

Lexical Ambiguity in Dad Jokes: A Cognitive Linguistic Analysis

Fadila Septiani Sari¹✉, Murni Fidiyanti²
Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya^{1,2}
✉ fadila0918@gmail.com

Abstract:

This research aims to use cognitive linguistics to identify the lexical ambiguity found in dad jokes. The main focus of the investigation will be the mechanisms that produce humor in these kinds of jokes, such as homophony, polysemy, and double entendres. The research analyzes data from thirty dad jokes by lexical semantics theories, categorizing the information according to multiple meanings, sound similarities, and dual interpretations. The data was examined qualitatively to pinpoint how wordplay and frameshifts contribute to humor and to show how the jokes' ambiguous language surprises and amuses the audience. The findings demonstrate that dad jokes primarily employ homophony, polysemy, and double entendre to make jokes funny; other jokes share this dependence on these mechanisms. According to the results, the frameshift also happens based on how the audience understands and interprets the jokes. Last, this study argues that the sense of humor in dad jokes stems from the use of lexical ambiguity, and the punchline unexpectedly or humorously resolving and answers the peculiarity of the setups. This study's emphasis on the ambiguity of polysemy, homophony, and double entendre contributes to a more thorough linguistic analysis of dad jokes. It illustrates how individuals perceive humor through frameshift, elucidating humor's mechanics in everyday English.

Keywords: Dad jokes; lexical ambiguity; cognitive linguistics; polysemy; homophony; double entendre

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggunakan linguistik kognitif untuk mengidentifikasi ambiguitas leksikal yang terdapat dalam lelucon ayah. Fokus utama dari penyelidikan ini adalah mekanisme yang menghasilkan humor dalam jenis lelucon ini, seperti homofoni, polisemi, dan permainan kata ganda. Penelitian ini menganalisis data dari tiga puluh lelucon ayah dengan teori semantik leksikal, mengkategorikan informasi berdasarkan makna ganda, kesamaan bunyi, dan interpretasi ganda. Data tersebut diperiksa secara kualitatif untuk menentukan bagaimana permainan kata dan pergeseran bingkai berkontribusi pada humor serta untuk menunjukkan bagaimana bahasa ambigu dalam lelucon mengejutkan dan menghibur audiens. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa lelucon ayah terutama yang menggunakan homofon, polisemi, dan makna ganda untuk membuat lelucon menjadi lucu; lelucon lainnya juga bergantung pada mekanisme ini. Menurut hasilnya, pergeseran bingkai juga terjadi berdasarkan bagaimana audiens memahami dan menafsirkan lelucon tersebut. Terakhir, studi ini berpendapat bahwa rasa humor dalam lelucon ayah berasal dari penggunaan ambiguitas leksikal, dan punchline yang secara tak terduga atau lucu menyelesaikan dan menjawab keanehan dari pengantar. Penekanan studi ini pada ambiguitas polisemi, homofoni, dan permainan kata ganda berkontribusi pada analisis linguistik yang lebih mendalam tentang lelucon ayah. Ini menggambarkan bagaimana

individu memahami humor melalui frameshift, menjelaskan mekanisme humor dalam bahasa Inggris sehari-hari.

Kata kunci: Lelucon ayah; ambiguitas leksikal; linguistik kognitif; polisemi; homofoni; makna ganda

INTRODUCTION

People expect something witty that can make them chuckle whenever they hear a joke. Take this well-known example: *Why don't eggs tell jokes? They'd crack each other up.* This typical dad joke is a prime example of humor that depends on lexical ambiguity. Since eggs are literal, the word "crack" here has two different meanings: (1) to break open and (2) to make someone laugh, emphasizing its figurative usage. Puns and wordplay are critical components of dad jokes like this one, which use straightforward yet deft language manipulation to produce humor. There are those who laugh and those who groan, which begs the question: What makes dad jokes so funny—or, as many claim, so silly?

Dad jokes are usually short and frequently delivered as one-liners or as a Q&A session. They are distinguished by their frequent use of puns, simplicity, and family-friendly content (Hye-Knudsen, 2021; Miranto, 2020). Despite their apparent simplicity, dad jokes frequently use linguistic phenomena like lexical ambiguity, especially polysemy, in which a single word has several meanings. Because of this ambiguity, joke-tellers can deliver punchlines that make people laugh or understand because of the unexpected change in meaning (Garcia et al., 2007; Raskin, 1984).

Determining the wordplay in dad jokes is only one aspect of understanding their humor; another is investigating the mental processes that enable listeners to sort through these many meanings. A valuable framework for studying this kind of humor is cognitive linguistics, which studies how language users interpret ambiguous words and process their various meanings in a contextual context (Giorgadze, 2014; Rayz & Mazlack, 2004). The use of polysemous words in dad jokes presents a cognitive challenge and a linguistic strategy, requiring the listener to reconcile contradictory meanings instantly.

Dad joke humor heavily relies on polysemy, the definition of a word with more than one meaning, double entendre as enhanced humor by incorporating deeper meanings that are both engaging and thought-provoking, also homophony as words having similar sounds yet the meaning is different (Comedy, 2011; Kharchenko, 2023; Peña, 2006; Salvaterra, 2023). Cruise (1986), highlighted the significance of context in separating these



words because the intended meaning can change depending on the context. For instance, depending on the context, the word "bank" can refer to either a financial institution or the side of a river. Dad jokes frequently take advantage of this ambiguity by surprising the audience with a funny twist in meaning. According to earlier research, this surprise plays a crucial role in creating humor (Miranto, 2020).

Although substantial research has been conducted on polysemy, double entendre, homophony, and lexical ambiguity in general linguistic contexts, little is known about how these phenomena contribute to dad jokes' humor. While dad jokes, as a type of everyday humor, are still not well studied, most studies on polysemy concentrate on more formal or literary works (Bobchynets, 2022; Boxman-Shabtai & Shifman, 2014). The cognitive mechanisms underlying how people interpret and value these jokes are equally understudied.

This study attempts to close this gap by using cognitive linguistics to examine the function of lexical ambiguity in dad jokes. In particular, it investigated how listeners' cognitive processes handle the multiple meanings of polysemous words and how they add to the humor of dad jokes. By concentrating on dad jokes, this study is expected to be able to shed new light on how commonplace, basic humor can reveal more complex linguistic and cognitive patterns.

Even though dad jokes are frequently dismissed as unimportant or oversimplified, their use of linguistic ambiguity offers a chance to investigate more complex linguistic and cognitive processes. Through an analysis of a set of dad jokes, this study shows how polysemy, homophony, and double entendre make the jokes funnier and advance our knowledge of the relationship between language and humor. The findings highlight the value of lexical ambiguity in humor and provide insight into the linguistic nuances of dad jokes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As a multifaceted linguistic phenomenon, humor usually depends on the deliberate use of language to produce a variety of meanings that lead to surprising and amusing interpretations (Valitutti, 2012). Even though humor can take many different forms, its fundamental structure frequently relies on ambiguity, especially linguistic ambiguity. Because it focuses on cognitive processes including the creation of meaning in actual time contexts, cognitive linguistics provides a theoretical framework to comprehend how



people process humor (Aarons, 2012; Brône et al., 2015). Cognitive linguistics holds that language users actively construct meaning by retrieving contextual and cognitive information. This process is especially evident in humor, as people understand jokes using both situational and linguistic frameworks (Geeraerts, 2006). A wide range of humorous expressions are made possible by this dynamic interplay between language and cognition, where puns, double entendres, and other wordplay flourish. This encourages audiences to engage in a lighthearted exploration of meaning and interpretation (Aarons, 2012).

According to Geeraerts' (2006) theoretical contribution, cognitive linguistics offers crucial insights into how people negotiate complex linguistic structures and resolve ambiguity in ways that lead to humor. This theoretical framework emphasizes the dynamic emergence of meaning based on cognitive associations, past experiences, and contextual knowledge, in contrast to more traditional viewpoints that view language as a static construct. In this theory, lexical ambiguity—words or phrases that have more than one meaning—is a basic component of humor, requiring listeners to make cognitive shifts that lead to the humorous "punchline."

A key concept in the field of cognitive linguistics, lexical ambiguity refers to the fact that a single word or phrase can have more than one meaning. According to Cruise (1986), lexical ambiguity can be divided into two main categories: homonymy, which is defined by unrelated meanings (for example, "bat" can refer to both a flying mammal and a piece of sporting equipment), and polysemy, which is defined by meanings that are related but different (for example, "bank" can refer to both a financial institution and the side of it). Due to this ambiguity, language users must rely on contextual cues to correctly determine the intended meaning because words take on particular meanings depending on their situational and linguistic contexts (Cruise, 1986).

According to cognitive linguistics, lexical ambiguity poses a cognitive challenge that requires listeners to switch between various interpretations to achieve coherence (Simpson, 2006). This challenge spans both language processing and cognitive adaptability (Rayz & Mazlack, 2004). When it comes to humor, and specifically dad jokes, this ambiguity is purposefully used to create a humorous effect by leading listeners in one direction and then surprising them with a different interpretation (Birnbaum, 1985; MacDonald & Seidenberg, 2006).

By allowing multiple meanings to coexist within a single word, polysemy plays a significant role in humor. Phrases like "crack" in the joke "They'd crack each other up"



make people laugh by giving them a first impression before revealing a related but surprising meaning. According to Geeraerts (2006), polysemy demonstrates the mental associations that are a part of language, as a single word can elicit a network of meanings. Polysemy enhances humor by requiring a cognitive shift to interpret these meanings, particularly in jokes that rely on subtle meaning shifts itself (Falkum & Vicente, 2015; Pérez, 2013).

Throughout culture, wordplay and humor are frequently based on polysemy. For example, Bobchynets (2022) examined Spanish humor and showed how different interpretations of polysemous words in conversation can lead to humorous exchanges. Dad jokes specifically take advantage of polysemy through straightforward and approachable wordplay, even though it is frequently present in humor across languages. However, even though polysemy has been researched in formal humor, the precise role of dad jokes has not been thoroughly examined, indicating a knowledge gap in understanding its function in informal humor.

Two additional wordplay mechanisms present in lexical ambiguity—double entendre and homophony—help to clarify the mental processes involved in humor comprehension. A phrase that can be interpreted in two different ways, usually with one meaning being risqué or humorous, is referred to as a double entendre (Kharchenko, 2023; Salvaterra, 2023). By undermining the audience's expectations and then unexpectedly rerouting them, this division of interpretation—which is further enhanced by the listener's previous knowledge and cognitive flexibility—produces humor (Boxman-Shabtai & Shifman, 2014).

Similar to homophony, which occurs when two words have the same sound but distinct meanings (for example, "knight" and "night"), homophony also produces humor by introducing ambiguity based on sound, which forces listeners to reconcile the conflicting meanings. Homophones are frequently employed in dad jokes to create a straightforward but witty punchline that appeals to the cognitive processes of semantic disambiguation and phonological recognition (Miranto, 2020). Thus, homophony and double entendre function as cognitive puzzles requiring that listeners use their context and linguistic knowledge to resolve ambiguity and ultimately resolve the humor.

Although the cognitive linguistic approach provides a thorough approach to examining lexical ambiguity in language structures, few academic studies have specifically examined the functioning of this ambiguity in dad jokes. The majority of studies on

polysemy, homophony, and double entendre focus on formal or cultural humor contexts, such as cross-cultural humor and mediated comedic expressions (Bobchynets, 2022; Boxman-Shabtai & Shifman, 2014). However, as a form of everyday humor, dad jokes offer a unique perspective whereby cognitive linguistics may clarify the relationship between humor and language processing. This study aims to fill this knowledge gap by analyzing dad jokes from the perspective of cognitive linguistics, focusing on how lexical ambiguity—more especially, polysemy, double entendre, and homophony—produces humor in ways that reveal more general patterns in language processing and understanding.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a qualitative methodology to investigate the intricacies of linguistic ambiguity in humor, based on Creswell's (2014) framework. The data included 30 dad jokes from Manofmany's website (manofmany.com/entertainment/best-dad-jokes#The_Science_of_Dad_Jokes) that were selected for their humorous use of lexical ambiguity, particularly polysemy, double entendre, and homophony. Jokes without such ambiguity were not included.

Jokes were chosen and reproduced straight from the source as part of the data collection process. They were then categorized according to different forms of linguistic ambiguity, with an emphasis on polysemy and frameshifts. The analysis was organized according to the theories of lexical semantics and cognitive linguistics (Geeraerts, 2006), employing cognitive and semantic frame-shifting techniques to comprehend humor construction. Multiple meanings of ambiguous terms were confirmed by lexical sources and dictionaries. Using cognitive-linguistic principles, the punchlines of the jokes were examined for changes in meaning that produced humor to look at changes in the mental framework.

Polysemy, homophony, and double entendre types were used to classify patterns of linguistic ambiguity and cognitive shifts, and frame semantics assisted in identifying the mental frames that each joke activated. In order to produce more comprehensive findings about how dad jokes use linguistic ambiguity to generate humor, recurring motifs were identified.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the data explained how dad jokes produced humor through the use of lexical ambiguity of double entendre, polysemy, and homophony phrases and how it shifted the cognitive to comprehend the humor. The research discovered three categories for the 30 chosen dad jokes: homophony, double entendre, and polysemy. Depending on its type, each data joke may fall into two or more categories; some may overlap as homophonic or double entendre, while others may exhibit polysemy.

Polysemy in Dad Jokes

This research found a notable pattern from the selected data: the dependence on polysemous terms possessing two or more interconnected meanings. Humor emerged when the punchline revealed another interpretation, guiding the audience to perceive one. Here are some of the selected data of jokes classified as polysemy:

"I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. It's impossible to put down!" (1)

"I like telling Dad jokes. Sometimes he laughs!" (2)

Based on the data above, the polysemy of put-down (1) and dad jokes (2), these data highlight their multiple meanings. The first data produces dual meanings: physically placing something and stopping reading (1). The second data also produces a dual meaning, defining dad jokes as the type of jokes and the jokes told to one's dad (2).

To understand these jokes, the first data leads to the statement that a book cannot be placed down due to antigravity and the expectation of a book ending its reading session. This pun elicits a surprising response from the audience. In the second data, "dad jokes" often elicit the audience's expectation that fathers are the ones uttering these jokes and commenting on their style. However, when one tells a joke to their father and observes his reaction, the meaning transforms into a punchline. This shift in meaning may create simple humor for the audience listening to the jokes.

Double Entendre in Dad Jokes

Double entendres represent a crucial component of humor, often depending on wordplay and many interpretations. To produce humorous effects in two settings, double entendres usually use homophones and homonyms (Sang, 2009). This study identified a pattern of double entendre in the data based on its use of wordplay and its role in conveying humor. Here are two datas of double entendre:

“Wanna hear a joke about paper? Never mind—it’s tearable.” (1)

“Why are cats bad storytellers? Because they only have one tale.” (2)

The datas of puns above are based on using different words with similar sounds. This is considered a double entendre, where the jokes have two interpretations, and one is often humorous. The wordplay in the first joke, 'tearable,' combines the words 'terrible,' meaning bad, and 'tearable,' meaning able to tear (1). In this instance, the joke culminates in a resolution when a term related to physical attributes and subjective evaluation is added. The audience can read "tearable" in a way that plays with its dual connotations.

The double entendre of the second data is from the word “one tale.” The researcher discovered that the ambiguity of this word refers to both the tail of a cat and a single story (2). In this instance, the pun arises when the viewer perceives the implication that the cat has merely a singular narrative to convey. Nevertheless, the significance transitions to the cat's tail, which serves a second function with implications that evoke a playful comedy.

Homophony in Dad Jokes

The consideration of homophony might be similar to polysemy or double entendre. However, the researcher identified the data as homophony due to spelling differences, even though the sounds were similar. The humor in this type of joke stems from the sound it produces when we listen to it. Here are some data of homophonic dad jokes:

“What did the fried rice say to the shrimp? Don’t wok away from me.” (1)

“Did you hear about the guy who invented the knock-knock joke? He won the ‘no-bell’ prize.” (2)

In the data above, the homophone word wok, which refers to a cooking pan, sounds similar to the verb walk (1). The humor in the first data emerges when the audience interprets the word as a walk and then switches to its literal meaning as a cooking pan. The joke capitalizes on this phonetic similarity, creating a similar sound but a distinct meaning. The second joke demonstrates how homophony applies to the same phenomenon. The ambiguity of this joke arises from the term "no-bell," which resembles the Nobel Prize. Given the initial anticipation associated with the Nobel prestige award, presenting this joke straightforwardly might lead the audience to misunderstand the literal interpretation of "no-bell," which refers to a doorbell, as the first intended meaning. This type of knock-knock joke utilizes homophony to prompt the audience to reevaluate its meaning.



Discussion

The way the dad jokes' cognitive process operates is an intriguing investigation of humor and cognition that demonstrates the complex connections between language and laughter in our brains. The interaction between language and contradiction, where the punchline humorously subverts expectations, frequently determines the level of cognitive engagement needed to enjoy dad jokes (Aarons, 2012). This phenomenon is more than just a singular occurrence; it is indicative of larger cognitive processes in humor in general, which can be examined using frameworks like incongruity-resolution theory. Furthermore, knowing how our brains interpret these lighthearted jokes can help us understand more intricate types of humor, showing that even seemingly straightforward conversations can have multiple levels of meaning (Samson et al., 2008). As a result, the enjoyment of dad jokes provides an example for investigating the complex interplay between language and our feelings, demonstrating the depth of human thought in social settings. Because shared laughter can fill gaps between people and create a sense of community and belonging, this interaction between emotions and language not only improves our interactions but also builds connections (Giora, 1991).

Beyond dad jokes, this communal element of humor encompasses a wide range of comedic styles that engage in cognitive processes comparable to those involved in language exchanges. For example, satire and parody expose deeper truths through the lens of humor while simultaneously entertaining and challenging audiences to think critically about social norms (Chang & Yan, 2016). Moreover, these more intricate comedic structures frequently use techniques like conceptual blending, which creatively combines disparate ideas to enhance our comprehension of shared experiences and cultural contexts (Dyrel, 2018). It is clear from delving into this wider range of humor that laughter is not only a form of amusement but also an essential instrument for social criticism and introspection, strengthening interpersonal bonds while also subverting conventional wisdom (Watson et al., 2007). Because of its dual purpose, humor promotes discussion that goes beyond simple entertainment, inspiring viewers to reevaluate their viewpoints and have deep discussions about pertinent topics.

According to cognitive linguistics, frame-shifting is the process by which a reader or listener changes the meaning of a word or conceptual framework. Humor can result from this cognitive reorganization, especially in situations like dad jokes or puns where words' two meanings produce an incongruity that defies expectations (Wang, 2014). One frame

may be activated first when a listener comes across a word that has more than one meaning. But as the situation develops—typically by setting up a joke or a funny statement—the listener might move to a new frame that reveals a different meaning (Shibata et al., 2014). Because the punchline differs greatly from the first interpretation, this change may cause an expression of surprise or pleasure and make people laugh.

In cognitive linguistics, Geeraerts (2006) highlights the importance of frame-shifting in comprehending language and meaning. He investigates how these changes reflect larger cognitive processes that influence how we interact with language, rather than just being humor-related mechanisms.

This research also found that some collected data were considered overlapping jokes. This means that even though the jokes fall into some categories, their linguistic features and how they cognitively shift how the audience expects and interprets the humor make them fit with other categories. Below is one of the data of an overlapping joke.

“Atheism is a non-prophet organization.”

The homophony of "prophet" and "profit," along with the dual connotation associated with atheism, generates humor. People perceive atheism as a "non-prophet," implying an absence of a religious figure. On the other hand, its classification as a "non-profit" signifies a lack of financial gain. Consequently, the researcher classifies this data as a multiple-interpretation joke, incorporating homophonic and double-entendre elements.

Jokes represent a comedy category frequently employing linguistic versatility, various comedic techniques, and cognitive engagement. Many English words, like "makeup," have multiple meanings, falling under the categories of both polysemy and puns. Jokes frequently employ many techniques to enhance their effect, including puns, double entendres, and homophony. Cognitive processing creates one expectation and, occasionally, delivers a punchline that modifies interpretation. Various techniques like homophony (playing on similar sounds) and double entendre (providing two possible readings) contribute to ambiguity, another essential component of humor.

Humor frequently depends on wordplay, which utilizes phonetically similar words with distinct meanings (Rayz & Mazlack, 2004). Usually found in the punchline of a joke, this language device creates conflict or challenges expectations. According to Lems (2013) wordplay-based jokes can improve language skills, but metalinguistic awareness is needed.

When the punchline is revealed, many jokes change the meaning of the original premise. This phenomenon extends beyond verbal humor (Ritchie, 2006). Look at this data below.

“Why couldn’t the bicycle stand up by itself? It was two tired.”

The word "two tired" in this bicycle joke can refer to a literal situation where a bicycle has two tires or can serve as an adjective to signify the bicycle's extreme fatigue. Lexical semantics classifies this data as polysemy due to the wordplay involved. Jokes can convey multiple meanings, contingent on the audience's interpretation of the humor. The punchline of a dad joke often has a different meaning from the word or phrase the audience initially understood, which is why jokes are funny. This process of mental reinterpretation is a crucial idea in cognitive linguistics that explains humor.

According to the collected data, the considerable amount of humor aimed at dads aligns with the traits of stereotype humor, featuring a fun, clichéd, and somewhat foreseeable style. It is possible to identify a common theme of straightforward, daily humor that characterizes the dad joke genre. Some data employ the question-answer format, using questions for the set-up and a twist to deliver the punchline, resulting in quick, surprising humor. Current research shows that understanding humor involves complex cognitive processes. According to Coulson et al. (2006), humor requires listeners to frame circumstances or words differently in their minds to understand them. This sometimes requires the reconciliation of discrepancies between expected and actual interpretations (Kreitler et al., 1988). Studies have shown that intonation patterns, like contrast and deaccent, make people funnier by making them think of strange connections between words (Wennerstrom, 2011). Additionally, studies utilizing eye-tracking techniques support the frame-shifting model of joke comprehension, which suggests that readers consider joke endings for longer and often move their eyes backward to consider the context (Coulson et al., 2006).

The results of this study align with cognitive linguistics theories, which hold that comedy is the result of the cognitive process of alternating between several meanings for the same word. The cognitive transition between two conflicting interpretations of a polysemous term requires listeners to restructure their mental frameworks, a crucial process in the humor of dad jokes. Based on Geeraerts (2006), frame-shifting is a cognitive rearrangement that can be humorous when a listener switches from one understanding of a word to another. This process involves activating distinct frames, experiencing

incongruity, and resolving that incongruity, often resulting in a strange outcome. Understanding how humor is produced through frame-shifting requires understanding the interaction between language, context, and cognitive processes.

According to Cruise's (1986) theory of lexical semantics, polysemy frequently refers to related meanings of the same term that are triggered in various circumstances. Dad jokes often use this by directing the listener's attention to one interpretation, only to unveil a parallel, associated interpretation in the punchline. The dynamic quality of word meanings and context's critical role in influencing these meanings are highlighted in Cruse's explanation of polysemy. The capacity of words to alter meaning according to context enhances language and creates avenues for humor as audiences discern ambiguities and appreciate the whimsical transitions in meaning. As explicated by Fillmore (1976) about frame semantics theory, the utilization of frame-shifting is a prominent characteristic of dad humor. Listeners are first encouraged to adopt a familiar cognitive framework, such as the notion of a "cheesy" joke that means it contains cheese, before being suddenly transitioned to a divergent framework, which finally provokes the humor of the punchline.

The results enhance the comprehension of language ambiguity's function in humor creation. Examining dad jokes, frequently regarded as trivial, reveals complex systems of polysemy and frame-shifting that illustrate profound cognitive processes in language comprehension. This study concentrated on polysemy in dad jokes; however, subsequent research may investigate how various forms of lexical ambiguity, like homonymy or metaphorical shifts, enhance humor in alternative joke formats. Moreover, additional research on how audiences interpret these jokes could provide a greater understanding of the underlying cognitive mechanisms.

CONCLUSION

This study evaluated thirty data points representing a collection of dad jokes. The researcher divided the jokes into three categories: polysemy, double entendre, homophony, and jokes that fell into multiple categories. The results show that dad jokes use wordplay, specifically polysemy, and linguistic ambiguity, to create amusement through cognitive frame-shifting of the audience's perspective. The relationship between cognitive processes and lexical semantics highlights the complex linguistic systems underlying these seemingly straightforward jokes. The typical data pattern also discovered



that the jokes usually applied the question-answer format, where the punchline occurs in the twisted answers.

The researcher anticipates that this study will deliver a comprehensive linguistic analysis of dad jokes, emphasizing polysemy, homophony, and ambiguity. It might also be helpful in classrooms, where comedy is a great teaching tool for language concepts like homophony, ambiguity, and polysemy. Additionally, it will demonstrate how individuals interpret humor through frame changes, ambiguity, and mental frames, which will help to clarify how humor functions in plain, everyday English.

Future research suggestions may encompass a comparative analysis of the efficacy of dad jokes or analogous humor in various languages, investigating the cross-cultural functionality of polysemy, homophony, and frameshifts, or scrutinizing the particular forms of lexical ambiguity present in dad jokes, including homonymy, metaphorical shifts, antonymy, or acquiring contemporary insights on alternative humor formats. Eventually, further studies could examine alternative forms of comedy (e.g., black humor, observational humor) to evaluate the linguistic mechanisms that elicit amusement beyond the "dad joke" format.

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