus, but the funny thing is that he opts out of the Q Principle. In addition, it may be a case that he is unwilling to fulfill it since he intends not to be overtly so offensive to women (in this case, wives) and thus, seems to be afraid of saying this fact about his wife explicitly. Thus, this joke is less offensive than the one in example (4) above.

6. **“It's been almost a week I and wife are working from home due to coronavirus situation. I think we will kill each other before the virus does!”**

Joke Type	Universal
Horn's Principles Breaking	Flouting of the Q Principles
Humour Device	Teasing

The joke in example (6) is universal since it is about a typical husband-wife relationship especially during stressful situations. Structurally, the punch line of the joke is *"we will kill each other before the virus does!"*. According to Attardo's (1997), at the LC level, the implicature is generated by flouting the Q Principle through giving too much information, in the light of Horn (1989/2004) and Thomas (1995). While at the PC level, the humour is achieved by utilizing teasing as a humor device, based on Dynel (2009), since it is directed towards husband/wife characteristics of being difficult to stay together in one place for a long time.

Accordingly, the implicature in the above example is less offensive since the joke teller, who is also a male, believes that staying home with his wife triggers disagreement and problems to the extent that they may kill each other before the coronavirus does. It is worth noting that this example is offence-free, as compared to jokes 4 and 5 above, for the joke teller (husband here) is fair enough to hold both himself and his wife responsible for killing each other.

7. **“With all this talk of Corona Virus, the people who make sanitizing gel are rubbing their hands together.”**

Joke Type	Universal
Horn's Principles Breaking	Violation of the Q Principle.

Humour Devices	Sarcasm.
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The joke in example (7) is universal since greedy and manipulative people are part of every society. The sarcasm in the joke lies in the punch line which says: *the people who make sanitizing gel are rubbing their hands together*. According to Attardo (1997), Horn (2004), and Thomas (1995), the joke teller violates Q Principle to generate the intended implicature at the LC level since s/he does not express the intention overtly by being obscure. The joke teller is unwilling to obey the said principle because the humour results from being indirect in making the association between cleaning hands and being manipulative. At the PC level, the humorous effect is created by utilizing sarcasm as the humor device, based on Dynel (2009), since it is meant to be a critical comment and evaluation.

Specifically, the implicature generated in joke (7) above lies in that people who make sanitizing gel make full use of the coronavirus pandemic crisis to make more money and exploit the difficult situations people face. The humour lies in the paradox between the stressful and scary scene associated with the set up (*Corona Virus*) and punch line, that is, the fact that people are seemingly kept rubbing their hands and washing them with the sanitizing gel to avoid being infected by the virus. Sarcastically, the joke teller plays with the phrase '*rubbing hands*' since s/he intends that they are not rubbing their hands for cleaning them but they do so as an expression of being joyous for making more money!

**8. "I sneezed in the bank today, it was the most attention I have received from the staff in the last 10 years."**

Joke Type	Universal.
Horn's Principles Breaking	Violation of Q Principle.
Humour Devices	self-denigrating

In example (8), the joke is universal, for getting others' attention is one of human's basic needs. Laughter, in the said joke, lies in "*the most attention*" the joke teller received in the last 10 years. In the light of Attardo (1997), Horn (1989/2004), and Thomas (1995), the Q Principle is violated to generate implicature at the LC level. While at the PC level, humour is achieved by utilizing the self-denigrating humor device because the joke teller is criticizing him/herself as being unrecognized and neglected (Dynel, 2009).

The implicature generated in the above joke is that people are often inattentive and indifferent to sneezing, but sneezing has become



the most attention-getting action as people who are infected by coronavirus often sneeze. Further, the intended meaning is that the joke teller has never received such attention before and this indicates that s/he criticizes himself as being unworthy of attention before coronavirus!

**9. “Love knows no borders, neither do people with coronavirus.”**

Joke Type	Universal
Horn’s Principles Breaking	Violation of the Q Principle
Humour Devices	Sarcasm

In the above joke, the joke is universal since most of covidiot (people who are careless of the warnings concerning public health and social distancing related to Covid-19 virus) are the same in their carelessness and indifference. Following Attardo (1997), at the LC level, the implicature is attained by violating the Q Principle, based on Horn (1989/2004) and Thomas (1995), since the joke teller does not express his/her intention directly and the association made between love and covidiot is implicit. At the PC level, the humorous effect is achieved by using sarcasm as the humor device, according to Dynel (2009), for the joke teller is critical and evaluative to people with corona virus.

Thus, the implicature intended in the above joke is that as "love knows no borders"; the same is true with covidiot since they have no borders too. Specifically, they do not follow the medical instructions and warnings to stay home and they; therefore, transfer the pandemic virus to many other people.

**10. “The Coronavirus has achieved what no female has ever been able to achieve. It has cancelled sports, closed all bars and kept all guys at home!”**

Joke Type	Universal
Horn’s Principles Breaking	Violation of R Principle
Humour Devices	Sarcasm

The joke in the above example is universal as women usually complain from the absence of their husbands. In this case, the R Principle is violated because there is a lot of information mentioned as excuses for husbands’ absence. The humour device used to achieve humour is sarcasm as it criticizes men who usually avoid staying at home.

The intended implicature in example (9) above is that no matter what women do to prevent men from being out of the house, they continue to do so. The funny thing is that an invisible virus is the only one that ‘kept’ men at home.

## 6. Conclusion

The data analysis revealed the neo-Gricean Horn’s (2004) Q and R Principles, The Q Principle is found to be more unobserved (broken) than the R Principle. This is an indication that the implicature which creates humor in this types of jokes is mostly generated by not giving sufficient information and being obscure and ambiguous. The analysis shows that the ‘violation’ of principles is evident in our data of Corona virus jokes. In addition, ‘flouting’ and ‘opting out’ are less utilized in these jokes. As for the type of jokes under investigation, the universal coronavirus jokes are the most dominant type among the selected examples and they are more easily understood in terms of implicature than cultural jokes, which require more efforts to arrive at the joke teller’s intention because they are often specific to a certain culture. This result is indicative of the nature of the Corona virus jokes since the whole world is suffering from this pandemic

Concerning humor devices used in the data selected, ‘sarcasm’, ‘irony’, ‘teasing’, and ‘self-denigrating’ are all used because the major concern of the joke teller is criticism through humor. It shows that the type of principles breaking along with humor device utilized determine the joke teller intention and consequently the type of the joke.

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