

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of The Study

Humor, a ubiquitous human phenomenon, is commonly acknowledged as a fundamental aspect of human interaction (Li, 2022). Contemporary trends reveal a noteworthy shift wherein humor is not only employed for entertainment purposes but has become a prominent tool for social criticism, providing a platform to critique societal deviations. As articulated by Attardo (2020), humor operates within the realm of connotative semiotics, characterized by the functionalization of signs. In this context, messages cease to serve purely communicative purposes and instead take on hidden objectives, such as amusement or playful engagement. Therefore, analyzing humor provides an opportunity to investigate the richness and complexity of language use, revealing how speakers manipulate linguistic elements to create comedic effect.

Pocheplsov (1981) classified humor into two categories. The first is situational humor, whereas the second is linguistic or verbal humor. Attardo and Raskin (1991) define verbal comedy as produced through language or writing. According to Dynel (2009), verbal humor is divided into two categories: jokes and conversational humor, which comprises a variety of semantic-pragmatic elements such as lexemes, phrases, jokes, retorts, insinuations, banter, ridicule, self-deprecating humor, and anecdotes. Languages realize this. Verbal comedy refers to written and spoken words employed in tales, conversations, puzzles, and

jokes having a humorous ending. Therefore, verbal humor is explored in this research since the language and utterances of comedy in the form of subtitles are verbal. Attardo and Raskin's (1991) General Theory of Verbal Humor was used to examine verbal humor.

Raskin (1984) proposed the Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH), Attardo and Raskin (1991) proposed the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH), and Rayz (2020) proposed the Ontological Semantic Theory of Humor. The researcher relies on the General Verbal Theory of Humor as the primary theory for investigation. This revealed a mismatch between semantic scripts in verbal humor and is regarded as a significant advancement in laughter theory. GTVH is a joke-based humor competency model with six knowledge sources: script opposition, logical mechanism, situation, target, narrative strategy, and language.

A deeper exploration into humor offers a unique avenue to unravel the intricacies and sophistication of language use. Attardo's characterization of humor as connotative semiotics highlights the intentional manipulation of linguistic elements by speakers to create comedic effects. This intentional use of humor for amusement aligns with Lesmana's (2010) categorization of humor into two forms: intended and unintended. Intended humor, exemplified by comedy shows on television, stand-up performances, films, or comedy series, is crafted with the explicit purpose of eliciting laughter. Therefore, this study focused to revolves around the intentional humor found in Stand-Up Comedy, where comedians deliberately craft jokes to amuse and entertain their audience.

According to Bernabéu (2019), the humor in stand-up comedy serves an entertaining goal. This is conveyed through a linguistic system, and there must also be an element of enjoyment. Accordingly, Mulyadi et al. (2021) state that people are smart enough to find humor in things and understand what makes them funny or interesting. As entertainment, stand-up comedy has a comedian act in front of a live audience. The comedian usually talks directly to the audience, a type of verbal humor. One of the phenomenal stand-up comedians is Bill Burr. Bill Burr is a multifaceted American entertainer, known for his work as a stand-up comedian, actor, filmmaker, and podcaster. He has premiered multiple stand-up comedy specials, such as *You People Are All the Same* (2012), *I'm Sorry You Feel That Way* (2014), *Walk Your Way Out* (2017), and *Paper Tiger* (2019). He was nominated for a Grammy Award for his work on the song "Paper Tiger". He received a Primetime Emmy Award nomination for his role in the dark comedy series "Immoral Compass" (2021–present). That's why Bill Burr chooses this Stand-Up Comedian Bill Burr as the subject of the research in this study.

This research uses stand-up comedian Bill Burr to analyze the verbal humor he uses, for example: *"Who was Earl Campbell? He was two and a half Bo Jackson's like welded together"*. This joke could be part of a longer anecdote about Earl Campbell, the American Football legend. Bill Burr may have used this anecdote to illustrate Earl Campbell's strength and playing style. This sentence violates listeners' expectations about how to talk about athletes. Instead of using detailed descriptions of playing styles or statistics, Bill Burr uses unexpected hyperbolic

comparisons. He also uses faulty logical reasoning. It is impossible to "weld" two people together. This use of faulty logic creates a humorous effect.

Several studies on verbal humor have been carried out by scholars. Heidari-Shahreza (2018) conducted a study on using teacher-initiated humor and language games in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lessons. Yang (2019) Analyzing Verbal Humor in Friends from a Pragmatic Presupposition Perspective. Loizou & Loizou (2019) conducted the research discussed, ranging from examining the impact of structured activities on children's creative thinking and humor production. Yang (2019) Analyzing Verbal Humor in Friends from a Pragmatic Presupposition Perspective. In contrast, Wawrzyniuk (2021) explores how audiences perceive and analyze humor in stand-up comedy, shifting the theoretical focus from humor production to perception. The following study, undertaken by Yusuf (2021), examines the auditory interpretation of humor included in the transcriptions of the animated television show Gravity Falls. The objective is to identify the various forms of verbal humor present in the transcription of the animated television series Gravity Falls and to examine the linguistic analysis of this humor using the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH). Finally, Mulyadi et al. (2021) investigated the logical mechanisms and narrative strategies used by Indonesian stand-up comedians, with a focus on various types of verbal humor. This research is certainly different from existing research. The researcher intends to enhance the existing body of research by analyzing verbal humor in American stand-up comedy. This analysis will involve categorizing the humor based on Shade's typology and applying the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) to

conduct a thorough analysis. The study also explored the reason for creating humor using the theory of Halliday context model (1978).

B. The Problem of The Study

About the background of the study, the problem is formulated as follows.

1. What types of verbal humor are used in Bill Burr's stand-up comedian's discourse?
2. How are humor in Bill Burr's stand-up comedy linguistically realized?
3. Why are the verbal humor realized as they are?

C. The Objective of The Study

About the problems of the study, the objectives of the study are:

1. to identify the types of verbal humor utilized by American Stand-Up comedians.
2. to elaborate on how verbal humor is linguistically created through the lens of the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH).
3. to discover the reasons verbal humor is created linguistically.

D. The Scope of The Study

Using the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH), Shade (1996) typology, and Halliday (1978) as a theoretical framework, this study focuses on explaining the types of verbal humor employed by American stand-up comedians. Transcripts of American Stand-Up Comedy performances from his video "Live at

The Troubadour 3," which was posted on September 2, 2023, and has received 1,061,176 views, is the data source for this research.

E. The Significance of The Study

The study deals with the significances, namely theoretical and practical significances;

1. Theoretically, the findings of this study are expected to enrich the knowledge in applied linguistically.
2. Practically, this study is expected to be useful as information and reference for English teachers and English students who are interested in conducting further studies about verbal humor using the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH).