

Investigating Verbal Humor in Selected *Mr. Iglesias* Sitcom Shows Episodes

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ABSTRACT

Humor can be found in people's daily life, movie, and stand-up comedy. People use it to criticize and entertain at the same time. In entertaining and criticizing a situation, humor can be in a form of a TV show or sitcom. This research focuses on verbal humor in a sitcom entitled *Mr. Iglesias*. This study aims to figure out the types of verbal humor using the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) by Attardo & Raskin (1991). This research examined five episodes of *Mr. Iglesias's* shows from seasons 1 to 5 using a descriptive qualitative method. The results showed that this situation comedy has 58 expressions that employed linguistic humor. It could be classified into 8 of the 12 types of verbal humor. The six aspects of GTVH theory used to analyze the linguistic section were script opposition, logical mechanism, situation, target, narrative strategy, and language. Based on the six aspects of GTVH, this situational comedy indicated sarcasm as the most used verbal humor category.

Keywords: *Verbal humor, GTVH, Sitcom, Mr. Iglesias*

INTRODUCTION

Humor is one of the media that use to express a person's idea about a problem. Humor serves as an amusement to relieve the audience's psychological burden and as a tool for social criticism of all social inequalities in the area (Damanik & Mulyadi, 2020). Detrianto (2018) also states that jokes or humor can make the conversation more interesting, friendly, relaxed, and lively. The implementation of humor can be found easily around social activities. Putri & Baskara (2019) find that humor in society can create a good relationships among others. They also add humor can be a short story about a funny situation that can make the audience or reader laugh. There are two types of common humor forms, speaking and writing humor (Sen, 2012). The spoken form can be found in movies, videos, and stand-up comedies. Then, comic strips and memes are examples of humor in written form. Nugroho, Faridi & Hartono (2020) add that aside from actual social contact, the conception of humor is provided in the form of entertainment media such as television shows, movies, and drama.

There are several basic theories of humor from Raskin (1984) first, the Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH), second is General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) from Attardo & Raskin (1991), and the newest one is from Rayz (2020) about Ontological Semantic Theory of Humor (OSTH). SSTH deals with the script, incongruity, superiority, and release or relief (Attadaro & Raskin, 2017). The SSTH theory declares that script opposition is the most important factor that affects humor. Chilton, Landay & Weld (2015) mention that humor is the result of feeling superior to another person, humor is a release of tension that has been built up because society suppressed discussion, and humor is the discovery of an informational anomaly that causes laughter. After that, GTVH comes as the elaboration of the SSTH theory. As the result of SSTH elaboration, GTVH uses script opposition and five other parameters. Meanwhile, OSTH accentuates the manner of constancy in humor.

Humor that represents people's daily life that delivers naturally is the description of situation comedy (Wahyuni & Hamzah, 2019). Then, Hu (2012) describes a situation comedy as a form of TV series with specific actresses and similar characters in daily scenes. The actress in this comedy can get real-time feedback from the audience through laughter. Wiczorek (2018) states that the sitcom is captured in a mockumentary style to portray fictional situations as if they were a true reflection of daily life. Tsakona (2017) mentions that a sitcom is one

example of humor with smaller embedded punch lines in the beginning and end sections. Since the humor in sitcoms produces naturally with a daily life situation, it makes the humor unique.

One of the famous sitcoms on Netflix is *Mr. Iglesias*. *Mr. Iglesias* is a comedy series on Netflix that was released in 2019 with three seasons until now. That American comedy series talks about a teacher named Mr. Iglesias who works in his alma mater. He teaches gifted students but underperformed. Thus, he tries to create a different atmosphere of teaching and learning to build his students' potential. However, he sometimes gets a protest from other teachers and students. He tries to manage and control the situation in a fun way. The use of humor in this sitcom has an essential role in building a friendly situation in school. In that case, the production of humor by the teacher and the students can help the students bravely in showing their potential.

Some recent research about the use of humor can be analyzed in both verbal and visual ways (Fallianda, Astiti & Hanim, 2018). In their study, they choose newspaper comic strips to explore humor that was produced verbally, visually, and both verbally and visually by using visual-verbal analysis. Since they analyzed comic strips, the use of images gives the situation of the text and supported humor in it. There are verbal metaphors, contradictions, parallelisms, and so on as the humor in that media. Moreover, the interaction between image and text in this research made a textual hyper determination of humor.

On the other topic, Damanik & Mulyadi (2020) use the Script Semantic Theory of Humour (SSTH) and the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH) to investigate humorous Indonesian status in social media. From social media, people mostly laugh at others' misfortune, and it shows one's superiority over others. This research clearly described that humor arises when there is a discrepancy between the ideas prepared for specific circumstances and the actual happenings that are believed to be related to the ideas. Still, it depends on the script's opposition and situations.

Mulyadi, Yusuf & Siregar (2021) investigate verbal humor in stand-up comedy videos using the verbal theory of humor (GTVH). They found various logical mechanisms in the videos with simple narrative strategy and dialogue style used dominantly. Since this research analyzed an audio-video recording of stand-up comedy from one specific person, the writers mentioned that the comedian dominantly targeted his life for the target comedy. Thus, the style concluded as the way people avoid humiliating others.

According to some previous research in humor, there are two differences between the current research and previous research. First, the difference in using the research media. For example, Fallianda, Astiti & Hanim (2018) have analyzed newspaper comic strips; Damanik & Mulyadi (2020) have conducted script semantic theory and general verbal theory on social media; Mulyadi, Yusuf & Siregar (2021) have researched stand-up comedy video. There is no previous research that analyses verbal humor in situational comedy. Thus, this research comes to fill the gaps between those previous researches. This research attempts to analyze verbal humor and the type of verbal humor in *Mr. Iglesias's* comedy series by applying the general verbal theory of humor.

The purpose of this research is to find and analyze the verbal humor in the situational comedy of *Mr. Iglesias*, which talk about school life problems. The GTVH theory is used to analyze verbal humor with the six parameters. Furthermore, the analysis results are used to find the types of verbal humor. By using the GTVH theory, the researchers can analyze and interpret verbal humor linguistically.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Verbal Humor

An event or situation that triggers someone to laugh is called humor. Bali, Ahuja, and Singh (2018) state that the capacity of certain cognitive events to elicit amusement and laughter is known as humor. Based on Shade (1996), there are four categories of humor: visual, verbal, figural, and aural humor. The current research focuses on the use of verbal humor. Verbal humor is a language-based creation for fun by employing linguistic aspects (Heidari-Shahreza, 2018). According to Tianli, Mansor, Ang, and Sharmini (2022), the linguistic aspects of verbal humor as laughter-makers are words, phrases, and sentences. In detail, Shade (1996) categorizes verbal humor into 12 categories, such as puns, jokes, satire, riddles, parody, limericks, farce, anecdote, irony, wit, sarcasm, and tall tales. By using this theory, the researchers analyze verbal humor in *Mr. Iglesias's* Sitcom with the verbal humor category.

General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH)

Attardo & Raskin first presented the general theory of verbal humor in 1991 with six parameters of humor known as Knowledge Resources (KRs). GTVH brings a broader field than SSTH because it contains all linguistics areas. GTVH is an effective linguistic theory that enables the investigation of verbal humor from a linguistic perspective (Attardo, 2001:22). Through their research, Damanik & Mulyadi (2020)

mention that the GTVH intends to become a humor interpretation pattern that includes all humor aspects, from the abstract humor concept defined by the SSTH to the language in which it is expressed. The six parameters are Language, Narrative Strategies, Target, Situation, Logical Mechanism, and Script Opposition.

The first parameter is script opposition which indicates the humor's themes (Al-Badawi, Sadeq, Watab, 2021). It deals with the opposite script that is both clearly expressed and implicitly perceived by readers. The following parameter is a logical mechanism that explores the different scripts in the humor. It explains the humorous and non-serious logic used to solve the gaps between the opposing scripts. The situation as the third parameter encompasses everything surrounding humor, i.e. the context eliciting and generating the framework in the humor discourse (Ortega, 2013). It also talks about the background of the event or story, such as place, activities, participants, or objects. The third parameter is the target of the humor which describes humans and their activities. The following parameter is narrative strategies that refer to a text's narrative form (Masaeli & Heidari-Shahreza, 2017). It describes the organization of the text, for example, dialogue, riddle, narrative, pun, and punch line. The last parameter is language. It talks about the actual text item, spoken or written, gestured, conveyed through costume, and so on, with all the options at the appropriate levels of linguistic analysis, e.g. syntax, and phonology (Raskin, 2015).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research analyses the verbal humor in the *Mr. Iglesias* series. The verbal humor was analyzed using a descriptive qualitative research method. One qualitative research method used in visual material for presenting certain characteristics of the visual material is a content analysis by adopting several basic steps in analyzing content from Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen & Walker (2014). The data is taken from the first five episodes of season one of the *Mr. Iglesias* series on Netflix. Qualitative research usually depends on a single data source but multiple forms of data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Thus, the five titles of the episodes are *Some Children Left Behind*, *Summer School*, *Full Hearts Clear Backpacks*, *The Wagon*, and *Everybody*.

The five titles above will adopt some procedures from Creswell & Creswell (2018) to interpret the data. Watching the series and writing down the verbal humor transcript is the first step to making it more efficient. After that, code the transcript and put it in the table. To avoid over data, review the transcript and eliminate the redundant as the third

step. The next step, start to interpret the transcript using six Knowledge Resources. The last step is to write the narrative for some data that will be put in the finding part.

Table 1.
Episode title and duration

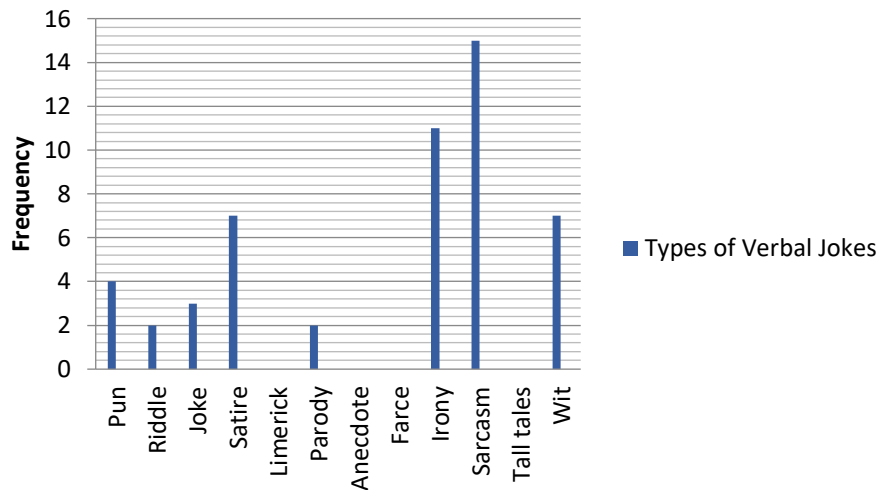
No	Title	Duration
1	Some Children are Left behind	30 minutes
2	Summer School	29 minutes
3	Full Hearts, Clear Backpacks	28 minutes
4	The Wagon	31 minutes
5	Everybody Hates Gabe	28 minutes

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The use of GTVH analysis aimed to explore the humor representation in the context. Knowledge Resources parameters in this research were used to analyze the humor in the text. Those six knowledge resource parameters are Script Opposition (SO), Logical Mechanism (LM), Situation (Si), Target (TA), Narrative Strategy (NS), and Language (LA).

The transcript of five episodes of *Mr. Iglesias's* sitcom contained 58 verbal senses of humor. It is categorized into 12 forms of verbal humor. However, from those five episodes, four types of verbal humor have zero value: limerick, anecdote, farce, and tall tales. The number of verbal humor found in *Mr. Iglesias's* sitcom is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 1
Verbal Humor in *Mr. Iglesias* Season 1



1. Pun

Milojkovic (2017) defines a pun as a play on words that sound the same (homonyms) or sound quite similar but have significantly different meanings. There were four puns from the five episodes, the researchers took 1 example to be analyzed. In the story, Principal Paula explained the substitute teacher. In that room, Ms. Abby, Mr. Tony, and Mr. Gabe (Mr. Iglesias) as teachers had to prepare a syllabus for that class. While Abby mentioned her syllabus, Mr. Tony said: "silly bus" to mock Gabe. Mr. Tony's statement "And Gabe drives a *silly bus*." Had the same sound as "syllabus" but was different in meaning. It is called a homophone.

Table 2.
The pun in *Mr. Iglesias's* Sitcom

Transcript: 11:14	Principal Paula: So, Helen Stone is taking early retirement this year, and one of you will be getting her honor students to section this fall. Abby: I'll do it. I can have a <i>syllabus</i> ready by the end of lunch. Tony: And Gabe drives a <i>silly bus</i> .
KR	Script Opposition
	Logical Mechanism
	Situation
	Syllabus vs. silly-bus Twisting homophone Abby will be ready with her syllabus, meanwhile Tony says that Gabe/Mr. Iglesias has a silly

	bus.
Target	Principal Paula
Narrative Strategy	Dialogue
Language	<p><i>Set up:</i></p> <p>Principal Paula: So, Helen Stone is taking early retirement this year, and one of you will be getting her honor students to section this fall.</p> <p>Ms. Abby: I'll do it. I can have a <i>syllabus</i> ready by the end of lunch.</p> <p><i>Punch line:</i></p> <p>Mr. Tony: And Gabe drives a <i>silly bus</i>.</p>

Based on the table above syllabus and silly bus, as the script opposition for the pun. These two words have the same pronunciation /'sɪləbəs/ that makes the script have a twisting homophone. In this dialogue part, Mr. Tony tries to mock Mr. Iglesias in front of Principal Paula, thus this pun's target is Principal Paula. About this part, the punch line happened in the last sentence by Mr. Tony.

2. Riddle

Kaivola-Bregenhøj (2018) on the research mentions that a riddle has two functions, one as a question and one as an answer. From the conversation between Mr. Iglesias and Mr. Tony, It was detected how Mr. Iglesias gives response to Mr. Tony's problem with his track. He says "Oh, big surprise! *Do you know who doesn't have a bad year at the track? The track*"

Table 3.
Riddle in *Mr. Iglesias's* Sitcom

Transcript: 07:09	<p>Mr. Tony: I had another bad year at the track.</p> <p>Mr. Iglesias: Oh, big surprise! <i>Do you know who doesn't have a bad year at the track? The track</i></p>
KR	<p>Script Advice vs. fact</p> <p>Opposition</p> <p>Logical Word repetition</p> <p>Mechanism</p>

Situation	Mr. Iglesias is asking about the track
Target	Mr. Tony
Narrative Strategy	Question and Answer
Language	<i>Set up</i> Mr. Tony: I had another bad year at the track. <i>Punch line</i> Mr. Iglesias: Oh, big surprise! <i>Do you know who doesn't have a bad year at the track? The track</i>

The riddle from the table above used advice vs. fact script opposition. It used to advise about Mr. Tony's gambling track. The repetition of words on the riddle made this the logical mechanism. With the script opposition and logical mechanism, this riddle had a specific situation and target. Mr. Iglesias gave advice specifically through the riddle to Mr. Tony. Question and answer were the narrative strategies to show how the riddle performed.

3. Joke

This statement happened when Mr. Iglesias's class did a protest the use of the clear bag in their school. Principal Paula forced the students to continue the class but, Walt as one of the students said "We're standing up for our beliefs." The joke part was when he added that he wants to do the protest during the lesson hour to skip the Geometry Class.

Table 4.
Joke in *Mr. Iglesias's* Sitcom

Transcript: 09:08	Walt: We're standing up for our beliefs. And also missing geometry. Win-win!
KR	Script Opposition
	Logical Mechanism
	Situation
	Target
	Narrative

Strategy	
Language	<p><i>Set up</i> Walt: We're standing up for our beliefs.</p> <p><i>Punch line</i> And also missing geometry. Win-win!</p>

The sentence by Walt at minute 9:08 expressed his feeling to stand on their beliefs. However, he said "win-win" could be interpreted as a joke. It included a joke because he wanted to join the protest, because of the protest and the geometry class. It made the script opposition normal vs. abnormal. From the script opposition, absurd interpretation became the logical mechanism. That interpretation made people laugh. Both script opposition and logical mechanism happened in a specific situation where Walt showed his reason. Therefore, there was no certain target in that monologue. Thus, the joke was constructed in this part.

4. Satire

The performance genre of satire serves as a tool for social control, a way to rein in individual, societal, or communal excesses (Orji, 2018). In the other words, satire is used to attack and criticize people. Mr. Carlos as the pioneer of the clean bag program does not want to change the rule. So, he says he will stay there with his rule. To respond to that statement, Mr. Iglesias said "*there'll be a lot of clawing, scratching, and crying.*"

Table 5.
Satire in *Mr. Iglesias's* Sitcom

Transcript: 13:00	<p>Mr. Carlos: Very clever, Mr. Iglesias. You've bought them more time but I have not yet begun to fight.</p> <p>Mr. Iglesias: I imagine when you do, <i>there'll be a lot of clawing, scratching, and crying.</i></p>	
KR	Script Opposition	Strength vs. weakness
	Logical Mechanism	Insult/ put-down humor
	Situation	Mr. Carlos is trying to defend himself from the protest
	Target	Mr. Carlos

Narrative Strategy	Conversation
Language	<p><i>Set up</i></p> <p>Mr. Carlos: Very clever, Mr. Iglesias. You've bought them more time but I have not yet begun to fight.</p> <p><i>Punch line</i></p> <p>Mr. Iglesias: I imagine when you do, <i>there'll be a lot of clawing, scratching, and crying.</i></p>

The satire data above was using strength vs. weakness as the script opposition. Since it used that SO, insult/ put-down humor is applied in this scene. Based on the scene, Mr. Iglesias was mocking Mr. Carlos about his reaction to the protest. The only target in this conversation was Mr. Carlos. It is in line with the theory of target humor that it happened from the superior side. That was how satire was constructed in this scene.

5. Parody

Mikey is one of the students in Me Iglesias's class. On the first day of school after summer, he came late. His reason was that he watched a movie from Mr. Iglesias's recommendation. Almost all of the students gave comments about the movie and the class became boisterous. Mikey imitated one of Abraham Lincoln's actions in that movie by saying "Until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword."

Table 6.
Parody in *Mr. Iglesias's* Sitcom

Transcript: 02:54	<p>Mr. Iglesias: Yeah, the way he killed Dracula with that ax handle. Oh! Very presidential.</p> <p>Mikey: You know, in the—in the Lincoln movie I watched, he said, [Imitating Lincoln] "Until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword."</p>
KR	Script Actual vs. non-actual
	Opposition
	Logical -
	Mechanism

Situation	Mikey is imitating Abraham Lincoln's action from the 'Abraham Lincoln Vampire Hunters movie.
Target	-
Narrative Strategy	Dialogue
Language	<p><i>Set up</i></p> <p>Mr. Iglesias: Yeah, the way he killed Dracula with that ax handle. Oh! Very presidential.</p> <p>Mikey: You know, in the—in the Lincoln movie I watched, he said,</p> <p><i>Punch line</i></p> <p>[Imitating Lincoln] “Until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword.”</p>

The parody in this scene demonstrated Mikey as Abraham Lincoln in a movie. With the facial expression and body gestures he made, it was the punch line. It used actual vs. non-actual as the script opposition without any logical mechanism. Through the dialogue between Mr. Iglesias and Mikey, the question and answer happened. So, the parody was built in this scene.

6. Irony

During lunchtime, Principal Paula spent her time alone and put it as 'me-time' with her salad. Ms. Abby, one of the teachers, gave a compliment about her lunch menu. By saying the awesome iceberg lettuce, the ironic situation happens.

Table 7.

Irony in *Mr. Iglesias's* Sitcom

Transcript: 13:05	Ms. Abby: Oh, my God, <i>that iceberg lettuce with no dressing looks awesome!</i> Principal Paula: F this!	
KR	Script Opposition	Actual vs. non-actual
	Logical Mechanism	Insult/put-down humor

Situation	Abby is mocking principal Paula about her lunch
Target	Principal Paula
Narrative Strategy	Dialogue
Language	<i>Punch line</i> Ms. Abby: Oh, my God, <i>that iceberg lettuce with no dressing looks awesome!</i> Principal Paula: F this!

The irony scene was shown to see the actual vs. non-actual fact. Ms. Abby's compliment towards the lettuce was opposing the fact. It created insult/put-down humor as the logical mechanism. After knowing the script opposition and logical mechanism, the ironic situation happened. What Ms. Abby said about Principal Paula's lunch was opposite the fact. Through this dialogue, the punch line was stated at the beginning of the dialogue.

7. Sarcasm

Mr. Carlos gave a win-win solution to grade some of Mr. Iglesias's students. He got a compliment about the grading method but, Mr. Iglesias put him as the sarcasm target by saying "*you don't have any friends*" as the punch line.

Table 8.
Sarcasm in *Mr. Iglesias's* Sitcom

Transcript: 07:22	Mr. Iglesias: Look, my kids are gonna pass their final, and they're gonna crush your dreams of expelling them. Mr. Carlos: Okay, we are going to grade them the Lakewood way. Principal Paula: Yey, the Lakewood way. What's the Lakewood way? Mr. Carlos: a different teacher will be grading Gabriel's class final, so there's no malfeasance. Mr. Iglesias: "Malfeasance"? Somebody's been playing Words With Friends. Wait, yeah, <i>you don't have any friends.</i>
KR	Script Opposition Logical
	Praising vs. insulting Insult/put-down humor

Mechanism	
Situation	Mr. Carlos is giving one solution for the grading system
Target	Mr. Carlos
Narrative	Conversation
Strategy	
Language	<p><i>Set up</i></p> <p>Mr. Iglesias: Look, my kids are gonna pass their final, and they're gonna crush your dreams of expelling them.</p> <p>Mr. Carlos: Okay, we are going to grade them the Lakewood way.</p> <p>Principal Paula: Yey, the Lakewood way. What's the Lakewood way?</p> <p>Mr. Carlos: a different teacher will be grading Gabriel's class final, so there's no malfeasance.</p> <p>Mr. Iglesias: "Malfeasance"? Somebody's been playing Words With Friends.</p> <p><i>Punch line</i></p> <p>Wait, yeah, <i>you don't have any friends.</i></p>

The sarcastic situation above presented praising vs. insulting as the script opposition. It presented the contrast that made it an insult/ or put-down humor as the logical mechanism. According to the situation, Mr. Iglesias was mocking Mr. Carlos by saying "You don't have any friends.". Mr. Carlos is the target of the conversation. Before the punch line, Mr. Iglesias gives a compliment to Mr. Carlos. However, the compliment was the bridge to make him a target of his sarcasm.

8. Wit

Their class has a new student with high-expectation grades without getting any assignments. The new student believed that Mr. Iglesias will give him a good score since he was the school representative in a sport championship. In that case, Marisol showed

how students had to earn the score. Lorenzo added a quick response that there were no free grades although they gave money to Mr. Iglesias.

Table 9.

Wit in *Mr. Iglesias's* Sitcom

Transcript: 06:53	Marisol: In this class, we aren't given our grades. We earn them. <i>Lorenzo: No matter how much we offer to pay Mr. Iglesias.</i>	
KR	Script	Possible vs. impossible
	Opposition	
	Logical Mechanism	Fallacious reasoning
	Situation	Marisol is explaining the grades that they earn in the class.
	Target	None
	Narrative Strategy	Conversation
	Language	<i>Set up</i> Marisol: In this class, we aren't given our grades. We earn them.
		<i>Punch line</i> Lorenzo: <i>No matter how much we offer to pay Mr. Iglesias.</i>

This section presented a wit action between Marisol and Lorenzo. The script opposition has shown the possible vs. impossible about the grades in class. It used fallacious reasoning between achieving the grades and paying Mr. Iglesias. With the script opposition and logical mechanism, the wit was built in a situation where Lorenzo was saying how he tried to pay Mr. Iglesias for good grades. However, students cannot pay for the grades but, they had to earn the grades. Thus, the wit happened in the middle of the conversation with the punch line at the last. Thus, it was presented in this scene.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the linguistics and types of verbal humor, which is applied to the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH), the researchers concluded some important things. This research found various results from the 5 episodes of a sitcom. According to the discussion, the researchers found 58 verbal humor in *Mr. Iglesias's*

series. From those 5 episodes, the researchers found sarcasm as the category on that. The narrative strategy from the series is dialogue. Since the dialogue that occurs in the school between teachers-students, students-students, and teacher-teacher, sarcasm happened between them. It made the narrative strategy from the series dialogue because the entire scene happened between teachers and students as the main actors. However, this research has some limitations. This research focused on verbal humor in a specific sitcom. Meanwhile, some types of humor can be found in other media, such as digital newspapers, short movies, and radio. Future researchers can compare and contrast different kinds of shows. Future researchers might use the Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH) to find data. Thus, linguistic research about humor can give a better understanding of the sociolinguistic field.

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