

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the study, outlining its foundational aspects and research focus. It begins with a background section, which establishes the context and rationale for the research. Following this, the problem formulation presents the study's central research question. The operational definitions section clarifies key terms to ensure a consistent understanding throughout the research. Additionally, the aims of the study specify the study's primary focus, while the significance of the study highlights its potential contributions.

#### A. Background of the Study

Stand-up comedy on the 'Don't Tell Comedy' platform demonstrates how humor can serve not only as a form of entertainment but also as a means of reflecting on personal experiences and pressing social realities. As Winarsih (2020) explains, stand-up comedians use humor to bring social issues directly to the forefront of public attention, offering new ways of thinking without disrupting the social order. This phenomenon highlights that behind every joke that provokes laughter, there is a deliberate use of humorous language crafted through timing and structure that resonates with the audience. Understanding why people laugh and what specific language choices trigger that laughter allows us to uncover what makes a joke effective. Through this process, valuable insights can be obtained into the ways comedians construct jokes that are not merely humorous but also intellectually stimulating and socially meaningful. Humor, therefore, becomes both a communicative strategy and an artistic tool, where knowing the mechanics of language and laughter can help shape impactful comedic performances.

Laughing and perceiving something as funny are influenced by a combination of elements that tap into both psychological and social aspects. According to Warren et al. (2021), most theories of humor rely on five key elements often present in comedy: surprise, simultaneity, feelings of superiority, a violation appraisal, and a benign appraisal. The element of surprise frequently catches people off guard with unexpected twists, while simultaneity allows audiences to enjoy humor that

resonates with shared social interpretations. A violation appraisal occurs when humor addresses taboo or controversial topics in a lighthearted and acceptable manner. These combined elements make humor entertaining and powerful for sparking social reflection, offering new perspectives, and enhancing awareness of social realities in a non-offensive manner.

Expanding the understanding of humor's function, its role extends beyond entertainment and social critique, holding substantial value in education. Humor is vital for strengthening relationships, fostering a fun and relaxed environment, and encouraging student engagement. It enables teachers to communicate effectively and dynamically with students, thereby improving both academic performance and interpersonal relationships (Lovorn, 2008). Additionally, humor helps create a fun, tension-free, and relaxed atmosphere, motivating students to participate actively and learn (Thuy & Thao, 2022). Therefore, humor significantly supports the teaching and learning process, as well as interpersonal relationships and student learning motivation.

In stand-up comedy, humor serves as a reflection and a tool for understanding deeper social dynamics. Humor serves as a meeting point between social narratives and individual experiences, where it serves not only as entertainment but also as a medium of critique on social issues that are often overlooked (Adekunle, 2022). By using humor, individuals can more readily accept social realities, especially in oppressive and manipulative political systems (Zekavat, 2022). Humor is not just a means of entertainment; it also serves as a bridge to convey profound social messages, encourage critical reflection, and strengthen bonds between individuals, thus making it a force that can change how audiences view issues.

As a unique art form, stand-up comedy allows comedians to entertain and deliver social criticism directly to the audience. In these performances, comedians act as narrators in their self-created narratives, sharing their personal views and experiences on stage (Brodie, 2009). This is where the role of the 'Don't Tell Comedy' platform becomes essential. The platform offers a space for new comedians to perform and gain wider exposure through online media, thereby opening up opportunities for a larger audience to enjoy and support comedy.

(Asmelash, 2024). As such, 'Don't Tell Comedy' supports the development of a more inclusive and diverse comedy ecosystem while strengthening the social function of stand-up comedy to voice critical perspectives on important issues.

Previous research conducted by Sulistyowati et al. (2024), entitled "Analysis of Humor Language Techniques of Male and Female Participants in the Kompas TV Stand-Up Comedy Competition," highlighted the phenomenon of using humor language techniques between male and female participants in the Stand Up Comedy Indonesia (SUCI) event broadcast on Kompas TV. This research used a qualitative approach with a content analysis method to identify differences in humor techniques used based on gender. The analysis of this study draws on Berger's (2017) theory of humor techniques, which categorizes humor into four main categories: language (verbal), logic (ideas), form (existential), and motion (physical). The research data consisted of ten male comics who were winners in each season and eight female comics representing several seasons, except for seasons 5 and 9, which had no female participants. The results showed that male comics tended to use techniques such as infantilism, sexual allusion, and taboo words, while female comics more often used role-playing, roasting, and self-deprecation techniques. These findings suggest that humor technique preferences may be influenced by gender and cultural factors in Indonesia.

Unlike previous research that focuses on differences in humor techniques based on gender in the context of Stand Up Comedy Indonesia (SUCI), this research aims to fill the void in verbal humor and the underlying theories that make it humorous by exploring comics' performances in the context of American stand-up comedy Liz Blanc performance on 'Don't Tell Comedy' Youtube channel. In contrast to Indonesian stand-up comedy, which often relies on local dialects, socio-political commentary, and culturally specific references, American stand-up primarily as performed on the 'Don't Tell Comedy' platform features a more diverse and individualistic set of themes, including race, identity, mental health, and everyday absurdities, delivered through a distinctly personal narrative style. This cultural contrast highlights the performative uniqueness of American comedians who merge vulnerability with wit to engage audiences on both intellectual and emotional levels.

In performances on the ‘Don’t Tell Comedy’ platform, humor does not merely serve as entertainment but also acts as a reflection of personal experiences and social realities. Comedians intentionally use humor that is structurally and linguistically crafted to construct punchlines that provoke laughter while simultaneously addressing social issues in a critical yet non-confrontational manner. This phenomenon suggests that by understanding the language of humor and the reasons why people laugh, one can better comprehend how practical and meaningful jokes are constructed.

Based on these phenomena and previous studies, this research adopts Berger’s (2017) theory of humor language analysis and the concept of why it makes it funny to examine the strategic use of humorous language in Liz Blanc’s performance on ‘Don’t Tell Comedy’. Entitled “Analyzing the Language of Humor and Why it is Funny in Stand-Up Comedy on ‘Don’t Tell Comedy’”. The research is expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on humor studies, particularly verbal humor, while offering insights into the broader cultural dynamics of comedy that resonate with diverse audiences.

## **B. Formulation of the Problem**

Based on the background above, the researcher addressed the question: “What types of humor language are used, and why are they perceived as funny in stand-up comedy on the ‘Don’t Tell Comedy’?”

## **C. Operational Definitions**

### **1. Humor Language**

The analysis of humor language refers to the use of words and sentences to create humor. The research focuses on how comedian design and deliver comedy based on the study of *Allusion, Bombast, Definition, Exaggeration, Facetiousness, Insults, Infantilism, Irony, Misunderstanding, Overliteralness, Puns or Wordplay, Repartee, Ridicule, Sarcasm, and Satire*.

## **2. Theories Why it is Funny**

Analyzing why it is funny refers to using sentences to create humor. The research focuses on how comedian design and deliver comedy based on the study of *Superiority*, *Incongruity*, *Cognitive*, and *Psychoanalytic* approaches to understanding the underlying mechanisms of humor.

## **3. Stand-Up Comedy**

In the context of this research, stand-up comedy is defined as a performance art form in which comedian use humorous language strategies to deliver humorous monologues to the audience. The analysis focuses on how the comedian's language of humor is designed to create a comedic effect.

## **4. 'Don't Tell Comedy'**

'Don't Tell Comedy' is a stand-up comedy performance platform that features a diverse range of comedy styles and themes from various comedians, offering a rich of voices and perspectives. In this research, the platform serves as the data source for exploring the construction of humor language through a selected performance video, namely "Teaching Gen Z is WILD" by Liz Blanc, which is particularly relevant to current social and generational issues.

## **D. Aims of the Study**

This research aims to analyze the types of humor language used and examine the underlying reasons why it is perceived as funny in stand-up comedy performances on the 'Don't Tell Comedy' platform.

## **E. Significance of the Study**

### **1. Theoretical use**

This research provides a theoretical foundation for future studies on the language of humor in stand-up comedy, particularly in terms of linguistic strategies and their connection to social issues. The findings of this study can be used to develop a further analysis of the relationship between humor and comedian performance, as well as its application in various cultural and media contexts.

## **2. Practical use**

This research offers insights into crafting practical and humorous jokes by examining the use of clever language and understanding the underlying mechanisms that make jokes humorous. These insights can benefit comedians, content creators, educators, and entertainment practitioners by enhancing their ability to engage audiences through humor.

## **3. Empirical use**

The study provides concrete data on humor language techniques used in 'Don't Tell Comedy,' enriching the researcher's knowledge of analytical and interpretive skills in the context of humor.