

## **UNDERSTANDING VERBAL HUMOR THROUGH IMPLICATURE AND ENTAILMENT IN THREADS COMMENT INTERACTIONS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research focuses on examining humor within online communication by investigating implicature and entailment found in comments on social media. The data were collected using a documentation technique by capturing screenshots of humorous comments on the Threads platform. The data were analyzed through implicature and entailment analysis using pragmatic and semantic perspectives. The results indicate that implicature is a key aspect in the understanding of humor, as the majority of comments depend on suggested meanings rather than direct statements. Conversely, entailment serves as a supporting component that creates logical connections but is frequently overshadowed by the interpretation based on context. Furthermore, the digital environment, including shared knowledge, informal language, and an engaging communication style, greatly impacts the way humor is created and perceived. Consequently, humor in social media serves not only as a source of amusement but also reflects the users' pragmatic skills and inventive use of language.

**Keywords:** comment interaction, entailment, implicature, social media, verbal humor

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Language is a fundamental aspect of human life that functions not only as a tool for communication but also as a medium for expressing ideas, emotions, and social identity. In contemporary society, the use of language has undergone significant

transformation due to the rapid development of digital technology. Communication is no longer limited to face-to-face interaction but has expanded into online platforms, particularly social media, where users engage in dynamic and interactive

exchanges. According to Tagg (2021), digital communication is characterized by its reliance on shared knowledge, interaction patterns, and platform-specific conventions, which make meaning more context-dependent and fluid. This shift has influenced how individuals construct and interpret meaning in everyday communication.

One of the most prominent features of language use in social media is the widespread use of humor. Humor is not only utilized for entertainment but also serves as a communicative strategy to express opinions, criticism, and social identity in an indirect manner (Attardo, 2023;). Verbal humor, in particular, refers to humor that is constructed through linguistic expressions such as irony, sarcasm, exaggeration, and wordplay (Burgers et al.,). According to Attardo (2021), humor arises from incongruity, which involves a mismatch between expectation and reality, leading to amusement. In digital communication, humor often appears in short forms such as comments and replies, which require users to interpret meaning beyond the literal level (Huang, 2021;).

In understanding verbal humor, the concept of implicature plays a crucial role. Implicature refers to meaning that is implied rather than explicitly stated, allowing speakers to convey messages indirectly. According to Huang (2021), implicature is essential in context-dependent communication because it enables speakers to communicate efficiently without stating all information directly. This is particularly relevant in humorous discourse, where the intended meaning is often hidden behind literal expressions. Furthermore, (Dynel 2022) emphasizes that humor in digital communication frequently relies

on implicature, especially in the use of sarcasm and irony, where the intended meaning is often opposite to what is said.

In addition to implicature, entailment is another important concept in understanding meaning. Entailment refers to the logical relationship between statements, where the truth of one statement guarantees the truth of another. Although humor is often indirect, entailment still contributes to the interpretation process by providing a logical framework for understanding meaning. According to Chatzikiyakidis and Luo (2021), entailment is widely used to analyze semantic relationships, particularly in identifying how one statement can be inferred from another. However, in humorous discourse, entailment is often less dominant compared to implicature, as humor relies more on contextual interpretation than on strict logical relations.

Furthermore, the role of context in digital communication cannot be ignored. Social media platforms such as Threads provide a unique environment where users interact through short written comments that often contain layered meanings. According to Lew (2022), humor in online interaction is highly dependent on contextual factors such as cultural background, shared knowledge, and communication norms. Without understanding these contextual elements, users may fail to interpret the intended meaning of a humorous expression. Therefore, analyzing humor in digital communication requires a comprehensive approach that considers both linguistic and contextual aspects.

Several previous studies have examined humor and meaning in digital communication. For instance, (Dynel 2022) found that humor in online

discourse is largely constructed through implicature and indirect meaning. Similarly, (Yus 2022) highlights the importance of contextual relevance in interpreting humor, emphasizing that shared knowledge plays a key role in understanding implicit meaning. In addition, (Pérez 2021) argues that digital humor often involves multiple layers of meaning, combining both explicit and implicit elements. While these studies provide valuable insights, they mainly focus on general social media platforms and do not specifically address comment interactions in Threads.

Based on the discussion above, there is a lack of research efforts that analyze verbal humor, especially in the context of interactions in Threads comments, particularly those related to implicature and its impact. Previous research has been more directed at social media in general and broader online discussions, while studies that focus on humor in Threads comments are still relatively rare. Therefore, this study aims to identify various types of verbal humor that exist in comment interactions on Threads, analyze how implicatures are used to create verbal humor, and examine the function of implicatures in understanding humorous expressions in comments on Threads.

This research is expected to increase insight in the field of pragmatics and provide a deeper understanding of the role of humor in digital communication.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Verbal Humor

Verbal humor is a form of humor that is constructed through linguistic expressions, where language becomes the primary medium for creating amusement. It involves the

manipulation of words, phrases, and sentences to produce humorous effects that often go beyond literal meaning. In linguistic studies, verbal humor is closely associated with the concept of incongruity, which refers to the mismatch between expectation and reality. According to Attardo (2021), humor arises when there is a cognitive shift caused by unexpected outcomes, leading to amusement. This suggests that humor is not merely about funny content but about how meaning is structured and interpreted. In addition, verbal humor can take various forms, including irony, sarcasm, exaggeration, and wordplay, each of which requires a certain level of linguistic awareness from the audience.

In the context of digital communication, verbal humor becomes more complex due to the nature of online interaction, which is often brief, informal, and context-dependent. Social media platforms encourage users to express ideas concisely, which leads to the creation of short yet meaningful humorous expressions. According to Dynel (2022), humor in online discourse is highly dependent on pragmatic competence, as users must interpret implicit meanings rather than rely solely on literal interpretation. This complexity is further emphasized by (Pérez 2021), who states that digital humor often combines explicit and implicit meanings simultaneously, resulting in layered interpretations. As a result, understanding verbal humor in digital contexts requires not only linguistic knowledge but also the ability to interpret meaning within a specific context.

Furthermore, verbal humor serves multiple communicative functions beyond entertainment. It can

be used as a strategy to express opinions, criticism, and social identity in a less direct manner. According to Yus (2022), humor allows speakers to convey sensitive or potentially offensive ideas in a way that reduces social tension. In addition, humor can strengthen social relationships by creating a sense of shared understanding among users. In digital environments, this function becomes even more significant, as humor helps maintain interaction and engagement among users. Therefore, verbal humor can be seen as a complex linguistic and social phenomenon that reflects both creativity and communicative competence.

## 2.2 Implicature

Implicature is a fundamental concept in pragmatics that explains how speakers convey meaning indirectly in communication. It was introduced by (H. P. Grice), who proposed that meaning is not always explicitly stated but can be implied through context. This concept is closely related to the Cooperative Principle, which consists of four maxims: quantity, quality, relation, and manner. When these maxims are intentionally violated, implicature arises, allowing speakers to convey meanings beyond the literal level. In this sense, implicature highlights the importance of context and shared understanding in interpreting meaning.

In humorous communication, implicature plays a crucial role because humor often depends on indirect meaning. Speakers frequently use sarcasm, irony, or exaggeration to create humorous effects, which require the audience to interpret the intended meaning behind the words. According to Huang (2021), implicature is essential in context-dependent communication, as it enables speakers to communicate

efficiently without explicitly stating everything. This is particularly relevant in digital communication, where messages are often short and lack non-verbal cues. As a result, users rely heavily on implicature to understand the intended meaning of humorous expressions.

Moreover, implicature is closely related to the interpretation of humor in social media. According to Dynel (2021), sarcasm and irony are two forms of humor that rely heavily on implicature, as the intended meaning is often opposite to the literal meaning. This creates a gap between what is said and what is meant, which becomes the source of humor. In addition, implicature allows speakers to maintain politeness and avoid direct confrontation, making it a useful strategy in online communication. Therefore, implicature can be considered a key mechanism in constructing and understanding verbal humor.

## 2.3 Entailment

Entailment is a concept in semantics that refers to the logical relationship between statements, where the truth of one statement guarantees the truth of another. Unlike implicature, which depends on context, entailment is based on literal meaning and logical inference. According to Huang (2021), entailment focuses on the inherent meaning of linguistic expressions, making it independent of context. This means that if one statement is true, another related statement must also be true based on logical reasoning. In linguistic analysis, entailment is important because it helps explain how meaning is structured logically. For example, the statement "She is a teacher" entails "She works in education," as the second statement

logically follows from the first. According to Chatzikiyakidis and Luo (2021), entailment is widely used in analyzing semantic relationships, particularly in understanding how information can be inferred from a given statement. This makes entailment a crucial concept in both linguistic and computational studies.

However, in the context of humor, entailment plays a less dominant role compared to implicature. This is because humor often relies on indirect meaning rather than strict logical relationships. Nevertheless, entailment still contributes to the interpretation process by providing a logical framework that supports understanding. Even when humor involves exaggeration or contradiction, the audience may still rely on logical inference to interpret the meaning. Therefore, entailment can be seen as a supporting element that complements implicature in understanding verbal humor.

#### **2.4. Comment Interaction**

Comment interaction refers to the exchange of messages between users in digital platforms, particularly in the form of comments and replies. It represents a dynamic form of communication where meaning is constructed collaboratively through interaction. Unlike traditional one-way communication, comment interaction allows users to respond, react, and build upon each other's statements in real time. According to Herring (2021), online interaction is characterized by its interactive and participatory nature, where users actively contribute to the development of discourse. This makes comment interaction a complex communicative process that involves not only individual expression but also collective meaning-making.

In the context of social media, comment interaction often involves short and spontaneous responses that are rich in meaning. Users frequently engage in humorous exchanges, where one comment triggers another, creating a chain of interaction. According to Tagg (2021), digital interaction relies heavily on shared knowledge and contextual understanding, which influence how messages are interpreted. This is particularly evident in humorous interactions, where meaning is often implied rather than explicitly stated. As a result, users must interpret both the content and the context of the interaction in order to understand the intended meaning.

Furthermore, comment interaction plays an important role in shaping communication patterns in digital environments. It allows users to negotiate meaning, express opinions, and build social connections through language. According to Androutopoulos (2021), online interaction is influenced by audience diversity and visibility, which affect how users construct their messages. In humorous comment interactions, users often rely on creativity and linguistic strategies such as implicature and wordplay to engage with others. Therefore, comment interaction can be seen as a key element in understanding how humor is produced and interpreted in digital communication.

#### **2.5. Social Media**

Social media refers to digital platforms that enable users to create, share, and interact with content in online environments. These platforms have transformed the way people communicate by providing spaces for real-time interaction and user-generated content. According to Kaplan

and Haenlein (2010), social media is defined as a group of internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. This definition highlights the participatory nature of social media, where users are not only consumers but also producers of information. As a result, communication in social media becomes more interactive and decentralized compared to traditional media.

In addition, social media communication is characterized by informality, brevity, and high context dependency. Users often rely on short texts, symbols, and informal language to convey meaning. According to Tagg (2021), meaning in social media is constructed through interaction patterns, shared knowledge, and platform conventions. This makes communication in social media more dynamic but also more complex, as users must interpret meaning within a specific context. Furthermore, the absence of non-verbal cues such as tone of voice and facial expressions requires users to rely on textual signals to convey meaning effectively.

Moreover, social media plays a significant role in shaping modern communication practices, including the use of humor. Humor is widely used in social media as a form of entertainment, social bonding, and indirect communication. According to Dynel (2022), humor in social media reflects users' creativity and pragmatic competence, as it often involves implicit meaning and contextual interpretation. In platforms such as Threads, users frequently engage in humorous comment interactions that rely on shared understanding and cultural references. Therefore, social media can

be considered a crucial context for analyzing how language, meaning, and humor interact in digital communication.

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to explore verbal humor in online interactions. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research aims to understand meaning, interpretation, and social phenomena in a natural context. This approach is appropriate because this study investigates the indirect meanings and contextual interpretations that emerge in humorous comments on social media platforms.

The data in this study consist of 30 comments taken from the Threads platform. These comments were deliberately selected because they contain elements of verbal humor, such as sarcasm, irony, wordplay, hyperbole, and situational humor. Documentation techniques were used to collect the data. According to Herring (2021), computer-based discourse analysis utilizes naturally occurring online interactions as crucial linguistic data for studying communication in digital environments.

Therefore, screenshots of humorous comments on Threads were taken and systematically organized for further analysis. The data were analyzed through implicature and entailment analysis using pragmatic and semantic perspectives. According to Huang (2021), pragmatic analysis focuses on interpreting meaning in context, especially meaning that goes beyond literal expression. First, comments were identified and grouped based on the types of verbal humor present. Second, implicatures were analyzed by

considering the hidden meanings behind the expressions. Third, an entailment analysis was conducted by identifying the logical relationships between statements and the meanings that can be inferred from them. Finally, the results were interpreted using pragmatic and semantic perspectives to explain how humor is produced and understood in comment interactions on Threads.

The findings are presented descriptively through tables and explanations. According to Bou-Franch and Blitvich (2021), the presentation of findings in digital discourse studies should be systematic and contextual to support meaningful interpretation. Therefore, tables and narrative explanations are used to explain the patterns of verbal humor found in Threads comment interactions.

## 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Result

This section presents the findings based on the analysis of verbal humor found in comment interactions on the Threads platform. The data consist of 30 selected comments containing various types of verbal humor such as sarcasm, irony, wordplay, exaggeration, and situational humor. The analysis is divided into two main aspects, namely implicature and entailment, in order to provide a clearer understanding of how meaning is constructed and interpreted in humorous discourse.

#### 4.1.1 Implicature in Verbal Humor

The first analysis focuses on implicature, which refers to the implied meaning behind the comments. Most of the humor found in the data relies on indirect meaning rather than literal interpretation.

**Table 1.** Implicature Analysis

No	Comment	Type of Humor	Implicature
1.	<i>Ngakak bgt pliss</i>	Hyperbole (exaggeration)	LOL so much please Hyperbole (exaggeration) The speaker exaggerates the reaction to show that the content is very funny
2.	<i>Bayangkan pulang ada bendera kuning, ternyata ortumu masuk golkar</i>	Irony / Wordplay	Exploiting the double meaning of "yellow flag" (mourning vs politics) for humorous effect
3.	<i>Aneh aplikasi ini, masa gak bisa pesan makan</i>	Sarcasm	Insinuating the app's function by pretending not to know
4.	<i>Laper, makan apa yak</i>	Light humor / relatable	Inviting interaction or asking for advice indirectly
5.	<i>Bahagia itu sederhana — isi sendiri</i>	Reflective humor	Implying that happiness is subjective
6.	<i>Jual batu nisan ke</i>	Dark humor / sarcasm	Jokingly hinting at "customer died"
7.	<i>Jempol keramat → jempol kematian</i>	Wordplay / contrast	Changing a positive meaning to a negative one for humorous effect
8.	<i>1997 belum menikah wajar kan?</i>	Social/relatable humor	Seeking validation and criticizing social norms about marriage age

9.	<i>Di Malaysia posting harta diincer Shopee, kalau di Indonesia diincer siapa?</i>	Satire / comparison humor	Social satire by comparing conditions between countries
10.	<i>Assalamualaikum (akun brand)</i>	Light/contextual humor	Brands greet and show presence in the conversation
11.	Indonesia can survive WW3. No doubt.	Hyperbole / patriotic humor	Exaggerated (non-literal) expression of belief
12.	Everyday is a WW3 here	Hyperbole / sarcasm	Life feels full of conflict, exaggerated like war
13.	<i>Kawin lari itu termasuk couple workout ga sih?</i>	Wordplay	The play on the meaning of the word "run" becomes something funny
14.	<i>Sangat bisa, bakar kalori sekaligus bakar hubungan silaturahmi</i>	Irony / sarcasm	The allusion that elopement damages family relationships
15.	<i>Nah gitu dong, jangan positive thinking terus doc</i>	Sarcasm	Criticism of overly optimistic attitudes
16.	<i>Cantiknya Nenekku</i>	Expressive / pride	Showing pride in grandma
17.	<i>Kok bisa lolos dari penglihatan Soekarno?</i>	Cultural humor / satire	Implying a woman is very beautiful through cultural references
18.	<i>Kenapa nelayan mencari ikan di laut, padahal di pasar?</i>	Riddle	The answers are deliberately kept simple and funny.
19.	<i>Kalau nyari ikan di pasar pasti berebut... Di laut lebih sepi</i>	Situational humor	Insinuating the crowded market conditions
20.	<i>Di laut bukan nyari Ikan bang...</i>	Irony	Explained in a relaxed and funny way
21.	<i>Ikan nya sukarela menjual diri ka</i>	Sarcasm	Sarcastically in a non-serious style, Fish doesn't really "sell itself"
22.	<i>Nelayannya males liat istrinya...</i>	Dark humor	Jokes about the old Fisherman's household relationship at sea
23.	<i>Tempe lama karena ke-delay</i>	Wordplay	Word play Not really a delay

Based on Table 1, the findings show that sarcasm, irony, wordplay, hyperbole, and situational humor are the dominant forms of verbal humor found in Threads comment interactions. Most humorous comments rely on implied meanings rather than literal interpretation. The data indicate that users tend to express humor indirectly through exaggeration, criticism, cultural references, and contextual expressions.

This demonstrates that implicature plays an important role in helping readers interpret humorous meanings in digital communication.

#### 4.1.2. Entailment Analysis

The second analysis focuses on entailment, which refers to the logical relationship between statements. Although humor is often indirect, entailment still plays a role in supporting the interpretation of meaning.

**Table 2.** Entailment Analysis

No	Comment	Statement	Entailment
1.	<i>Lagi di Bali nih</i>	The speaker states a location	The speaker is currently in Bali
2.	<i>Akhirnya lulus juga hari ini</i>	The speaker states graduation	The speaker has now graduated
3.	<i>Punya dua kucing lucu di rumah</i>	The speaker states ownership	The speaker has two cats
4.	Today Its my birthday	The speaker states a special day	Today is the speaker's birthday
5.	<i>New iPhone, terima kasih aku</i>	The speaker states a purchase	The speaker now has a new iPhone
6.	<i>Kakakku nikah minggu lalu</i>	The speaker states an event	Her brother is now married
7.	<i>Lagi hujan deras di sini, guys</i>	The speaker states weather conditions	It is raining where the speaker is

Based on Table 2, entailment functions as a supporting element in understanding verbal humor. The logical relationship between statements helps readers understand the literal meaning before interpreting the implied humor. Although entailment contributes to meaning interpretation, the findings show that humor in Threads comments depends more on contextual understanding and implicature rather than strict logical relationships. Therefore, implicature remains the dominant aspect in interpreting humorous expressions in digital interactions

#### 4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the application of verbal humor in Threads comment interactions stems primarily from implicature rather than direct meaning. The majority of jokes examined in this study rely on implied meaning, requiring readers to interpret the message based on context, shared understanding, and the specific

situation. In some circumstances, humor cannot be understood simply by referring to the literal meaning of the utterance. Instead, users need to recognize hidden intentions, indirect expressions, and contextual clues to fully grasp the intended joke. These findings confirm that humor in digital communication is closely tied to pragmatic abilities, particularly the capacity to understand meaning beyond what is explicitly stated. These results align with H. P. Grice's theory of pragmatics, which explains that speakers often convey information indirectly by deliberately violating conversational principles such as relevance, quantity, quality, and manner. In the context of humor, these violations create unexpected meanings that produce humorous and amusing effects. One of the most significant findings of this study is the high frequency of sarcasm, irony, and wordplay in Threads comments. This is evident in comments like "*Aneh aplikasi ini, masa gak bisa pesan makan?*", where the speaker

sarcastically pretends not to understand the app's true function to create laughter. Similarly, the comment "*Nah gitu dong, jangan positive thinking terus doc*" indirectly criticizes overly optimistic attitudes through sarcastic remarks. These comments indicate that users are more likely to express criticism and views indirectly rather than through explicit statements. These findings support the view expressed by Dynel (2021), who stated that sarcasm and irony are crucial components of online humor because they create a discrepancy between literal and actual meaning. This discrepancy between what is said and what is actually meant is a source of laughter and enjoyment in online communication.

Besides sarcasm and irony, wordplay is also frequently seen in the findings. For example, the statement "*Kawin lari itu termasuk couple workout ga sih?*" creates a joke by presenting the double meaning of the word *lari* ("running"), specifically the concept of elopement with physical activity. Another example can be found in the phrase "*Jempol keramat → jempol kematian,*" where the speaker transforms a familiar expression to create humorous and exaggerated effects. Similarly, the statement "*Tempe lama karena ke-delay*" (long tempeh due to delay) mixes Indonesian and English expressions to create engaging linguistic humor. These examples demonstrate that individuals innovatively modify language to entertain others and encourage interaction in digital communication. This creativity in language reflects the flexible nature of communication on social media platforms, where users continuously adapt their language use in line with

trends, internet culture, and modes of interaction.

Furthermore, some comments rely heavily on contextual understanding and shared knowledge. The statement, "*Bayangkan pulang ada bendera kuning, ternyata ortumu masuk golkar*" is humorous because readers understand the dual meaning of the yellow flag in Indonesian culture, where the flag refers to both the tradition of mourning and the Golkar political party. Similarly, comments such as "Indonesia can survive World War III. Of course" and "Everyday life here is like World War III" rely on hyperbole and shared social experiences to create humorous moments. Without cultural knowledge and context, these jokes may not be fully understood. These results confirm that humor in interactions on Threads relies heavily on the pragmatic abilities and social knowledge of users. This reinforces (Tagg's 2021) argument that communication in digital environments is highly context-dependent and influenced by collective understandings among users.

Although implicature is considered the primary mechanism of creating humor, entailment also plays a role in interpreting meaning. Entailment helps readers recognize the logical meaning of a statement before they understand the implied meaning. For example, the phrase "Today is my birthday" indicates that the speaker is celebrating their birthday on that day, while "*Punya dua kucing lucu di rumah*" indicates that the speaker owns two cats. In the context of humorous commentary, entailment acts as a supporting element that provides literal understanding before readers digest the contextual meaning and humor. However, compared to implicature,

Entailment plays a less prominent role because jokes on social media rely more on indirect meaning and contextual interpretation than on strict logical relationships. This finding (Huang 2021) assertion that implicature requires pragmatic reasoning, while Entailment explores more literal semantic relationships.

Another important finding emerging from this study is the significant impact of the digital environment on how people perceive humor. Social media platforms like Threads foster a more relaxed, interactive, and engaging way of communicating, where users frequently use short phrases, trending topics, memes, and references to popular culture. In this environment, humor is heavily influenced by shared experiences and collective understandings among users. Readers familiar with specific trends, internet culture, or social issues are more likely to grasp the humor contained in these comments. Conversely, readers without sufficient contextual knowledge may struggle to understand the humor. This finding corroborates (Tagg's 2021) assertion that communication in the digital age is heavily influenced by context and requires users to understand meaning beyond the text itself.

Overall, this study demonstrates that verbal jokes in Threads comments are complex interactions involving linguistic creativity, contextual understanding, and social interaction. Implicatures play a key role in shaping humorous meanings by enabling users to communicate in indirect and innovative ways, while Entailment contribute to the logical process of understanding and interpretation. The

results of this study confirm that humor in online interactions cannot be separated from context, shared knowledge, and the audience's perspective. By analyzing implicatures and Entailment in humorous comments, this study offers in-depth insights into online communication patterns and demonstrates how language users creatively employ pragmatic strategies to create humor in digital environments.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study suggests that verbal humor in Threads comment interactions is primarily shaped by implicature rather than direct meaning. The findings reveal various types of verbal humor, such as sarcasm, irony, wordplay, hyperbole, and situational humor. These types reveal how users innovatively utilize language to create humorous effects in digital communication. Furthermore, implicature plays a key role in fostering humor because readers need to interpret hidden meanings based on context and shared agreements. On the other hand, Entailment serves as an additional element by helping readers understand the logical connection between statements before understanding the intended humor. Furthermore, this study demonstrates that humor on social media platforms is heavily influenced by the digital context, cultural references, and users' pragmatic skills. Therefore, understanding humor in online interactions requires not only knowledge of language but also an understanding of context.

This study is expected to contribute to the field of pragmatics, particularly research on humor in digital interactions. Future researchers are encouraged to explore verbal humor on various social media platforms such as

Instagram, TikTok, or X by applying a more comprehensive pragmatic theory or using broader data sources. Furthermore, readers are expected to recognize that humor in online communication often harbors hidden meanings that require understanding in context.

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