

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

In communication, humor is one way for someone to convey something, either directly or indirectly. People share expressions of humor in their daily interactions because humor tremendously affects daily relationships, relieving boredom and making conversations attractive and fun. According to Raskin (1985), humor is a phenomenon in which a person laughs when hearing (audibly) or seeing (visually) something funny in everyday life, whether it is a narrative, idea, or scenario.

Humor can be conveyed as a complex phenomenon by crafting jokes using verbal and non-verbal means such as funny pictures and speech acts that prompt listeners or readers to identify certain points or patterns that entertain others (Critchley, 2002). The reason for using humor is to share one's personal experience or to make a communicative impression. Sometimes, humor is used simply to lighten one's mood, sometimes to gently poke fun at authority figures, and sometimes not at all. The phenomenon of humor relates to various factors, including gender, age, culture, context, participants, social group, era, and day of the week. Therefore, each of these factors impacts the use of humor (Ermda 2008).

There are many types of humor. Shade (1996) classifies them into four groups: physical, visual, auditory, and verbal humor. According to Shade (1996), "Verbal humor relies on using language to achieve a humorous effect." By

employing words to contradict, undermine, exaggerate, surprise, or turn things on their head, verbal humor highlights incongruities. Later, he classified verbal humor into twelve categories including puns, riddles, jokes, satire, limericks, parody, anecdotes, farce, irony, sarcasm, tall tales, and wit. Verbal humor can be displayed in any media, such as cartoons, stories, films, cartoons, stand-up comedy performances, or sitcoms. The development of communication technology, such as stand-up comedy television programs and social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok also supports its growth.

(Mintz 1985) A stand-up comedy performance involves an individual, the comedian, delivering a scripted monolog or extemporaneous speech intended to elicit laughter from the audience. It has evolved into an international phenomenon with increasing popularity and a steadily expanding viewership. The primary aim of stand-up comedy is entertainment. While often structured as a monolog, a stand-up routine relies heavily on the audience's reaction to the comedian's words. After all, comedians tell their stories to elicit a response. Without that response, the very premise of stand-up comedy is lost (Brodie 2014).

One of the famous comedians is Matt Rife. He is an American stand-up comedian and actor best known for his viral interactions and material on TikTok. With over 13 million followers and 2 billion views worldwide, he has become one of the fastest-growing comedians. Rife has successfully produced and released three of his comedy video specials on his YouTube channel, including "Only Fans," "Matthew Steven Rife," and "Walking Red Flag." In his comedy special "Walking Red Flag," Matt Rife provides an unusual twist on the typical stand-up

comedy in which the comedian does all the talking, Rife engages the audience by asking for their feedback on red flags. Rife emphasizes the importance of recognizing red flags early in a relationship by using various verbal humor techniques, creating an entertaining and engaging experience.

It is important to analyze the types of verbal humor used by Rife in this performance as this helps the audience understand the complexity of the comedy and the message the comedian is trying to convey. For instance, in the video Rife said:

“You've always been **autistic**... I'm sorry I'm so sorry I'm so sorry I heard something totally different... artistic.”

In this conversation, "pun" occurs when Matt gets the word "artistic" wrong as "autistic". The similarity in pronunciation between these two words (artistic = är'tistik, autistic = ô'tistik) creates confusion that eventually leads to humor. This pun creates humor by utilizing hearing errors and sensitivity to word pronunciation.

The analysis of verbal humor has also been the topic of many previous studies. As written by Mulyadi (2021), verbal comedy in SUC discourse was investigated using content analysis as the research design. The results showed a variety of logical strategies used in the data, including word repetition, faulty reasoning, neologisms and interpretations, and false comparisons. Nabila, K. B., Ena, O. T., & Bram, B. (2022) also focused on verbal humor in the sitcom Mr. Iglesias by using Attardo & Raskin's General Theory of Verbal Comedy (GTVH), the findings of this study showed that 58 expressions used linguistic humor and

could be classified into 8 of the 12 types of verbal humor. Furthermore, Wisasongko, W., Pangestu, A., & Wahyuningsih, A.T. (2023) also made a study showing that eight linguistic comedy categories can be found in Mrnigelng's YouTube videos.

Regarding the research on humor mentioned in the previous paragraph, it is clear that the previous studies differ from this study regarding the object of analysis and the theory used. In this study, the writer used Shade's (1996) theory of humor to examine the various types of verbal humor in Matt Rife's Stand-Up Comedy Special, *Walking Red Flag*. While previous studies used Attardo & Raskin's General Theory of Verbal Comedy (GTVH).

1.2. Problem of the Study

In relation to the background, the problems of the study are formulated as the following:

1. What types of verbal humors are found in Matt Rife's Stand-Up Comedy:

Walking Red Flag?

2. How are the verbal humors linguistically realized in Matt Rife's Stand-Up

Comedy: *Walking Red Flag*?

3. Why are the verbal humors realized in the way it is in Matt Rife's Stand-

Up Comedy: *Walking Red Flag*?

1.3. Object of the Study

Concerning the previously stated problem of the study, the writer develops the following study objectives:

1. To analyze the dominant verbal humor in Matt Rife's Stand-Up Comedy: Walking Red Flag.
2. To elucidate linguistic realization of verbal humor in Matt Rife's Stand-Up Comedy: Walking Red Flag.
3. To explain the social context underpinning the use of verbal humor in Matt Rife's Stand-Up Comedy: Walking Red Flag.

1.4. Scope of the Study

This study provides a clear understanding of verbal humor as described in Shade's (1996) theory of humor. The main objective is to determine the types of verbal humor and its realization in Matt Rife's stand-up comedy video, Walking Red Flag. The video was released on 24 June 2023 on Matt Rife's YouTube channel with a duration of 50:16 minutes.

1.5. Significances of the Study

Based on the object of the study above, this study is expected to provide theoretical and practical benefits.

1. Theoretically

The findings of this study are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the scientific research of Applied linguistics, especially on verbal humor analysis; more specific information can be referred to Matt Rife's stand-up comedy videos. In addition, the findings of this study are also expected to be a reference for further research.

2. Practically

1. Actors and actresses: This study is expected to help actors and actresses enhance more memorable and effective performances in comedic roles. The study of verbal humor is also expected to help enhance improvisation skills, which enable actors and actresses to respond spontaneously to comedic situations on stage. Additionally, it will guide in delivering criticism in a more conducive manner and help new comedians better understand various ways to create humor effectively.
2. Producers: This study is expected to assist producers in making decisions about scriptwriting and comedic components in their productions, to ensure that the humor is relevant to the target audience.
3. Sensory authorities: Sensory authorities can use an understanding of verbal humor analysis to assess the possible impact of comedy content on different audience groups, especially regarding offensive language or inappropriate themes.