

THE CONSTRUCTION OF LANGUAGE HUMOR TOWARDS INDONESIAN LANGUAGE CULTURE

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Abstract

This research explores the intricate interplay of humour, psycholinguistics, morphology, themes, rheme, and language intelligence within the Indonesian language context. Through thorough analysis, the study breaks down humorous linguistic constructs, emphasizing the significance of abrupt contextual shifts and linguistic disruptions as the essence of Indonesian humour. By examining themes and rheme, the research reveals how humour arises from unexpected linguistic contrasts, challenging reader expectations. From a psycholinguistic perspective, the study dissects the cognitive processes that underlie humour comprehension, shedding light on the crucial role of language intelligence in recognizing and appreciating linguistic nuances. The research methodology involved extensive text analysis, delving into various linguistic elements and their impact on humour. The study concludes that language structure, psycholinguistics, and the manipulation of themes and rheme are fundamental aspects of Indonesian humour, underscoring the linguistic complexity inherent in comedic expression.

Keywords: *linguistics humour, Indonesian language culture, humour construction, theme and rheme theory*

Introduction

The study of humour, a multifaceted and intricate phenomenon, has captivated the attention of linguists, psycholinguists, and researchers over an extended period. Its examination spans the fields of linguistics, psychology, and cultural studies. In recent times, significant progress has been made in the investigation of humour, revealing fresh perspectives on its operations within linguistic and psycholinguistic frameworks.

Humour is inherently connected to language, and its linguistic foundations are crucial in both the generation and comprehension of amusing content. According to Attardo (2017), humour frequently depends on linguistic structures such as incongruity, surprise, and the violation of expectations. Furthermore, research in psycholinguistics has explored the cognitive processes that underlie the perception and creation of humour, elucidating the mechanisms that render certain linguistic constructs amusing (Buijzen, 2019). Morphology, a subset of linguistics, assumes a significant role in crafting humorous expressions, where certain linguistic structures, particularly morphological features, can result in comedic interpretations. The intricate interplay between linguistic

and psycholinguistic elements is evident in humorous texts that involve shifts in context, theme, and sentence structure.

The objective of this study is to explore more profoundly the linguistic and psycholinguistic dimensions of humour, with a specific focus on texts utilizing alterations in linguistic elements for comedic effect. The investigation will encompass both global and local components in linguistic humour, as proposed by Attardo (2011), and will scrutinize the manifestation of the incongruity theory of humour (Meyer, 2000) in written discourse, along with its influence on the reader's comprehension and amusement.

The exploration of humour extends beyond academic pursuits; it holds practical implications for language and communication. Gaining insights into the mechanisms that underlie linguistic humour can enhance the development of more effective communication strategies, language teaching methods, and applications in fields such as marketing and advertising.

In the Indonesian context, where humour plays a significant role in everyday communication, particularly through social media, a grasp of linguistic humour becomes imperative. Indonesian culture boasts a rich tradition of humour, embracing elements like wordplay, puns, and linguistic surprises (Pertiwi, 2020). The analysis of humour within linguistic and psycholinguistic realms not only provides valuable perspectives for Indonesian linguists but also contributes to a broader comprehension of how humour functions across diverse cultural contexts.

The main goals of this study are as follows: 1) to examine how linguistic and psycholinguistic elements contribute to the formation of humour in written texts; 2) to assess the influence of linguistic modifications in generating humour and entertainment; 3) to investigate the involvement of morphological features, themes, and sentence structure in linguistic humour.

This research holds several potential advantages: 1) Advancement of Language Education: The discoveries can offer insights to language educators regarding the role of linguistic humour in language development and instruction; 2) Communication and Marketing: A comprehension of linguistic humour can be employed to enhance communication and marketing approaches, resulting in more captivating and memorable content; 3) Cross-Cultural Perspectives: The study can offer cross-cultural perspectives on how linguistic humour operates across diverse cultural contexts.

Humour stands as a universal phenomenon that has captivated researchers across diverse fields, including linguistics, psychology, and cognitive science. The exploration of humour is multifaceted, addressing linguistic, cognitive, and cultural dimensions. This review of literature will delve into the theoretical underpinnings of humour, the role of psycholinguistics, and morphological aspects within humour, while underscoring the significance of research in this field.

Widely considered an integral component of human communication, humour serves various functions such as strengthening social bonds, alleviating tension, and presenting intricate ideas in an accessible and entertaining manner (Martin, 2007). The Incongruity Theory of Humor suggests that humor emerges from incongruities, or disparities between expected and actual occurrences (Suls, 1972). This theory of incongruity lays the groundwork for comprehending linguistic humour.

This discovery underscores the profound emotional impact embedded in the composition of national anthems, playing a crucial role in influencing and persuading

their audiences. When considering the emotional resonance evoked by figurative language, there arises a necessity to delve into the underlying structure of meaning. Sukardi et al. (2017) stress the importance of such an investigation. Researchers convey information to readers and listeners through clauses, with pivotal information typically positioned at the beginning, known as the theme. The structure of a clause that encapsulates the textual meaning, especially the information system, is termed the theme structure (Kim, 2021), as highlighted by Yuwana et al. (2019). Complementing the theme is the rheme, which extends the preceding information. Together, these elements form thematic-theme structures. According to Halliday (1985 and 2000), the thematic structure is essential in characterizing a clause as a message. Tomasowa (1994) and Subiyanto (2019) emphasize that the rheme-theme structure explicitly manifests the textual component of the text, particularly in the thematic organization of message delivery. The thematic structure provides insight into how elements of the ideational metafunction are arranged in sequences conveying messages and information within clauses. To identify these elements of message delivery and information transmission, textual analysis is employed, drawing from the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (Martin et al., 1992 and 2019) as well as Thompson (2014 and 2019).

Linguistic humour relies on a variety of linguistic tools, encompassing puns, wordplay, incongruity, and surprise. According to Attardo (2017), themes and rhemes play a crucial role in linguistic humour. Deviating from the norm, often achieved through linguistic manipulation, can elicit laughter. Humorous texts abound with linguistic surprises that defy the reader's expectations, leading to a sense of amusement (Giora, 2003).

Psycholinguistic research offers valuable insights into how the human brain processes humour. Meyer (2000) stresses that humour frequently engages cognitive processes such as pattern recognition and mental flexibility. Humour triggers specific cognitive responses, including the sudden recognition of incongruities and the subsequent resolution of these incongruities, resulting in laughter. The cognitive mechanisms underlying humour comprehension have been extensively studied (Buijzen, 2019).

Morphology, as an integral aspect of linguistics, contributes to the creation of humorous expressions. Word formation, morphological manipulation, and the invention of neologisms can lead to amusing interpretations (Nababan, 2017). Morphological elements play a role in the linguistic surprises that are essential to humour (Veale, 2016).

Cultural elements exert a significant influence on the generation and interpretation of humour. Various cultures exhibit distinctive forms of humour, and understanding these nuances is essential (Pertiwi, 2020). In the Indonesian context, a rich tradition of humour, incorporating linguistic play and puns, has shaped the expression of humour in language and everyday communication.

Several previous studies within the context of this research have utilized varied data sources. For instance, Faradi (2015) conducted an analysis of discourse from the 2014-2019 presidential election debate, linking it to discourse learning in educational institutions. Similarly, Usman (2015) explored the speech of the West Lombok Regent, associating it with discourse learning in schools. Additionally, Wulansari (2016) examined a newspaper article titled "What's Up with Monas?" published in The Jakarta Post. It's important to highlight that these three studies employed the framework of Functional Systemic Linguistics, which differs from the approach taken in the current study.

Other studies that share similarities in using Functional Systemic Linguistics include Agustiani (2019), who focused on reviewing the structural aspects of modality without

themes in Japanese dialogues; Diansyah (2019), who concentrated on learning techniques related to Hallidayan theme and rheme in the context of writing education; Kristiandi, et al. (2020), who delved into the themes of transitivity and theme-rheme in a campursari song titled "Sesidheman"; Nugraha (2017), who explored Indonesian abstract texts; Nurrahmah, et al. (2020), who centered their research on transitivity in short stories found in the Kompas Newspaper; Sinulingga, et al. (2019), who focused on the organization of themes and rhemes within Joko Widodo's speeches; Syartanti, et al. (2020), who engaged in an investigation of the structural aspects of themes in Balinese folklore titled "PAN BELOG"; Yuwana (2019), who conducted an examination of clauses within Indonesian humor materials; and Yuwana & Pertiwi (2022), who delved into the themes and rhemes in the Indonesian National Song "Bagimu Negeri."

Method

This study employs a comprehensive approach to explore the linguistic and psycholinguistic dimensions of humour in written texts, particularly those utilizing shifts in linguistic elements to create humour. The methodology is crafted to investigate the roles of morphological features, themes, and sentence structures in linguistic humour, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative techniques for effective linguistic data analysis.

Data Collection

Text Selection: Diverse texts will be gathered from various sources such as social media, literature, and written communication, chosen for their potential to demonstrate linguistic humour through shifts in context, theme, or morphological constructs.

Transcription and Compilation: The chosen texts will undergo transcription and compilation to create a research corpus, serving as the foundation for subsequent linguistic analysis.

Linguistic Analysis

Thematic Analysis: A thematic analysis of the collected texts will be conducted to identify themes and their shifts, especially those contributing to humorous effects (Attardo, 2017). The emphasis will be on discerning the thematic structure in humorous texts.

Morphological Analysis: Analysis of morphological elements, including word formation, neologisms, and linguistic surprises, will be performed (Nababan, 2017). The research will explore how morphological features contribute to humorous interpretations and linguistic shifts.

Psycholinguistic Analysis: The psycholinguistic analysis will delve into how humour is perceived and processed by readers. Cognitive mechanisms such as incongruity resolution (Allen & Meyer, 2000) will be explored. Techniques like eye-tracking and reaction time measures may be employed to investigate cognitive processes in humour perception (Buijzen, 2019).

Cross-Cultural Insights

Cultural Analysis: A sub-analysis of the cultural aspects of humour will be conducted, with a specific focus on the Indonesian context (Pertiwi, 2020). This will offer insights into the unique linguistic and cultural elements influencing humour in Indonesia.

Data Interpretation

Qualitative and Quantitative Interpretation: Data interpretation will combine qualitative and quantitative techniques. Thematic and morphological analyses will primarily be qualitative, while psycholinguistic analysis may involve quantitative measures.

Result and Discussion

1st Data

Anda tahu, kenapa bom atom dijatuhkan di Hiroshima dan Nagasaki? kalau tahu, cerita dong.

(You know, why were atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki? If you know, please tell (us).)

Clause 1:

<u>Anda</u> <u>(You)</u> Theme Unmarked Topical	<u>tahu</u> <u>(know)</u> Rema
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Clause 2:

<u>kenapa</u> <u>(why)</u> Theme Interpersonal & Marked Topical	<u>bom atom</u> <u>(atomic bomb)</u> Theme Unmarked Topical	<u>dijatuhkan di Hiroshima dan</u> <u>Nagasaki? (were dropped on</u> <u>Hiroshima and Nagasaki?)</u> Rema
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Clause 3:

<u>kalau</u> <u>(if)</u> Theme Textual	<u>tahu</u> <u>((you) know)</u> Rema
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Clause 4:

<u>cerita</u> <u>(tell (us))</u> Theme Marked Topical	<u>dong.</u> <u>(please.)</u> Theme Textual
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Clause 1:

Unmarked Topical Theme: The unmarked topical theme in Clause 1 is "Anda (You)" which refers to the listener or reader of the sentence.

Rema: "tahu (know)" is the rema element in Clause 1. Rema provides information that explains or adds to the topical theme.

Clause 2:

Interpersonal & Marked Topical Theme: Clause 2 begins with "kenapa (why)" indicating a question about the reason or cause of an event.

Unmarked Topical Theme: "bom atom (atomic bomb)" is the unmarked topical theme in Clause 2.

Rema: "dijatuhkan di Hiroshima and Nagasaki? (were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki?)" is the rema element in Clause 2. Rema provides information that explains or adds to the topical theme.

Clause 3:

Textual Theme: Clause 3 begins with "kalau (if)" indicating a conditional or conditional relationship.

Rema: "tahu ((you) know)" is the rema element in Clause 3.

Clause 4:

Marked Topical Theme: The marked topical theme in Clause 4 is "cerita (tell (us))" indicating that the speaker will provide additional information.

Textual Theme: "dong (please)" is the textual theme in Clause 4, serving as an emphatic word.

Rema: There is no rema element in Clause 4, but Clause 4 implies that the speaker will tell something.

Sudden Context Shift: The humour in the comparison between Clause 1 and Clause 2, as well as Clause 3 and Clause 4, lies in the sudden shift in context. Clause 1 is an introductory sentence that doesn't explain anything. Readers may anticipate serious information or questions in Clause 2. However, Clause 2 suddenly poses a serious and weighty question about why atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Theme Usage Patterns concerning Language Intelligence: The pattern of theme usage in both clauses is crucial in creating humour. Clause 1 begins with an unmarked topical theme referring to the listener. Language-intelligent readers may anticipate a serious continuation. However, Clause 2 abruptly changes the theme and presents a question that dramatically alters the context.

Language Intelligence: Humor in this case is also related to understanding the sudden context shift. Language-intelligent readers will quickly recognize this shift and sense the absurd contrast between Clause 1 and Clause 2. They will realize that the speaker suddenly poses a serious question after a meaningless beginning.

Use of Language as a Humor Tool: Clause 3 and Clause 4 imply the use of language as a humour tool. Clause 3, starting with "kalau tahu (if (you) know)" creates the expectation that the speaker has serious knowledge to share. However, Clause 4 simply says, "cerita dong (tell (us), please)" which creates a humorous effect by exposing the mistaken expectation of serious information.

By using theme and rema theory and considering theme usage patterns about Indonesian language intelligence, we can better understand how the sudden shift in context creates humour by disrupting the reader's expectations.

2nd Data

Yang penting bagi pemimpin adalah "n", karena tanpa "n", pemimpin hanyalah pemimpi. (The important thing for a leader is "n", because without "n", a leader is just a dreamer.)

Clause 1

Yang penting bagi
(The important thing for)

Theme

Marked Topical

pemimpin
(a leader)

Theme

Unmarked Topical

adalah "n"
(is "n")

Rema

Clause 2

karena tanpa "n"
(because without "n")

Theme

Pemimpin
(a leader)

Theme

hanyalah pemimpi.
(is just a dreamer.)

Rema

Textual

Unmarked Topical

Clause 1:

Marked Topical Theme: The marked topical theme in Clause 1 is "Yang penting bagi (The important thing for)" describing the importance of something.

Unmarked Topical Theme: "pemimpin (a leader)" is the unmarked topical theme in Clause 1.

Rema: "adalah 'n' (is 'n')" is the rema element in Clause 1. Rema provides information that explains or adds to the topical theme.

Clause 2:

Textual Theme: Clause 2 starts with "karena (because)" indicating a cause-and-effect or explanatory relationship.

Unmarked Topical Theme: "pemimpin (a leader)" is the unmarked topical theme in Clause 2.

Rema: "hanyalah pemimpi (is just a dreamer)" is the rema element in Clause 2. Rema provides information that explains or adds to the topical theme.

Sudden Context Shift: Humor in the comparison between Clause 1 and Clause 2 lies in the abrupt change in context. Clause 1 describes the importance of something for a leader, creating an expectation that there will be important or serious information about a leader's role. However, Clause 2 suddenly shifts the context by stating that without "n," a leader is just a dreamer. This creates a ridiculous contrast between the expected understanding of a leader's role and the surprising statement in Clause 2.

Theme Usage Patterns with Language Intelligence: The pattern of theme usage in both clauses is crucial in creating humour. Clause 1 starts with a marked topical theme describing the importance of something for a leader. Language-intelligent readers will anticipate a continuation that is serious or possibly metaphorical about a leader's role. However, Clause 2 abruptly changes the theme with a paradigm-shifting statement that a leader is just a dreamer without "n."

Language Intelligence: Humor in this case is also related to understanding the sudden shift in context and the disruptive use of themes. Language-intelligent readers will quickly recognize this shift and sense the absurd contrast between two clauses that are supposed to be serious. They will realize that Clause 2 creates a contrast between the expected understanding of a leader's role and the surprising statement in Clause 2.

By using theme and rema theory and considering theme usage patterns to Indonesian language intelligence, we can better understand how the sudden shift in context and disruptive theme usage create humour by disrupting the reader's expectations and making a sharp change in meaning. The language intelligence of readers is reflected in their ability to recognize this shift and sense the absurd contrast between two clauses that are supposed to be serious.

3th Data

Jangan suka ngurusi orang lain, karena belum tentu orang itu ingin kurus.

(Don't interfere with other people because those people may not necessarily want to lose weight.)

Clause 1

<u>Jangan</u>	<u>suka ngurusi orang lain</u>
<u>Don't</u>	<u>(interfere with other people)</u>
Theme	Rema
Marked Topical	

Clause 2

<u>karena belum tentu</u>	<u>orang itu</u>	<u>ingin kurus.</u>
<u>(because may (be) not)</u>	<u>(those people)</u>	<u>(want to lose weight.)</u>
Theme	Theme	Rema
Textual	Unmarked Topical	

Clause 1:

Marked Topical Theme: The marked topical theme in Clause 1 is "Jangan (Don't)" which is a command or instruction.

Rema: "suka ngurusi orang lain (interfere with other people)" serves as the rema element in Clause 1. Rema provides information that explains or adds to the topical theme.

Clause 2:

Textual Theme: Clause 2 starts with "karena belum tentu (because may (be) not)" which is a conjunction that connects this clause to the previous one.

Unmarked Topical Theme: "orang itu (those people)" is the unmarked topical theme in Clause 2, which was not prominent in the previous sentence.

Rema: "ingin kurus (want to lose weight)" is the rema element in Clause 2. Rema provides information that explains or adds to the topical theme.

Sudden Context Shift: Humor in the comparison between Clause 1 and Clause 2 lies in the abrupt change in context. Clause 1 begins with a command not to interfere with others, which is a serious social message. However, Clause 2 suddenly changes the context by stating that "orang itu ingin kurus (those people want to lose weight)" which is a personal desire unrelated to the previous message. This creates a ridiculous contrast between a serious message and a trivial personal desire.

Theme Usage Patterns concerning Language Intelligence: The theme usage pattern in both clauses is essential for creating humour. Clause 1 starts with a highly prominent topical theme, the command "Jangan (Don't)" instructing the reader to avoid specific behaviour. Language-intelligent readers will anticipate a continuation of the serious message. However, Clause 2 abruptly changes the theme to "orang itu ingin kurus (those people want to lose weight)" which is a ridiculous contrast to the previous message.

Language Intelligence: Humor in this case is related to understanding the sudden change in context and disruptive theme usage. Language-intelligent readers will quickly recognize this change and perceive the shift in meaning as absurd. They will recognize that the serious command in Clause 1 suddenly transforms into a statement about a personal desire unrelated to it in Clause 2.

By using theme and rema theory and considering theme usage patterns concerning Indonesian language intelligence, we can better understand how the abrupt change in context and disruptive theme usage create humour by disrupting the reader's expectations and making a sharp change in meaning. The language intelligence of readers is reflected in their ability to recognize this shift and sense the ridiculous contrast between two clauses that were supposed to be serious.

Conclusion

The analysis reveals the intricate interplay among humour, psycholinguistics, morphology, themes, and rema within the Indonesian language. In every instance, the core of humour revolves around sudden shifts in context brought about by linguistic components like themes and rema. These shifts present a challenge to the reader's expectations, facilitating the emergence of humour. Proficiency in language intelligence, as demonstrated by the ability to perceive and appreciate these linguistic disruptions, is crucial for a comprehensive understanding and enjoyment of such humour. This study clarifies how language structure, psycholinguistic factors, and the manipulation of themes and rema are integral to humour comprehension in Indonesian, highlighting the linguistic complexities that underlie comedic expression.

The research emphasizes the inherent connection between language structure, psycholinguistics, and the deliberate manipulation of themes and rema for a nuanced comprehension of humour in Indonesian. It underscores that abrupt shifts in context orchestrated by linguistic elements play a pivotal role in shaping humorous content in each scenario. The cultivation of language intelligence, the ability to discern and appreciate these linguistic disruptions, is stressed as a fundamental aspect for not only grasping but also savouring such comedic expressions. Ultimately, this investigation contributes to a deeper appreciation of the linguistic complexity inherent in Indonesian humour, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of comedic expression.

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