

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Human has been known to communicate with himself, his environment and his fellow being with language. Language of human is developing which has made it powerful and relevant to human existence. The communication of human is the chief purpose of language. As well, the ability to use language for meaningful and purposeful interaction by human is one great edge human has over every other living thing.

Lehman (1976, p.4 cited in Oluyinka, 2010, p.10) sees language as a system for the communication of meaning through sounds. Through language, we generate meaning and information which can be exchanged between interlocutors to generate communication because without communication, there will hardly be survival in the society. Language is an art that is made up of an arbitrary code in which intra and inter personal communication takes place.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا
وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ
خَبِيرٌ.

The verse describes that Allah the Almighty creates human from man and woman, and then makes us into nations and tribes in order to know

each other. Different nation makes different culture, different culture makes different humor. One of the purposes of this study is to try to understand the humor of English.

Due to the effect of different cultures of where the languages used, the humor of one culture is often not understood by other culture. It is noticed that language is part of culture. Moreover, humor or joke cannot be separated from language and often used in effective communication. So, it is important for non-native speakers to understand and manipulate the language that can impact humor sense. Beforehand, they must be able to understand how the language causes humor to the listener especially its natives.

وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَضْحَكَ وَأَبْكَى

The verse above is *Qur'an, chapter 53; An-Najm, Verse 43*. It explains about that it is Allah makes human laugh and cry which means both are essential to human being. Thus, humor has been described as a condition for humanity and part of human cultural universals. Attardo (2001, p. 135) notes that the word “humor” is the technical term that covers “anything that is or maybe perceived as funny, amusing and laughable.” It is usually associated with laughter, gaiety, mirth and feelings of happiness.

Scholars see humor as serious thing and make study from many fields of science; psychology, philosophy, linguistics and so on. Humor is connected so much with the language due to that humor need words to deliver the message, though some humor can be happened without language such as

situation comedy. Since humor is primarily expressed through language, language scholars have approached it from linguistic perspectives.

For the sake of more effective communication, humor is used in human interactions, sometimes human using humor to cope with the unpleasant situation. Humor will elicit laughter as the nature of the humor as the response. However, the same background knowledge or the same interpretation between the speaker of humor and the hearer should match. Since humor itself will not sound funny, laughable if it is not understandable, emerging antipathy attitude, and breaking ones' feelings and not meeting the appropriate time, place, and situations (Riyono, 2010, p.2). The linguistic investigation of humor helps to describe, understand and state principles or generalizations that surround the use of humor in language.

There are some specific linguistics areas that are responsible for the humor study, namely pragmatics. Humor produces many invisible meanings which understood by the two; speaker and the hearer. Thus, pragmatics is specialized in decoding the speaker's meaning. Yule (1996, p. 127) defines pragmatics as "the invisible meaning or how meaning is recognized even when it is not said or written". He further explains that for invisible meaning to be recognized, speakers must be able to depend on a lot of shared assumptions and expectations. In simplified words, pragmatics is the study of the purpose of the speech rather than the meaning.

However, Raskin came to study the humor from the semantic side. Semantics is the field in linguistics that learns about meaning. He tried to see

how the humor can be analyzed without coping another aspect out of the language. His theory is found in his book 'Humor Mechanism' called "Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH)". The study of humor is script-based, and assumes that every humor consists of two scripts that switch makes surprise for the reader or the hearer.

Even though all sub-field of pragmatics can study about humor, however there is one sub-field that more often used in decoding humor rather than its brothers namely Grice's implicature which talking about conversational maxims; how the good conversations should be. When humor happened, it breaks or violates the conversational maxims.

Raskin himself connects his own theory (SSTH) with violation of communication principles by Grice. As he said that humor differs from a common discourse which is formed by bonafide process of communication while on the other hand, humor may usually be formed by non-bonafide process of communication (Raskin, 1985). Based on the above understanding, humor is a violation of principles of communication suggested by pragmatic principles, both textually, and interpersonally. Using both Grice's Maxims and Raskin's SSTH, this paper studied about humor which was found on the utterances that elicit audiences' laughter in Stand-up comedy.

Stand-up comedy is a performance in which the stand-up comedian behaves comically and says funny things directly to an audience (Mintz 1985, p.71). Schwarz (2010, p. 17) describes stand-up comedians as "individual performers who plant themselves in front of their listeners with their

microphones and start telling a succession of funny stories, one-liners or short jokes, and anecdotes... in order to make their audience laugh.”

Further, Schwarz (2010, p.17) characterizes stand-up comedy performances as monologues which are not different from jokes from a textual point of view, but which are distinguishable from jokes due to their complexity. In stand-up comedy, the comedians plant themselves in front of the audience and do the talking without expecting the audience to reciprocate the jokes or interrupt their monologues.

Regardless of the differences between joking in stand-up monologues and conversational joking, stand-up comedy performance can still be characterized as an instance of conversational joking. Stand-up comedian however need talks in shared assumption with the audience and must be understandable. The shared assumption then is betrayed by the comic's utterances which mainly cause humor effect.

There are many factors of the way how the comic betrays the natural assumption which listed by Zhao and Zhou (2014, p.7) into 15 variables in total. They are implicature, pun, simile and metaphor, personification, culture, self-mockery, hyperbole, language and words, interrogative words and sentences, oxymoron, analogy, boasts, exclamation, rhetorical question, and assumption. All of them may appear in the conversation and talk in humor normal life. And the behaviors, expressions and other method that caused humor are not included in that they are a part of factors that caused the situational humor (Pocheptsov, 1981 cited in Zhao and Zhou, 2014, p.3).

For this study, the writer chose Trevor Noah; notable South African stand-up comedian which has been living in USA for long time works as the stand-up comedian and in The Daily Show, a late-night television talk show on Comedy Central; as the subject. The writer took the video of one of his shows in Australia in Melbourne Comedy Festival. The genres of the show of the stand-up that brought up is quietly familiar in daily humor such observational comedy, anecdotal humor, and social satire humor. This performance was accessed via two YouTube clips of the program with the title “Trevor Noah - Melbourne Comedy Festival”. The performance analyzed was 7 minutes and 29 seconds in duration. Accessing the performances via YouTube ensured that all contributors, wherever they were located, could easily retrieve (and re-retrieve) the data, as long as they had internet access.

From the introduction above as it explains, this study has investigated which utterances of South-African comic in his shows that made audience laugh then analyzed why from pragmatic and semantic side and which causal factors of them. In other words, the writer would explain so far why the utterances said by the stand-up comedian causing the audiences’ laughter using theories.

B. Statement of Problem

Based on the background study explained above, this study was designed to answer these three questions:

1. Which utterances make audience laugh?
2. What factors of each utterance causing laughter of audience?
3. Why are those utterances funny?

C. Objective of Study

Based on the statement of problem above, the purposes of this research are:

1. To find out utterances which make audiences laugh.
2. To find out the factors each utterance causing laughter of audience.
3. To find out why are those utterances funny?

D. Significance of Study

This research is expected to be able to give information for the researcher himself and people in educational field dealing with understanding English as second (foreign) language especially in humor. By doing this research, it will contribute some benefits for teachers, students, readers, and the researcher in the future: (1) the more they know and understand about humor in English language, (2) they can learn and understands pragmatics and semantics in English easier that it has a big deal to language as communication tool through humor, and (3) English teacher can give knowledge about pragmatics and semantics to student through humor.

E. Research Method

1. Subject Object

The subject of this research is the stand-up comedy show of Trevor Noah in Melbourne, consisting of the comic and the audiences. The object of this research is the laughter-causing utterances he said in the show and the audiences' response which transcribed from video downloaded from YouTube with the duration 7 minutes and 29 seconds.

2. Data and Sources of Data

The data which were gained in this research as follows:

- a. Transcription of the Stand-up Comedy show of Trevor Noah in Melbourne, Australia.
- b. Laughter causing utterances that found in the Stand-up Comedy show of Trevor Noah in Melbourne, Australia.

The source of data of this research was one video of Trevor Noah's Stand-up Comedy show in Melbourne, Australia titled "Trevor Noah – Melbourne Comedy Festival" that downloaded from YouTube with the duration 7 minutes and 29 seconds.

3. Techniques in Collecting Data

In terms of the way or data collection techniques, the data collection techniques have been done by observation.

The techniques in collecting the data in this analysis involve several activities:

- a. Transcribing the Video.

By observing the videos of the shows of the comedian, the writer transcribed all the utterances of what the comic said in the show.

- b. Identification.

After the first step was done, the next step was identification. The writer identified the utterances that make audiences laugh in the transcription.

c. Rechecking.

The last step was rechecking the data. The writer rechecked all collected data to make sure whether they have already completed or not in this research.

4. Techniques in Analyzing Data

After processing the data, the next step was data analyzing. There were two steps of analyzing data, as follows:

- a. The first step was describing the utterance and matching the factors of laughter causing utterances as listed.
- b. The second step was analyzing the utterances causing the audiences' laughter descriptively and qualitatively.

After collecting the data, the analysis helped the writer to highlight some important conclusion from this research. The conclusion was taken through deductive way.

5. Research Procedure

There were some steps that are passed through in completing this research, as follows:

a. Preliminary Step

To make research design proposal consisting of the background of study and the methodology of research

b. Preparatory Step

To decide the theory for analysis and choose the video of the stand-up comedy and download it.

c. Research Step

- 1) To collect all the data from the video.
- 2) To process the data in procedural way.
- 3) To study and analyze the data.

d. Organization Step

Being all the obtained data was complete, the writer soon organized them in the form based on the continual guidance and consultation with the writer's advisors.

F. Definition of Key Terms

1. Utterance is a smallest unit of speech. It is a continuous piece of speech beginning and ending with a clear pause
2. Laughter-causing utterances are the utterances that are said by the comic in the show that make the audiences laugh.
3. Stand-up comedy is comedy style in which a comedian performs in front of a live audience, usually speaking directly to them. The show here means the performance by Trevor Noah in the video "Trevor Noah – Melbourne Comedy Festival"
4. Comedian is commonly known as the performer of stand-up comedian, also called comic, stand-up comic, stand-up comedian, or simply a stand-up. The comedian in this study is Trevor Noah, a notable comedian from South Africa.