

THE SEMANTIC PHENOMENA IN *READER'S DIGEST*,
"Laughter, the Best Medicine"

A THESIS

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Sarjana Pendidikan Degree in English Language Teaching



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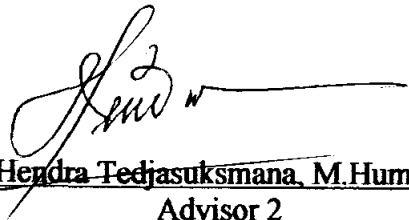
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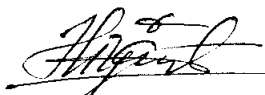


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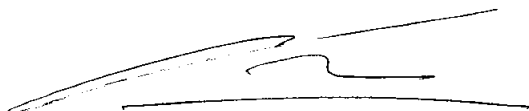
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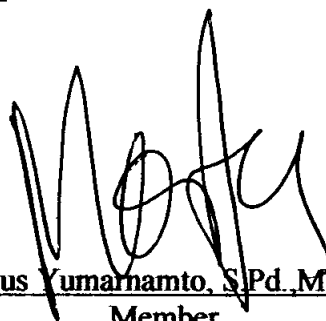
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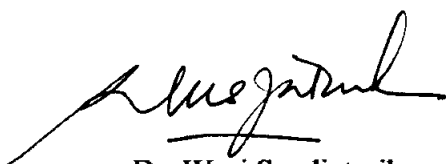
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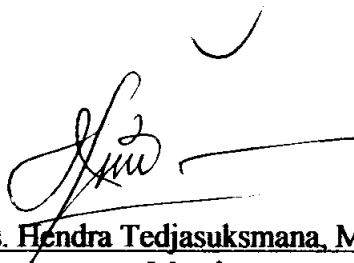
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ABSTRACT

Indrawati, Yanny. 2004. **"The Semantic Phenomena in *Reader's Digest*, "Laughter, the Best Medicine"**". Thesis. Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, FKIP. Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala, Surabaya.

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Key words: jokes or humor, semantic phenomena, ambiguity semantics, truth-conditional semantics, false logic

Language plays an important role in human life. It is a social product, which expresses "feelings, attitudes, desires, and belief and usually conveys information" (Black, 1970: 164). To be able to communicate successfully, people are required to make a "meaningful and unified" language (Cook, 1989: 3). However, in some cases, language is deliberately deviated to obtain funniness. This funniness takes only a small part in human language. However, it takes a big role in human life, especially to release tension or reduce stress (Mindness, as quoted in Raskin, 1985: 7)

This reason has brought the writer to analyze jokes in *Reader's Digest*, two editions from Asia and two editions from America. She uses the systematic sampling to select the data and collects 14 jokes from the data altogether. These jokes in English seem difficult even for the native speakers. Using qualitative research on semantic analysis, the writer tries to find out the funny part of the jokes and the semantic phenomena, explaining their funniness.

Since this study entirely intends to analyze jokes using semantic phenomena, the writer uses the theory of jokes itself, the theory of ambiguity semantic, the theory of truth-conditional semantic, and the theory of false logic as the main references to find out the research questions.

To trustworthy the funniness of the jokes, the writer used researcher triangulation, it required more than one researcher to interpret the same data. In this case, the writer asked two native speakers of English. The first one came from U.K and the second U.S. Both of the triangulators were mostly have the same interpretation with the writer. The differences basically came up because of lack of knowledge and experience, which built up the jokes. Therefore, not every text entitled as jokes gives laughter to the readers.

The writer finally found out that the funny part occurred at the last part of the jokes. This last part gave the jokes their highest amusement. Therefore after the funny part or usually called the punch line, there must be no more words. Then it proves what Wilson (1979: 152) states, "Humor tends to brevity." This brevity also covers all parts of the jokes. If wordiness occurs at the introductory part, which leads to the amusement, then the readers will easily predict the answer before they get into the punch line.

The semantic phenomena which occurred the most often, was ambiguity semantic. It had the percentage of 47.06% (including metaphor). 29.41% caused by the violation of the truth condition. The rest 23.52% was caused by the false logic. The false logic is still distributed into confusing coincident relationships with causes (11.76%), ignoring a common cause (5.88%), and confusing cause and effect (5.88%). Genetic fallacy had no percentages on the selected jokes.