

**AN ANALYSIS OF KEVIN GOLDSTEIN-JACKSON'S JOKES  
USING FIRTH'S DESCRIPTION OF  
CONTEXT OF SITUATION**

Thesis



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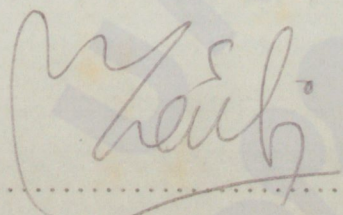
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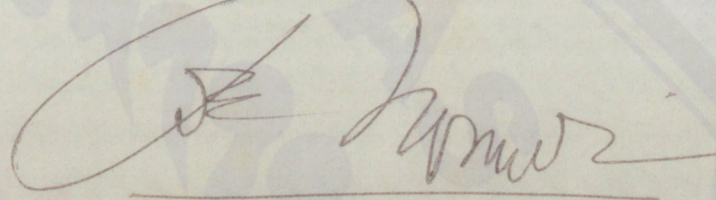
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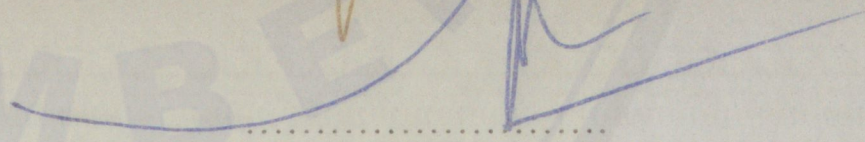
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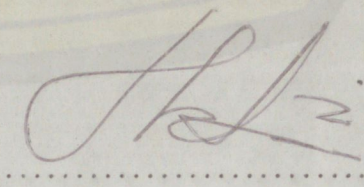
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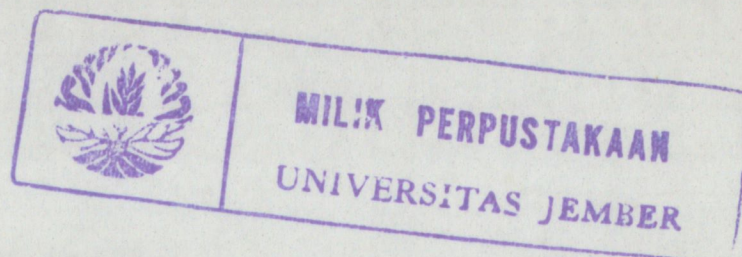


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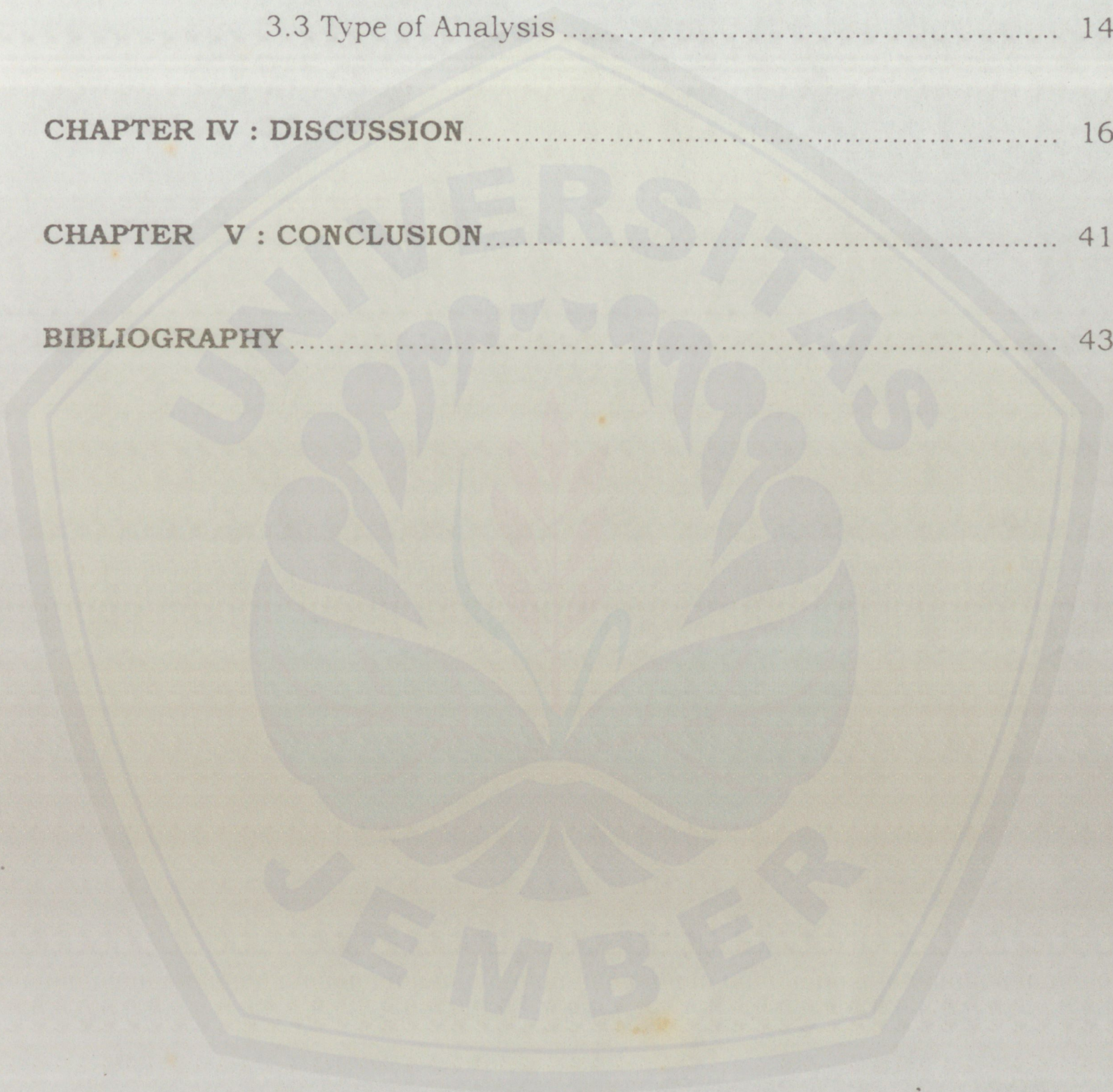
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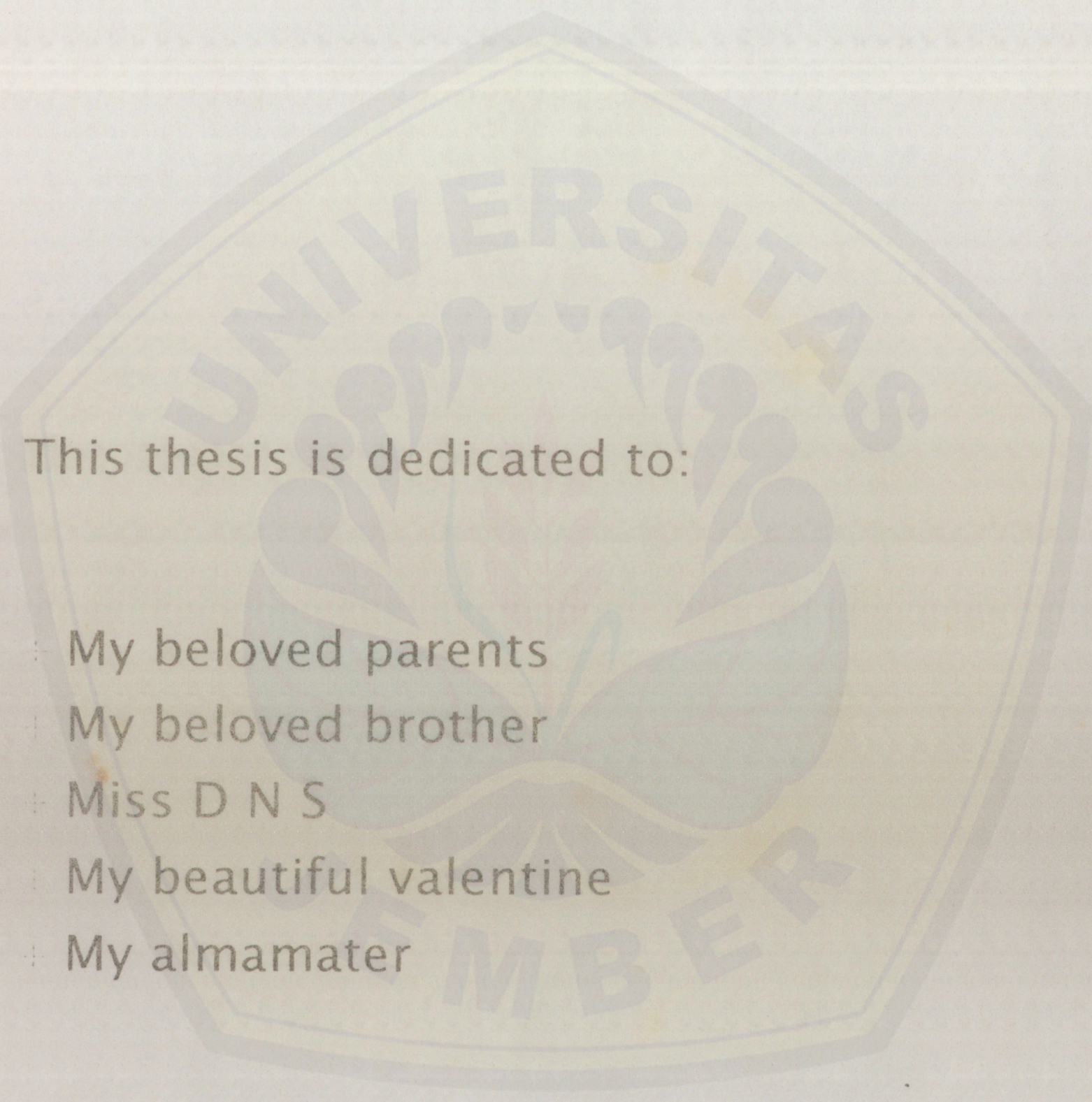
I cannot pay all of your help but I do believe that Allah SWT will bless you all.

Jember, 20 September 2000

Firman Rachmadhina

*Motto:*

*"Laughter is the best medicine"*



This thesis is dedicated to:

- My beloved parents
- My beloved brother
- Miss D N S
- My beautiful valentine
- My almamater

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 The Background of the Study

Language is a means of communication among people. It is true that people always get in touch with language, especially if they want to communicate with other people. Even when they are thinking, language is still used at least in their own mind (Poespoprodjo and Gilarso, 1987:44). By using language, people want to achieve a certain effect and also consider that the communication will be successful to attain the purposes. The activity of using language is divided into two, which are the active activity and the passive activity. The active activity includes speaking and writing, while the passive activity includes listening and reading (Pateda, 1987:1).

Besides used as a means of communication, language is also studied. The study of language is the main subject of linguistics. Saussure in *Cours de Linguistique Generale* claims that the object of linguistics is language (1916, cited in Verhaar, 1992:3). Here, language is divided into three forms, which are *langage* (language in general), *langue* (particular language) and *parole* (speech or utterance). Besides, he also said that there are also written and spoken languages. The written language can be defined as the descendant of the spoken language.



Still talking about the study of language, Cook (1989:6) states that there are two different kinds of language as potential objects for study. The first kind is abstracted in order to teach a language or literacy, or to study how the rules of language work, and another which has been used to communicate something and is felt to be coherent. The latter kind of language is called discourse, and the search for what gives discourse coherence is discourse analysis.

Moreover, Brown and Yule (1983:ix) explain that discourse analysis examines how humans use language to communicate and, in particular, how addressers construct linguistic messages for addressees and how addressees work on linguistic messages in order to interpret them.

Firth, a Professor of General Linguistics in University of London, put the study of context of situation in the area of linguistic analysis. He says that in linguistic analysis, the meaning of the sentence is not enough, but it must be determined by the context first (Lubis, 1993:19).

Context is the total environment in which a text unfolds. There is text and there is other text that accompanies it which is called context (Halliday and Hasan, 1985:5). Halliday also adds that the word text is used in linguistics refers to any passage, spoken or written whatever length that does form unified whole (1980:1, cited in Lubis, 1993:21). Therefore, text can be in the form of song, speech, advertisement, lecture, story, article, conversation, newspaper or joke.

## **1.2 The Problem to Discuss**

In order to get a clear understanding of the discussion, the problems that will be proposed in this thesis are:

1. How does the Firth's description work on Goldstein-Jackson's jokes?
2. What are the values of analyzing the jokes through the study of context of situation?

## **1.3 The Scope of the Study**

The title of this thesis is related to discourse analysis, by focusing more specifically on context of situation proposed by Firth. He describes context of situation in four concepts: the participants in the situation, the action of the participants, other relevant features of the situation and the effects of the verbal action. These concepts will be applied in chapter IV, which is the discussion of this thesis.

## **1.4 The Aim of the Study**

1.4.1 The general aim of this study is to apply linguistic theory, especially discourse analysis, and to give motivation to other students of English Department who are interested in the study of context of situation.

1.4.2 The specific aims are:

1. To explain the understanding of Goldstein-Jackson's jokes through the study of context of situation.
2. To get a better understanding of the jokes from the linguistic point of view.

### **1.5 The Thesis Organization**

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first is introduction, which deals with the background of the study, the problem to discuss, the scope of the study, the aim of the study and the thesis organization itself. Chapter II is theoretical review and hypothesis, which deal with some linguists' researches related to the study of discourse, context of situation, theory of humor and the hypothesis. The methodology of research of this study is explained in chapter III, which includes data collection, type of data and type of analysis. Chapter IV deals with the discussion. In this chapter, all of the data will be analyzed with the study of context of situation. Chapter V, which is the last chapter, will draw the conclusion of the discussion.

## CHAPTER II

### THEORETICAL REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS

#### 2.1 Text

The word 'text' is used in linguistics to refer to any passage, spoken or written whatever length that does form unified whole (Halliday, 1980:1, cited in Lubis, 1993:21). In addition, Lyons (1995:264) states: "What are commonly referred to as texts, whether written or spoken, are deliberately composed by their authors as discrete wholes with determinate beginnings and ends".

Not all of the group of sentences can be regarded as a text. The passage that is defined as a text is a group of related sentences, that form a structure and has a unified meaning. Furthermore, it is a verbal record of a communicative act (Brown and Yule, 1983:6).

Moreover, Halliday and Hasan explain that a text is a unit of language in use as it is not a grammatical unit like a clause or a sentence. A text is best regarded as a semantic unit: a unit not of form but of meaning. A text does not consist of sentences but it is realized by sentences. Text is a semantic unit which hangs together internally because it has semantic unity (1976, cited in Nugroho, 1993:44). In short, a text is a group of related sentences, spoken or written, which has a structure and a unified meaning

## 2.2 Discourse and Discourse Analysis

Cook (1989:6) has explained the definitions of discourse and discourse analysis. He defines discourse as a language in use for communication, either in written or spoken forms, that has unity; and the search for what gives discourse coherence is discourse analysis.

Discourse may be composed of one or more well-formed grammatical sentences. It treats the rules of grammar as a resource, conforming to them when it needs to, but departing from them when it does not.

Furthermore, discourse can be anything from a grunt or single expletive through short conversations or a lengthy legal case. What matters is not its conformity to rules, but the fact that it communicates and is recognized by its receivers as coherent. There is a degree of subjectivity in identifying a stretch of language as discourse. It may be meaningful and thus communicate to one person in a way which another person does not have the necessary knowledge to make sense. It is found that discourse is usually perceived as such by groups, rather than individuals (Cook, 1989:7).

Languages abound with names for discourse types, and in English there are a good number of quite ordinary words, for example: song, speech, lecture, advertisement, story, article, conversation, newspaper, joke, etc. The perception of discourse type is a factor in discourse processing and production which brings together our perception of sender or receiver, topic, function and other factors besides. Some type of discourse are universal e.g. joke, perhaps, and song; and the others are influenced by cultures which are close to each other in social history or organization e.g. bank statement, holy

Koranic text, political street slogan, Christmas card (Cook, 1989:95, 87, 98).

It was Zellig Harris who coined the term discourse analysis for the first time. He initiated a search for language rules that would explain how sentences were connected within a text by a kind of extended grammar. In 1952, in an article entitled 'Discourse Analysis', he analyzed an advertisement for hair tonic and set about searching for grammatical rules to explain why one sentence followed another. The analysis details are not so important, but he made interesting conclusions. He observed that there were two possible directions for discourse analysis: the first is continuing descriptive linguistics beyond the limits of a single sentence at a time, and the second is correlating culture and language (i.e. non-linguistic and linguistic behavior) (Cook, 1989:13).

Moreover, Brown and Yule state that discourse analysis examines how humans use language to communicate and, in particular, how addressers construct linguistic messages for addressees, and how addressees work on linguistic messages in order to interpret them (1983:ix). The people who communicate, the people who interpret and the communicative context then are the most important factors in discourse analysis. In order to account for discourse analysis, we need to look at the features outside the language: the situation, people involved, what they know and what they are doing.

### 2.3 Context and Context of Situation

Text and context are the terms which cannot be separated. They both are aspects of the same process. Context is a text that accompanies other text, not only something can be said or written, but also includes other non-verbal "goings-on". In real life, contexts precede texts and the situation is prior to the discourse that relates to it (Halliday and Hasan, 1989:5).

In addition, Fillmore states that the task is to determine what we can know about the meaning and context of an utterance given only the knowledge that the utterance has occurred. He finds that whenever he notices some sentences in context, immediately find himself asking what the effect would have been if the context had been slightly different (1977:119). From his statement, it is found that context is significant to determine the meaning of a text. If the context changes, consequently, the meaning of the text will also be different (Lubis, 1993:57).

The term 'context of situation' was proposed by Malinowsky, an anthropologist and also a linguist. The term was coined when he conducted a research in a group of islands of the South Pacific known as the Trobriand Islands, whose inhabitants speak Kiriwinian. He was able to converse freely in this language. He then came to the problem of how to interpret and expound his ideas on the culture to English-speaking readers. The culture that he was studying was different to the culture that is familiar to Westerners (Halliday and Hasan, 1985:5).

Malinowsky, then, provided an extended commentary. It was the kind of commentary that placed the text in its living environment. Up to that time, the word 'context' in English had meant 'con-text';

that is to say the words and the sentences before and after the particular sentence that one was looking at. Malinowsky needed a term that expressed the total environment, including the verbal environment, but also including the situation in which the text was uttered. In an article written in 1923, he coined the term 'context of situation' (Malinowsky, 1923). By context of situation, he meant the environment of the text (Halliday and Hasan, 1985:6).

Since then, many linguists have set forward the description of the context of situation. Hymes (1967, cited in Halliday and Hasan, 1985:9) proposed a set of concepts for describing the context of situation as follows:

- a. the form and the content of the message;
- b. the setting;
- c. the participants;
- d. the intent and effect of the communication;
- e. the key;
- f. the medium;
- g. the genre;
- h. the norms of interaction.

Halliday and Hasan (1985:12) classify context of situation into three categories: field (what is happening), tenor (who are taking part) and mode (what part the language is playing).

#### **2.4 Firth's Description of the Context of Situation**

Firth was Malinowsky's young colleague who became the first professor of general linguistics in London University. Firth was interested in the cultural background of language, and he took over Malinowsky's notion of the context of situation and built in to his own



linguistic theory. In Firth's view, expressed in an article he wrote in 1935, all linguistics was the study of meaning and all meaning was function in a context (Halliday and Hasan, 1985:8). He states that the central concept of the whole of semantics is the context of situation. In that context are the human participant or participants, what they say, and what is going on (Firth, 1935:27).

His view was, and still is, that 'context of situation' is best used as a suitable schematic construct to apply to language events. A context of situation for linguistic work brings into relation the following categories:

- a. ***the participants in the situation***: what Firth referred to as persons and personalities, corresponding more or less to what sociologists would regard as the statuses and roles of the participants;
- b. ***the action of the participants***: what they are doing, including both their verbal action and their non-verbal action;
- c. ***other relevant features of the situation***: the surrounding objects and events, in so far as they have some bearing on what is going on;
- d. ***the effects of the verbal action***: what changes were brought about by what the participants in the situation had to say (Firth, 1950:182, Halliday and Hasan, 1985:8).

## 2.5 Humor

No one knows exactly why we laugh, why anything that is funny should cause us to make such a peculiar noise. It would be just as logical to stick our thumbs in our ears and wiggle our fingers as it is to giggle or bellow or howl with laughter. But, when something greatly amuses us, our diaphragm flutters up and down, and we are moved to give out laughter.

The urge of laugh appears at an early age. Babies smile, then “coo”, and finally chuckle when pleased. If certain parts of the body are tickled with the fingers, laughter is produced in babies as well as in many adults. But, by the time a child starts going to school, he also laughs at things he hears and sees. He does not have to have his ribs tickled in order to giggle.

The term humor is applied to all literature and to all informal speech or writing in which the object is to amuse, or rouse laughter in, the reader or header (Monro, 1993:356). Similarly, Hornby defines humor as quality of being amusing or comic (1994:608).

Blumenfeld and Alpern (1990:6-7) state that the goals of humor are as follows:

- a. Humor makes a cheerful life;
- b. Humor can help us to solve our problems;
- c. Humor can express anger in acceptable ways;
- d. Humor offers perspective and balance;
- e. Humor can be a means of communication and an expression of creativity;
- f. Humor gives temporary freedom from restricted social rules;
- g. Humor can be a way of telling the truth;
- h. Humor is good for us physically and mentally;

- i. Laughter asserts life and unites humans;
- j. Humor can often solve problems successfully when the other ways cannot.

There are two types of humor, which are as below:

1. *The Humor of Situation*, which need not be described in words. The humor of situation can be divided into two kinds. They are:

- a. *The Humor of the Unexpected Happening*

For example: If a man meets a woman in the street, raises his hat to her, and a pigeon flies out from beneath it, most of the people who see it would roar with laughter.

- b. *The humor of Incongruity*

For example: Boys and girls see dogs every day and think nothing of them. But if a dog enters a classroom, everyone laughs. The dog does not belong there, and the situation has an element of the incongruity (Monro, 1993:357, The World Book Encyclopedia, 1966:274).

2. *The Humor of Words*

The greatest amount of humor is told rather than seen. Funny stories, or jokes, are among the most popular forms of humor (The World Book Encyclopedia, 1966:274). For example: The young man asked the beautiful young girl to marry him, pointing out that his father was 103 years old and that he was heir to his father's substantial fortune. The girl asked the young man for time to consider his offer and, two weeks later, she became his step-mother.

## 2.6 Hypothesis

Based on the problems and the theoretical review, the hypotheses can be stated as follows:

1. Firth's description of context of situation works on Goldstein-Jackson's jokes Goldstein-Jackson's jokes, by describing the participants, the action of the participants, the other features of the situation and the effects of the participants' verbal action in the jokes.
2. Logically, analyzing the jokes through the study of context of situation can give a contribution to a better understanding and precise interpretation of a text.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

#### 3.1 Data Collection

The data used in this study are collected from library. It means that the data are obtained from books and dictionaries. Hence, this is a library research. More specifically, the data are chosen and collected from Goldstein-Jackson's jokes. Next, the researcher selects the data from the jokes. The selections of those data, of course those that are relevant to the problem of this thesis. However, this thesis will present ten jokes related to the problem proposed in chapter I.

#### 3.2 Type of Data

The study of this thesis uses the qualitative data. The data is qualitative because the data is in the form of words. Neuman (1991:321) states that qualitative data tend to be in the form of words, sentences and paragraphs rather than numbers. In this case, the data are the jokes.

#### 3.3 Type of Analysis

The researcher uses descriptive analysis. Best claims that the descriptive method describes and interprets what is. It involves the description, recording, analysis and interpretation of conditions that exist. It is also concerned with opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident, or trends that are developing

(1981:25,93). The descriptive analysis will be used in analyzing the jokes by the study of context of situation and then the jokes will be interpreted in order to make the jokes understandable.



## CHAPTER IV

### DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 The First Data

##### **BUTCHER**

The lady was searching for the last work in value in Christmas turkeys. The butcher showed her a bonny bird but she hesitated and asked if he had a slightly bigger one.

"I will have a look in the cold store", said the butcher, and disappeared for a minute or two.

In fact it was his last bird so what he did was to ruffle all the feathers up and put the bird into a shallow box so that it would look bigger.

"Here we are", he said. "Is this all right?"

"Ooh, now that is super", said the woman. "I think I will take both!"

(Goldstein-Jackson, 1977:22)

##### **Situational Description**

##### **The Participants in the Situation:**

- a female customer
- a male butcher

##### **The Action of the Participants:**

- a lady was searching for some turkeys for Christmas
- the butcher showed her a bonny bird
- the lady hesitated and asked if he had a slightly bigger one
- the butcher said that he would have a look in the cold store; and he disappeared for a minute or two

- the butcher ruffled all the bird's feathers up and put the bird into a shallow box
- the butcher then asked if the bird was all right
- the woman said that now that was super and she thought she would take both

**Other Relevant Features of the Situation:**

- a turkey
- a shallow box

**The Effects of the Verbal Action:**

- the butcher showed the lady a bonny bird after she told him that she searched a turkey
- the butcher went to look in the cold store after the lady asked if he had a slightly bigger one
- the butcher went back, ruffled all the feathers up and put the bird into a shallow box then brought the bird and asked the lady's opinion
- the lady was satisfied of the last bird and decided to take both of them

**Interpretation**

This joke is about a conversation between a customer and a butcher. The customer is female and the butcher is male. The relationship between the customer and the butcher is just a relationship between a customer and a butcher, and they do not know each other. The other relevant features in the joke are the turkey and the shallow box. The turkey is the thing they are talking about and the shallow box is the instrument that the butcher uses for tricking the lady. At that time, the customer wants to buy some turkeys for Christmas and she asks the



butcher if he still has some turkeys. The butcher shows her one but she hesitates and asks him if he has a bigger one. The butcher then tricks her by making the turkey look bigger because it is the last one he has. The customer then feels satisfied with the turkey. The humor appears when she tells the butcher that she wants to take them both, which are the first and the last turkey. The readers of this joke will laugh at once because in fact, the butcher only has one turkey. Therefore, the lady will find out that the butcher wants to trick her.

#### **4.2 The Second Data**

##### **CHILDREN I**

The two little girls were busy boasting to each other about how great their respective fathers were.

"My father had lunch with Shakespeare yesterday", said Sally.

"But Shakespeare is dead", commented Clare.

"Oh", replied Sally, unperturbed. "No wonder dad said he was quiet."

(Goldstein-Jackson, 1977:24)

##### **Situational Description**

##### **The Participants in the Situation:**

- two little girls: Sally and Clare

##### **The Action of the Participants:**

- Sally said that her father had had lunch with Shakespeare yesterday
- Clare commented that Shakespeare was dead
- Sally replied unperturbed that no wonder her father had said Shakespeare had been quiet

**Other Relevant Features of the Situation:**

- Sally's story about her father

**The Effects of the Verbal Action:**

- Clare commented that Shakespeare was dead after Sally said that her father had had lunch with Shakespeare the day before
- Sally then replied unperturbed that no wonder her dad had said Shakespeare had been quiet

**Interpretation**

This joke is about a conversation between two little girls, Sally and Clare. Sally and Clare are friends and they spend time together frequently. Another relevant feature in the joke is Sally's story about her father because in this joke, it is Sally's turn to tell Clare about her father. Sally says that his father had lunch with Shakespeare yesterday. Clare then comments that Shakespeare is dead. The humor appears when Sally then says unperturbed that no wonder her father said Shakespeare was quiet. The readers will laugh because of Sally's answer. They will think that Sally is a smart girl because even Clare has forced Sally into a corner by saying that Shakespeare is dead, Sally still can give an answer as if she did not tell a lie. Her answer means Shakespeare is dead, no wonder he was so quiet.

**4.3 The Third Data****CHILDREN II**

A small boy was peering through a hole in the fence of a nudist colony. His friend, Paul, came up to him and asked: "Tim, what can you see? Are they men or women in there?"

“I don’t really know”, replied Tim. “None of them have got any clothes on.”

(Goldstein-Jackson, 1977:25)

### **Situational Description**

#### **The Participants in the Situation:**

- two small boys: Tim and Paul

#### **The Action of the Participants:**

- Tim was peering through a hole in the fence of a nudist colony
- Paul came up to him and asked Tim what he could see, whether they were men or women in there
- Tim replied that he did not really know because none of them had got any clothes on

#### **Other Relevant Features of the Situation:**

- a hole in the fence of a nudist colony

#### **The Effects of the Verbal Action:**

- Tim replied that he did not really know after Paul had asked him whether they were men or women in the colony. He added that none of them had got any clothes on

### **Interpretation**

This joke is about the naughtiness of children. The participants are two small boys, Tim and Paul. Tim and Paul are friends and they do things together several times. Another relevant feature in the joke is a hole in the fence of a nudist colony. Through this hole, Tim can see what happens in the colony. This time, Tim is peering through a hole in the fence of

a nudist colony. Paul then comes up to him and asks what he can see, whether they are men or women in there. The humor appears when Tim replies that he does not really know because none of them has got any clothes on. The readers of this joke will laugh because of Tim's answer. Tim cannot differ men from women if he does not see the clothes they wear first, for he is still a child.

#### 4.4 The Fourth Data

##### **CINEMA**

Just at the climax of an epic film, an old man started grubbing around on the floor under the seats.

"What on earth are you doing?", the understandably irritated woman next to him rasped in a low voice.

"Trying to find my toffee," said the man.

"Can't you leave it till the end? You are ruining the film", snapped the woman.

"No!", croaked the old boy. "It has got my false teeth stuck in it!"

(Goldstein-Jackson, 1977:29)

##### **Situational Description**

##### **The Participants in the Situation:**

- two spectators: an old man and a woman

##### **The Action of the Participants:**

- an old man started grubbing around on the floor under the seats
- a woman next to him asked what the man was doing
- the man said he was trying to find his toffee

- the woman snapped the man why he could not leave it till the end because he was ruining the film
- the old man refused and said that the toffee had got his false teeth stuck in it

#### **Other Relevant Features of the Situation:**

- the climax of an epic film
- the old man's toffee
- the old man's false teeth

#### **The Effects of the Verbal Action:**

- the man said that he was trying to find his toffee after a woman asked him what he was doing
- the woman then asked can't he leave it till the end of the film and added that he was ruining the film
- the man refused and replied that the toffee had got his false teeth stuck in it

#### **Interpretation**

The joke is located in a cinema. The participants are two spectators, an old man and a woman. The relationship between them is just the same spectators in the same cinema and they do not know each other. The other relevant features in the joke are the climax of the epic film, the old man's toffee and the old man's false teeth. The climax of the epic film is a relevant feature in this joke because all of the spectators concentrate on this part of the film. The old man's toffee and the old man's false teeth are the other relevant features because the old man is trying to find his toffee, which stuck with his false teeth. At that time, the old man starts grubbing around on the floor under the seats, just at the climax of an epic film. The woman

next to him feels disturbed and asks him what he is doing. The man explains he is trying to find his toffee. The woman becomes angry and says why he cannot leave it because he is ruining the film. The humor appears when the man explains that the toffee has got his false teeth stuck in it. The readers of this joke will laugh because of the man's answer. Actually the old man is trying to find his false teeth. The important thing for the man is his false teeth, not the toffee.

#### **4.5 The Fifth Data**

##### **CLOCK**

A young man purchased a large grandfather clock from an antique shop in Brighton.

He put the unwrapped clock over his shoulder and began to look for a taxi. He hailed one approaching from the right, but it ignored him so, swinging around, he tried to flag one down approaching from the left. Unfortunately, in turning around, the clock over his shoulder struck an old lady on the head and she fell into the gutter.

"Idiot!", she shrieked. "Why can't you wear a normal wrist-watch like the rest of us?"

(Goldstein-Jackson, 1977:29)

##### **Situational Description**

###### **The Participants in the Situation:**

- a young man
- an old lady

###### **The Action of the Participants:**

- a young man purchased a large grandfather clock from an antique shop in Brighton

- the man put the unwrapped clock over his shoulder and began to look for a taxi
- the man hailed a taxi approaching from the right, but it ignored him
- the man then swinging around, tried to flag a taxi down approaching from the left
- the lady shrieked to the man that he was an idiot and why he could not wear a normal wrist-watch like the rest of them

**Other Relevant Features of the Situation:**

- a large grandfather clock from an antique shop in Brighton
- the taxi

**The Effects of the Verbal Action:**

- the man said nothing after the lady shrieked that he was an idiot and asked why he could not wear a normal wrist-watch like the rest of them

**Interpretation**

The joke is located at a sidewalk. The participants are a young man and an old lady. The relationship between them is just the same pedestrians who are waiting for a taxi and they do not know each other. The other relevant features in the joke are the large grandfather clock from an antique shop in Brighton and the taxi. The clock is the thing that the young man has bought and the taxi is the thing the young man looks for. At that time, the young man put the unwrapped large antique clock he bought over his shoulder and begins to look for a taxi. He hails one approaching from the right, but it ignores him.



Swinging around, he tries to flag one down approaching from the left. The funny thing happens when he turns around, the clock over his shoulder strikes an old lady on the head and she falls into the gutter. The funnier thing happens when she shrieks to the man that he is an idiot and why he cannot wear a normal wrist-watch like the rest of them. The readers of this joke will laugh because of two events. First, when the clock strikes the old lady's head and this makes she falls into the gutter. Secondly, when she says why the man cannot wear a normal wrist-watch like them. Apparently, she thinks that the large clock is a wrist-watch because the man put the unwrapped clock over his shoulder.

#### **4.6 The Sixth Data**

##### **CUSTOMS**

A customs officer at Kennedy Airport, New York, opened the suitcase of a beautiful young girl from England and discovered six pairs of very brief panties. He took them out of the case for further inspection (in the vain hope of finding some concealed drugs) and found that the panties were each labelled with one day of the week, from Monday to Saturday.

"And on Sunday?", he inquired.

The girl blushed.

The next person to be inspected by the customs officer was an enormously fat woman from Montreal, and the customs officer took out twelve pairs of giant-size bloomers from her suitcase. Before he could say anything, the Montreal lady smirked, patted his arm playfully and said: "January, February, March, April, May..."

(Goldstein-Jackson, 1977:39)



### **Situational Description**

#### **The Participants in the Situations:**

- a male customs officer
- a beautiful young girl from England
- an enormously fat woman from Montreal

#### **The Action of the Participants:**

- the customs officer opened the suitcase of a beautiful young girl from England and discovered six pairs of very brief panties
- the customs officer took them out of the case for further inspection and found that the panties were each labelled with one day of the week, from Monday to Saturday
- the customs officer asked the girl what she wore on Sunday
- the girl blushed
- the customs officer inspected an enormously fat woman from Montreal
- the customs officer took out twelve pairs of giant-size bloomers from her suitcase
- the fat woman patted the customs officer's arm playfully and said January, February, March, April, May...

#### **Other Relevant Features of the Situation:**

- six pairs of very brief panties
- twelve pairs of giant-size bloomers

**The Effects of the Verbal Action:**

- the beautiful young girl blushed after the customs officer asked her about her panty for Sunday
- when the customs officer inspected an enormously fat woman, he could not say anything after she smirked and patted his arm playfully and said January, February, March, April, May...

**Interpretation**

This joke is about a daily work of a customs officer at Kennedy Airport, New York. The participants are a male customs officer, a beautiful young girl from England and an enormously fat woman from Montreal. The relationship between them is just a relationship between a customs officer and two passengers, and they do not know one another. Moreover, they come from different countries. The other relevant features in the joke are the six pairs of very brief panties and the twelve pairs of giant-size bloomers. The panties are the things that the young girl brings in her suitcase, and the giant-size bloomers are the things that the fat lady brings in her suitcase. Those two kinds of things are inspected and asked by the customs officer. One day, the customs officer inspects a beautiful English girl and opens her suitcase and then discovers six pairs of very brief panties. The panties are each labelled with one day of the week, from Monday to Saturday. After that, the customs officer asks the girl what she wears on Sunday. The girl just blushes. Next, he inspects the fat woman from Montreal and takes out twelve pairs of giant-size bloomers from her suitcase. The funny thing happens when the woman smirks, pats his arms playfully and

says January, February, March, April, May...; before the customs officer says something. The readers of this joke will laugh because of the fat lady's behavior. Actually, she has twelve bloomers in her suitcase and she does such thing to the customs officer in order to tease him. The amount of her bloomers is match to the amount of months in a year. Apparently, the fat woman noticed the event when the customs officer inspected the previous girl.

#### 4.7 The Seventh Data

##### DOCTOR I

The man went to see his doctor because he was feeling under the weather. The doctor asked the usual question such as had the man been drinking or eating too much.

"No", said the man.

"Well, perhaps you have had too many late nights?" queried the doctor.

"No", the man replied.

The doctor thought about the problem for a while and then asked: "Much sex?"

"Infrequently", came the reply.

"Is that two words or one?"

(Goldstein-Jackson, 1977:40)

##### Situational Description

##### The Participants in the Situation:

- a male patient
- a male doctor

**The Action of the Participants:**

- the man went to see his doctor
- the doctor asked the usual question such as had the man been drinking or eating too much
- the man said no
- the doctor queried perhaps he had had too many late nights
- the man replied no
- the doctor thought about the problem for a while and then asked if he had much sex
- the man replied infrequently
- the doctor asked whether that was two words or one

**Other Relevant Features of the Situation**

- the bad feeling of the patient
- the doctor's questions to the patient

**The Effects of the Verbal Action:**

- the doctor then asked whether the man had too many late nights after the man stated that he had not been drinking or eating too much
- the man denied and then the doctor asked whether he had much sex
- the man replied infrequently
- the doctor then asked the man whether infrequently is one word or two words

**Interpretation**

The joke is about a conversation between a doctor and his patient. The doctor and the patient are both males. The relationship between the doctor and the patient is just a

relationship between a doctor and his patient, and they have met each other before. The other relevant features in the joke are the bad feeling of the patient and the doctor's questions to him. The bad feeling makes him to go to see his doctor. The doctor then gives questions to find out why the man feels bad. This time, the doctor examines his patient by giving him questions to find out why he does not feel well. The doctor asks the man if he drinks or eats too much or has too many late nights. The man replies no. The doctor then thinks for a while and asks if he has much sex. The man replies infrequently. The humor appears when the doctor then asks if that is two words or one. Apparently, the doctor get confused with the man's answer because the word "infrequently" has a different meaning from the words "in frequently". "Infrequently" means rare or scarcely, while "in frequently" means often. The readers of this joke will laugh because of the doctor's last question.

#### **4.8 The Eight Data**

##### **DOCTOR II**

A woman went to her doctor to complain that her husband's sexual feelings for her seemed to have declined.

The doctor, being an old friend of the family, gave the woman some pills to slip into her husband's tea so that at least the man wouldn't get a complex about being a bit under-powered.

Two days later, the woman was back in the doctor's surgery.

"What happened?", asked the doctor. "Did the pills work?"

"Fantastic!", replied the woman. "I was so eager to see their effects on my husband that I tipped three of

them into a cup of coffee and, within seconds of drinking it, he got up, kicked over the table and pulled me down on to the floor and ravished me.”

“Oh!”, said the doctor. “I hope you weren’t too surprised.”

“Surprised?”, said the woman. “I’ll never be able to set foot in that restaurant again...”

(Goldstein-Jackson, 1977:41)

### **Situational Description**

#### **The Participants in the Situation:**

- a female patient
- a doctor who is an old friend of the patient’s family

#### **The Action of the Participants:**

- a woman went to her doctor to complain that her husband’s sexual feelings for her seemed to have declined
- the doctor gave the woman some pills
- two days later, the woman was back in the doctor’s surgery
- the doctor asked what had happened, had the pills worked
- the woman replied fantastic, she had been so eager to see their effects on her husband that she tipped three of them into a cup of coffee and, within seconds of drinking it, he had got up, kicked over the table and pulled her down on the floor and ravished her
- the doctor said he hoped she had not been too surprised

- the woman said she had not been surprised, but she would never be able to set foot in that restaurant again...

#### **Other Relevant Features of the Situation:**

- the sexual feeling of the woman's husband
- the pills
- the restaurant

#### **The Effects of the Verbal Action:**

- the doctor gave the woman some pills to slip into her husband's tea after she complained that her husband's sexual feelings for her seemed to have declined
- two days later, the woman explained that the pills worked on her husband after the doctor asked her about the pills
- the woman explained to the doctor that she was not surprised and would never be able to set foot in that restaurant again...

#### **Interpretation**

This joke is about a conversation between a doctor and his patient. The participants are a doctor and a female patient. The relationship between them is the doctor is an old friend of her family. The other relevant features in the joke are the sexual feeling of the woman's husband, the pills and the restaurant. The sexual feeling of the woman's husband makes her to go to see her doctor. The doctor then gives pills to her in order to increase her husband's sexual feeling. The restaurant is the place where the woman tips the pills into her husband's coffee.

This time, the patient comes to the doctor and complains that her husband's sexual feeling for her seemed to have declined. Then the doctor gives her some pills to slip into her husband's tea. Two days later, she comes again to the doctor and tells the doctor that she had tipped three pills into her husband's coffee. After that, her husband got up, kicked over the table and pulled her down and ravished her. The doctor then says he hopes she was not too surprised. The humor appears when the woman replies that she was not surprised, but she will never be able to set foot in that restaurant again. Apparently, that event happened in a restaurant. Surely, this joke will make the readers laugh at once.

#### **4.9 The Ninth Data**

##### **HOSPITAL I**

The pompous patient had annoyed everyone in the ward. The nurses were tired of his amorous advances at them, and the other patients had rapidly become irritated with his highly detailed boasts of his probably fictional conquests of numerous women.

One young nurse decided to teach the man a lesson.

"Now, sir, I want to take your temperature as the doctor instructed", she explained. "So I'll just close the screens around your bed and then you must take your pyjamas off."

"Oh, ho, oh!", said the man, loudly. "So you fancy a bit of slap and tickle with Mr. Fantastic himself, eh? Fancy asking me to take my pyjamas off just to take my temperature! A likely story!"

"I'm serious", insisted the nurse. "The doctor has ordered a rectal temperature to be taken."

"You mean, you want to stick the thermometer up my ..."

"Yes," replied the nurse hastily.



Soon the screens were in position around the man's bed, his pyjamas were removed, and the nurse carried out her plan.

"There, I'll have to leave the thermometer in position for a few minutes," said the nurse, and left the enclosure around the bed.

For the next five minutes the ward was filled with muffled giggles and shrieks of laughter.

"What's all the noise?" asked the matron, entering the ward and noticing a lot of nurses and patients peering in through gaps in the screen around the man.

On entering the enclosure around the man's bed, the matron demanded of the man: "What is the reason for this?"

"For what?" asked the man. "The nurse is taking my temperature." "With this?" demanded the matron, taking a tulip out of the man's behind to the accompaniment of riotous laughter from the onlookers who were still peering in through the screens.

(Goldstein-Jackson, 1977:60)

### **Situational Description**

#### **The Participants in the Situations:**

- a male patient
- other patients
- a young female nurse
- other nurses
- a matron

#### **The Action of the Participants:**

- a pompous patient had annoyed everyone in the ward
- the nurses were tired of his amorous advances at them
- the other patients had rapidly become irritated with the patient's boasts
- a young nurse decided to teach the man a lesson

- the young nurse explained that she wanted to take his temperature as the doctor instructed, she would just close the screens around his bed and then he might take his pyjamas off
- the man said loudly oh, ho, ho, so she fancy a bit of slap and tickle with Mr. Fantastic himself, fancy asking him to take his pyjamas off just to take his temperature, a likely story
- the nurse insisted that she was serious and the doctor had ordered a rectal temperature to be taken
- the patient asked that she meant she wanted to stick the thermometer up his...
- the nurse replied yes hastily
- the nurse closed the screens, removed the patient's pyjamas and carried out her plan
- the nurse said she would have to leave the thermometer in position for a few minutes; and she left the enclosure around the bed
- the matron asked what all the noise was, entering the ward and noticing a lot of nurses and patients peering in through gaps in the screen around the patient
- on entering the enclosure around the man's bed, the matron demanded of the man what the reason for that was
- the man asked for what, the nurse was taking his temperature
- the matron asks with this, taking a tulip out of the man's behind to the accompaniment of riotous

laughter from the onlookers who were still peering in through the screens

**Other Relevant Features of the Situation:**

- a tulip

**The Effects of the Verbal Action:**

- a young nurse decided to teach the pompous patient a lesson after the other nurses and the other patients had felt annoyed
- the patient then asked whether the nurse really wanted to stick the thermometer up his behind after the nurse has said that the doctor has ordered a rectal temperature to be taken
- the nurse said yes hastily to the patient and intended to leave the thermometer in position for a few minutes
- the patient explained that the nurse was taking his temperature after the matron came entering the enclosure around the man's bed because of the noise
- the riotous laughter came from the onlookers after the matron asked about the thermometer then took a tulip out of the man's behind

**Interpretation**

The joke is about the disturbing behavior of a patient in a hospital. The participants are a male patient, other patients, a young female nurse, other nurses and a matron. The relationship between them is just a relationship between patients and nurses and between nurses and a matron. Another relevant feature in the joke is a tulip. The tulip is the thing that the nurse uses to teach the man a lesson. This time, the male

patient makes a noise by boasting that he has conquered a lot of women. One young nurse decides to teach the man a lesson. She explains that she has to take his temperature and he has to take his pyjamas off. She also says that the doctor has ordered a rectal temperature to be taken. So he takes his pyjamas off and the nurse carries out her plan. She says that she has to leave the thermometer in position for a few minutes. Next, the ward is filled with giggles and laughter. The matron comes to check the noise and notices a lot of nurses and patients peering in through gaps in the screens around the man. The matron asks the man what the reason for this is. The man replies for what; and he explains that the nurse is taking his temperature. The funny thing happens when the matron asks the man if the nurse is taking his temperature with this thing. Then she takes a tulip out of the man's behind at the same time with the riotous laughter from the nurses and other patients who are still peering in through the screens. Apparently, the nurse put a tulip into the man's behind instead of a thermometer. The readers of this joke will laugh because of this event. It is really funny to see a tulip appears from the man's behind.

#### **4.10 The Tenth Data**

##### **HOSPITAL II**

Molly, one of the nurses in the hospital, was always going around joking and laughing and teasing the patients.

Knowing Molly's sense of fun, one of the male patients named John decided to play a little trick on her.

The When asked to provide a specimen of his urine he took some orange squash, which his mother had brought for him and poured this into the bottle instead.

When Molly came to collect the sample, John made as if to hand the bottle over to her, but then said: "Hmm. It looks a bit weak. I'd better pass it through again."

He then put the bottle to his lips and drank the contents. Molly fainted.

(Goldstein-Jackson, 1977:60)

### **Situational Description**

#### **The Participants in the Situation:**

- a female nurse: Molly
- a male patient: John

#### **The Actions of the Participants:**

- Molly always makes jokes, laughs and teases the patients
- John decided to play a little trick on Molly
- John took some orange squash which his mother had brought for him and poured this into the bottle instead when asked to provide a specimen of his urine
- when Molly came to collect the sample, John made as if to hand the bottle over to her, but then said hmm, it looks a bit weak, he would better pass it through again
- John then put the bottle to his lips and drank the contents
- Molly fainted

#### **Other Relevant Features of the Situation:**

- orange squash
- the specimen bottle

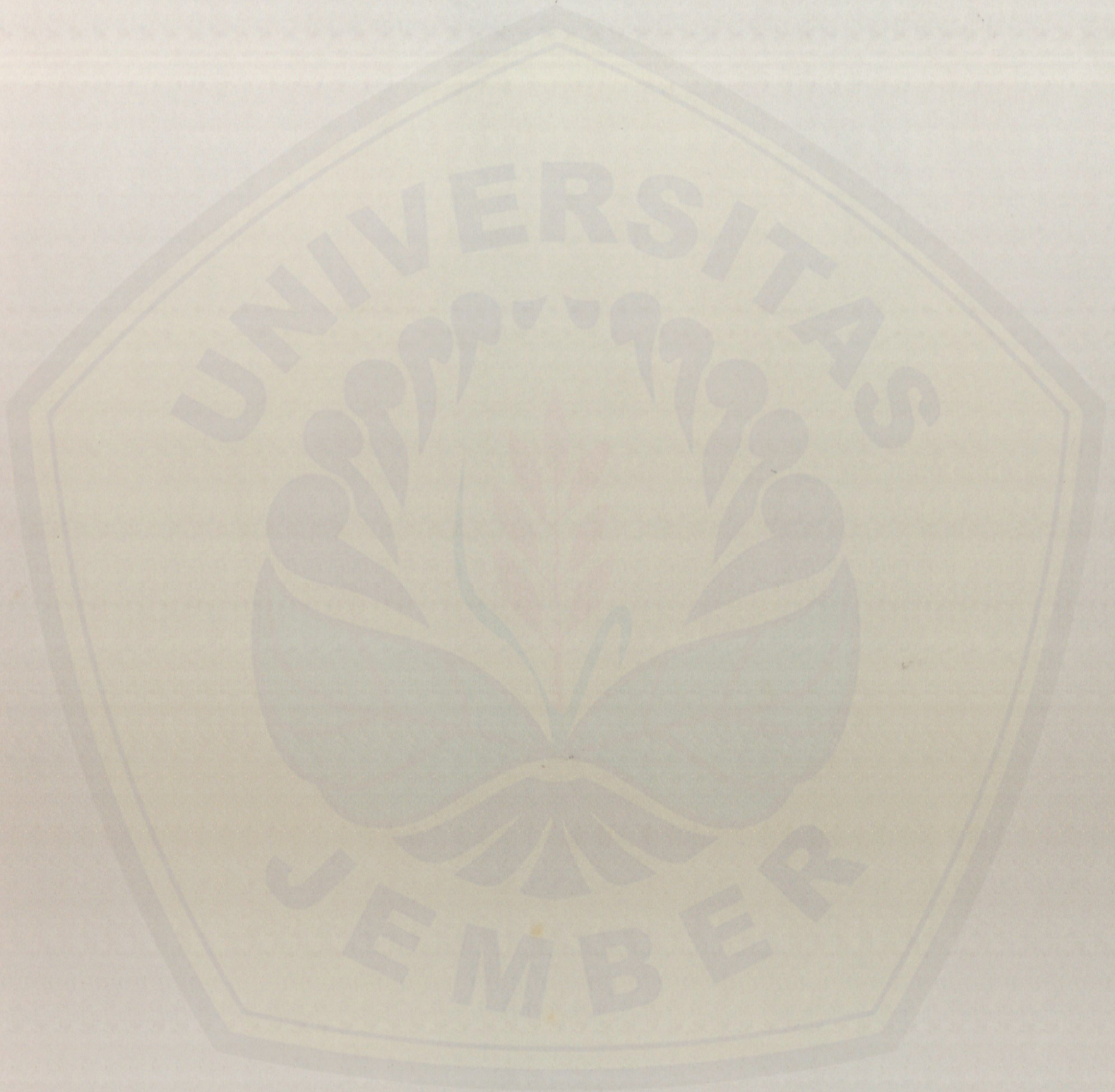
**The Effects of the Verbal Action:**

- John decided to play a little trick on Molly after she always makes jokes, laughs and teases the patients
- after John was asked to provide a specimen of his urine, he took some orange squash which his mother had brought for him and poured this into the bottle instead
- after Molly came to collect the sample, John said that the specimen looks a bit weak, and he would better pass it through again, then he drank the contents. After that Molly fainted.

**Interpretation**

This joke is about a patient who makes a trick to a nurse. The participants are a male patient, John and a female nurse, Molly. The relationship between them is just a relationship between a patient and a nurse, and although they have met each other but they do not know each other very well. The other relevant features in the joke are the orange squash and the specimen bottle. The orange squash is the thing that John uses to trick Molly and the specimen bottle is the place for John's urine. This time, John decides to play a little trick on Molly. When asked to provide a specimen of his urine, he takes some orange squash and pours this into the bottle instead. When Molly comes to collect the sample, John makes as if to hand the bottle over to her, but then says it looks a bit weak and he'd better pass it through again. The funny thing happens when John then puts the bottle to his lips and drinks the contents. After seeing this, Molly faints. She thinks John really drinks his

own urine, since the colour of the orange squash is almost the same with human's urine. John successes in tricking Molly. The readers of this joke will laugh because of John's trick and its effect to Molly.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

By looking at the analysis on chapter IV, we can assume that Firth's description of context of situation works on Goldstein-Jackson's jokes by describing the participants in the situation, the action of the participants, the other relevant features of the situation and the effects of the verbal action in the joke. Moreover, in order to complete the analysis, the humor parts in the jokes have also been shown.

By analyzing the ten jokes systematically, it is found that a text cannot only be studied based on its syntactic-grammatical form, but also based on the context of situation of the text. The essential thing that enables the readers to catch the meaning of a text is the relationship between the text and its environment. A text and its environment are closely related and we cannot separate them if we want to grasp the meaning of the text.

**The participants in the situation** have explained who are taking part in the situation. It means the people who are involving in the joke. It has also been explained their statuses and roles in the joke, such as the customs officer, the spectators, the buyers, common people, their sexes or ages, and so on.

**The action of the participants** has explained everything the participants are doing in the joke: verbal and non-verbal action. Whatever they say and the movements of the parts of their bodies (gestures), have been explained in chapter IV.



**The other relevant features of the situation** have explained the surrounding objects or events that are related to the joke, such as the film, the box, the clock and so on. These kinds of things also support the event in the joke therefore they are included in the analysis of the joke.

**The effects of the verbal action** have been demonstrated what happens after the participants have said something in the joke. There must be some changes or effects after the participants have produced utterances, such as whether after hearing a joke, a man laughs or becomes angry instead.

Then, the question about the advantage of analyzing the jokes through the study of context of situation can also be answered. Logically, the study of context of situation can give a contribution to a better understanding and precise interpretation of a joke. It is acceptable that the study of context of situation can be used as an instrument of understanding a joke. Finally, it is hoped that this study can be useful for the readers, especially in comprehending a joke.

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