**Investigating Verbal Jokes 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 TV show and sitcom. This research focuses on verbal humor in a sitcom entitled *Mr. Iglesias*. The aims of this study are to figure out the types of verbal humor using the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) by Raskin (1984). 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 jokes. The most verbal joke in this research is sarcasm. The six aspects of GTVH theory used to analyze the linguistic section were script opposition, logical mechanism, situation, target, narrative strategy, and language.

Keywords: Verbal jokes, GTVH, Sitcom, Mr. Iglesias

**INTRODUCTION**

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 relationship 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, in speaking and writing humor (Sen, 2012). The spoken form can be found in the movie 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, Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH), second is General Verbal Theory of 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). 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 as a result of society's suppression of discussion, and humor is the discovery of an informational anomaly that causes laughter. After that, GTVH comes as the elaboration of SSTH theory. 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. Wieczorek (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. The 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 brave in showing their potential.

Some recent research about the use of humor can be analysed in both verbal and visual ways (Fallianda, Astiti & Hanim, 2018). In their study, they choose newspaper comic strips to explore humor by using visual-verbal analysis. Since they analysed comic strips, the use of images gives the situation of the text and supported humor on it. There are verbal metaphors, contradictions, parallelisms, so on as the humor on that media. 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. Still, it depends on the script 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.

Some previous research discusses verbal humor in various media such as newspapers, social media, and stand-up comedy. There is no previous research that analyses verbal humor in situation comedy. Thus, this research comes to fill the gaps between those previous researches. This research attempts to analyse verbal humor in *Mr. Iglesias* comedy series by applying the general verbal theory of humor.

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

**General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH)**

Attardo & Raskin first presented the general theory of verbal humor in 1991 with six parameters of jokes known as Knowledge Resources (KRs). Through their research, Damanik & Mulyadi (2020) mention that the GTVH intends to become a joke interpretation pattern that includes all joke aspects, from the abstract joke 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 Position.

The first parameter is script position which indicates the humor's themes (Al-Badawi, Sadeq, Watab, 2021). The following parameter is a logical mechanism that explores the different scripts in the humor. 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). The third parameter is the target of the joke. The following parameter is narrative strategies that refer to a text's narrative form (Masaeli & Heidari-Shahreza, 2017). 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 will be 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 will take from the first five episodes of season one of *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 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 joke representation in the context. Knowledge Resources parameters in this research were used to analyze the joke into 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 episode in *Mr. Iglesias* sitcom contained 58 verbal humors. It is categorized into 12 forms of verbal humor. However, from those five episodes, there were four types of verbal humor that have zero value: limerick, anecdote, farce, and tall tales. The number of verbal humor found in *Mr. Iglesias* sitcom 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 gave an explanation about 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 about 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. Pun in *Mr. Iglesias* 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 section this fall. **Abby**: I’ll do it. I can have a ***syllabus*** ready by the end of lunch.**Tony**: And Gabe drives a ***silly-bus***.  |
| KR | Script Opposition | Syllabus vs. silly-bus |
|  | Logical Mechanism | Twisting homophone |
| Situation | 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 | *Set up:***Principal Paula**: So, Helen Stone is taking early retirement this year, and one of you will be getting her honor students section this fall. **Ms. Abby**: I’ll do it. I can have a ***syllabus*** ready by the end of lunch.*Punch line:* **Mr. Tony**: And Gabe drives a ***silly-bus***. |

Based on the table above syllabus and silly-bus, as the script opposition for the pun. These two words have the same pronunciation /ˈsɪləbəs/ that makes the script had a twisting homophone. In this dialogue part, Mr. Tony was trying 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-Bregenhoj (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! *You know who doesn’t have a bad year at the track? The track”*

Table 3. Riddle in *Mr. Iglesias* Sitcom

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Transcript: 07:09 | **Mr. Tony**: I had another bad year at the track. **Mr. Iglesias**: Oh, big surprise! *You know who doesn’t have a bad year at the track? The track*  |
| KR | Script Opposition | Advice vs. fact |
|  | Logical Mechanism | Word repetition |
| Situation | Mr Iglesias is asking about the track |
| Target | Mr Tony |
| Narrative Strategy | Question and Answer |
| Language | *Set up***Mr. Tony:** I had another bad year at the track. *Punch line***Mr. Iglesias:** Oh, big surprise! *You know who doesn’t have a bad year at the track? The track* |

The riddle from the table above used advice vs. fact script opposition. It used to give advice about Mr. Tony’s gambling track. The repetition of words on the riddle made this as 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 strategy to show how the riddle performed.

**3. Joke**

This statement happened when Mr. Iglesias’s class did a protest on the use of 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* Sitcom

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Transcript: 09:08 | **Walt:** We’re standing up for our beliefs. And also missing geometry. Win-win! |
| KR | Script Opposition | Normal vs. abnormal |
|  | Logical Mechanism | Absurd interpretation |
| Situation | Walt is joining the protest to skip the class |
| Target | None |
| Narrative Strategy | Monologue |
| Language | *Set up***Walt:** We’re standing up for our beliefs. *Punch line*And also missing geometry. Win-win! |

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 in joke because he wanted to join the protest, because of the protest and the geometry class. It made the script opposition as 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). On 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 that, he says he will stay there with his rule. In order to respond to that statement, Mr. Iglesias said “*there’ll be a lot of clawing, scratching, and crying.”*

Table 5. Satire in *Mr. Iglesias* Sitcom

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Transcript: 13:00 | **Mr. Carlos:** Very clever, Mr. Iglesias. You’ve bought them more time but I have not yet begun to fight. **Mr. Iglesias:** I imagine when you do, *there’ll be a lot of clawing, scratching, and crying.* |
| 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 | *Set up***Mr. Carlos:** Very clever, Mr. Iglesias. You’ve bought them more time but I have not yet begun to fight. *Punch line***Mr. Iglesias:** I imagine when you do, *there’ll be a lot of clawing, scratching, and crying.* |

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 at Mr. Carlos about his reaction towards the protest. The only target in this conversation was Mr. Carlos. 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 because he watched a movie from Mr. Iglesias 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* Sitcom

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Transcript: 02:54 | **Mr. Iglesias:** Yeah, the way he killed Dracula with that ax handle. Oh! Very presidential. **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.”  |
| KR | Script Opposition | Actual vs. non-actual |
|  | Logical Mechanism | - |
| Situation | Mikey is imitating Abraham Lincoln action from ‘Abraham Lincoln Vampire Hunters’ movie. |
| Target | - |
| Narrative Strategy | Dialogue |
| Language | *Set up***Mr. Iglesias:** Yeah, the way he killed Dracula with that ax handle. Oh! Very presidential. **Mikey:** You know, in the—in the Lincoln movie I watched, he said, *Punch line*[Imitating Lincoln] “Until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword.” |

The parody in this scene demonstrated Mikey as Abraham Lincoln in a movie. 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* Sitcom

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Transcript: 13:05 | **Ms. Abby:** Oh, my God, *that iceberg lettuce with no dressing looks awesome*! 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 | *Punch line***Ms. Abby:** Oh, my God, *that iceberg lettuce with no dressing looks awesome*! **Principal Paula:** F this! |

The irony scene was shown to see the actual vs. non-actual fact. From Ms. Abby’s compliment towards the lettuce was opposing the fact. It created the 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* 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, *you don’t have any friends*. |
| KR | Script Opposition | Praising vs. insulting |
|  | Logical Mechanism | Insult/put-down humor |
| Situation | Mr. Carlos is giving one solution for the grading system |
| Target | Mr. Carlos |
| Narrative Strategy | Conversation |
| Language | *Set up***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. *Punch line*Wait, yeah, *you don’t have any friends*. |

The sarcastic situation above presented praising vs. insulting as the script opposition. It presented the contrast that made it as an insult/ or put-down humor as the logical mechanism. According to the situation, Mr. Iglesias was mocking Mr. Carlos. Thus, Mr. Carlos is the target of the conversation.

**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* Sitcom

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

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. This wit happened in the middle of the conversation with the punch line at the last. Thus, wit was presented in this scene.

**Conclusion:**

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* series. The narrative strategy from the series is dialogue. From those 5 episodes, the researchers found sarcasm as the most type on that. Since the dialogue that occurs in the school between teachers-students, students-students, and teacher-teacher, the sarcasm happened between them. This research has some limitations. This research focused on the verbal humor in a specific sitcom. Meanwhile, there are some types of humor that can be found in another media. The future researchers can do a compare and contrast among different kinds of show. Thus, linguistic research about humor can give a better understanding of sociolinguistic field.

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