

Verbal Humor Creation Techniques In The Lapor Pak! Trans 7 Program

Irroh Har'an Khoirun Nisa^{1*}, Prihadi²

Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: Irroh Har'an Khoirun Nisa

irrohharan.2022@student.uny.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study examines verbal humor techniques in the Indonesian television program *Lapor Pak!* on Trans7, focusing on the types, functions, and creation strategies of conversational humor. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected from 13 episodes aired between January and June 2024 and transcribed into 197 humorous utterances. The analysis employed Berger's (1998) humor framework and Hay's (2000) classification of functions. Findings reveal diverse humor types such as wordplay, witty retorts, teasing, self-denigration, and anecdotes, with witty utterances and retorts dominating. Humor primarily functions to build solidarity, relieve tension, and assert control, while techniques involve linguistic and logical play. These results highlight the cultural and pragmatic role of humor in Indonesian television discourse.

INTRODUCTION

Language is the primary means by which humans express their thoughts, emotions, and creativity. Innovative use of language not only serves to convey information, but also as a strategy for building social relationships, conveying criticism, and even creating entertainment through humor. Verbal humor, as part of language play, is an interesting phenomenon because it balances the functions of communication and recreation. In the context of Indonesian popular culture, humor is not merely entertainment, but also a means of conveying social, moral, and political messages that are often more easily accepted by the public than serious communication (Wijana, 2003; Rahardi, 2007).

With the development of mass media, especially television, humor has increasingly occupied an important space in entertainment programs. Television comedy programs are not only a means of laughter, but also a space for the public to reflect on social realities in a light and enjoyable way. One notable program is *Lapor Pak!* on Trans7, which combines a talk show format, comedy drama, and spontaneous improvisation. This show is interesting to study because it presents conversational humor that is highly dependent on context, improvisation, and linguistic creativity. This makes *Lapor Pak!* a unique representation of verbal humor practices in mainstream Indonesian media.

Previous research on humor has mostly focused on humor in advertisements, literary works, digital media, and everyday social interactions (Caprara & Zimbardo, 2004; Lusardi, Mitchell, & Curto, 2010; Sabri & MacDonald, 2010). However, studies that specifically discuss the techniques of creating verbal humor in Indonesian television programs are still very limited. In fact, television humor has great power in shaping public perception and creating social discourse. This study occupies an academic niche because it examines the phenomenon of humor in the context of contemporary television entertainment by combining linguistic and pragmatic analysis.

This research contributes in two ways. First, from a theoretical perspective, it enriches the literature on linguistic humor by applying Berger's (1998) classification of humor creation techniques and Hay's (2000) classification of the functions of humor in the Indonesian cultural context. Second, from a practical perspective, the results of this study can provide new insights for academics, educators, and media creators on how verbal humor can be used as an effective communication strategy, both in education and entertainment production. Thus, this study not only shows how humor functions as a social glue, a tension reliever, and a subtle criticism, but also how linguistic strategies work to present distinctive humor.

Based on this description, this study seeks to answer the main question: how are the types of verbal humor, its functions, and the techniques of creating humor presented in the *Lapor Pak!* Trans7 program?

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Verbal Humor Theory

Verbal humor is a form of humor that arises from the use of language, whether through wordplay, puns, or improvisation in conversation. Attardo (1994) divides verbal humor into two types, namely canned jokes and

conversational humor. In the context of television programs, especially comedy talk shows, conversational humor is more dominant due to its spontaneous and contextual nature. Verbal humor is understood as a linguistic practice that utilizes elements of morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics to create humor.

Theory of the Function of Humor (Jennifer Hay, 2000)

Jennifer Hay classifies the functions of humor into three broad categories: solidarity, psychological, and power. The function of solidarity includes the role of humor in strengthening social relationships, emphasizing similarities, and building togetherness. The psychological function relates to the role of humor in relieving tension, overcoming difficult situations, or protecting oneself from attack. The power function places humor as a means of control, criticism, and affirmation of social position within a group.

Theory of Humor Creation Techniques (Berger, 1998)

Berger divides humor creation techniques into four broad categories: language, logic, identity, and action. In this study, the analysis focuses on the aspects of language and logic. Linguistic techniques include the use of wordplay, irony, puns, sarcasm, satire, and ridicule. Logical techniques include errors in reasoning, contradictions, and paradoxes that are processed into humor. With this theory, we can see how linguistic strategies shape the effect of humor in conversation.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the theory used, this study maps the relationship between the analyses as follows:

Types of Verbal Humor: wordplay, retorts, teasing, self-denigrating, anecdotes.

Functions of Verbal Humor: solidarity, psychological, power.

Techniques for Creating Verbal Humor: wordplay, irony, puns, satire, sarcasm, outwitting, and others.

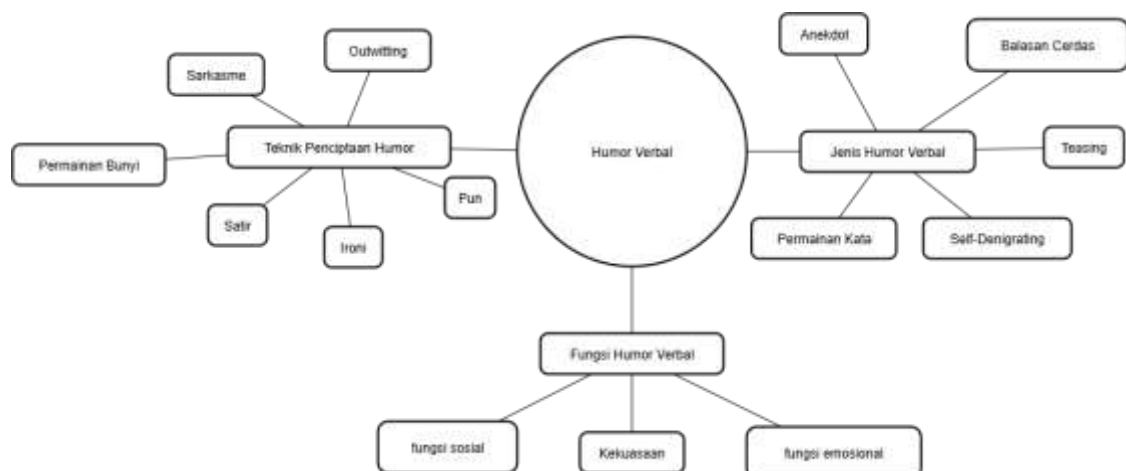


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with the aim of describing the techniques of creating verbal humor, types, and functions that appear in the *Lapor Pak!* program on Trans7. The research data consists of humorous utterances transcribed from episodes of the program that aired during the period January–June 2024. The research population included all episodes of *Lapor Pak!* during that period, while the sample was determined using purposive sampling, namely selecting 13 episodes that were considered representative. From the selected episodes, 197 humorous utterances were obtained as the main data.

The data collection technique was carried out through documentation in the form of watching, noting, and transcribing humorous dialogues. Data analysis was carried out in three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. To classify the data, Berger's (1998) theory on humor techniques and Hay's (2000) theory on the function of humor were used. Data validity was strengthened by the theory triangulation technique to ensure that the analysis results were consistent and accountable.

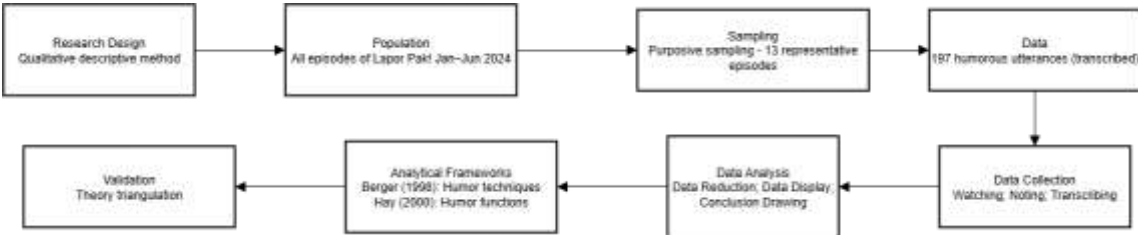


Figure 2. Research Flow Framework

RESULTS

The analysis was conducted in several systematic steps to ensure rigor and clarity. First, humorous utterances from 13 selected episodes of *Lapor Pak!* were carefully transcribed. Each utterance was identified within its conversational context to maintain accuracy and preserve pragmatic meaning. Second, the transcribed utterances were classified based on established theoretical frameworks. Specifically, Berger's (1998) categories of humor techniques were used to analyze how humor was created, while Hay's (2000) framework was applied to determine the communicative functions of humor. This dual framework allowed for a comprehensive analysis that combined structural-linguistic and socio-pragmatic perspectives. Third, after classification, the data were quantified and summarized to identify dominant trends. The results were then presented in the form of tables and visual graphs to provide a clear overview of the distribution patterns and to facilitate easier interpretation.

Types of Verbal Humor

From the total of 197 humorous utterances analyzed, five main types of verbal humor were identified. These include **wordplay**, **retorts (witty replies)**, **teasing**, **self-denigrating humor**, and **anecdotes**. As summarized in Table 1, retorts emerged as the most dominant type, accounting for 36.5% of the data. This finding highlights the spontaneous and interactive nature of humor in the

program, where hosts and guests frequently engage in quick, witty exchanges. Teasing also appeared frequently (20.8%), reflecting the playful dynamics among participants. Wordplay contributed 19.3%, showcasing the linguistic creativity employed in generating laughter. Meanwhile, self-denigrating humor and anecdotes were less frequent but still significant, each appearing in 11.7% of the data, suggesting that personal stories and self-directed jokes remain integral strategies in humor construction.. The summary data is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Types of Verbal Humor in Lapor Pak!

Type of Verbal Humor	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Wordplay	38	19.3
Retorts (Witty Replies)	72	36.5
Teasing	41	20.8
Self-Denigrating	23	11.7
Anecdotes	23	11.7
Total	197	100

Based on the analysis of 197 humorous utterances in the Lapor Pak! program, five dominant types of verbal humor were found. Retorts (witty responses) ranked highest with a frequency of 72 times (36.5%). This shows that Lapor Pak! often features spontaneous humor in the form of sharp and contextual responses between characters. This type shows verbal intelligence and the actors' ability to make situations funny without a rigid script. Meanwhile, teasing appeared 41 times (20.8%) and wordplay 38 times (19.3%). These two types show that wordplay and light teasing are important elements in building rapport between the actors. Self-denigrating humor and anecdotes appeared with the same frequency (23 times or 11.7%), indicating that self-deprecating humor or funny short stories were used as variations to maintain the dynamics of the show. Thus, the dominance of retorts shows that the main strength of Lapor Pak! lies in the actors' verbal improvisation skills and comedic quick thinking.

Functions of Verbal Humor

The classification of humorous utterances according to Hay's (2000) framework revealed three main communicative functions: **solidarity**, **psychological**, and **power-related**. As shown in Table 2, the majority of humorous utterances (41.1%) functioned to build solidarity, reflecting the program's role as a space where humor is used to foster camaraderie and social connection between hosts, guests, and the audience. The second most common

function was psychological (33%), which indicates that humor often served to relieve tension, reduce stress, and provide entertainment. Lastly, 25.9% of the humorous utterances performed a power function, such as asserting dominance, mocking others, or challenging authority, underscoring humor's role as a subtle tool of control within interactions. The result are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Functions of Verbal Humor in Lapor Pak!

Functions of Verbal Humor	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Solidarity	81	41.1
Psychological	65	33.0
Power	51	25.9
Total	197	100

Analysis of verbal humor based on Hay's (2000) classification reveals three main functions: solidarity, psychological, and power. The solidarity function is the most dominant with 81 data points (41.1%), indicating that humor is used to strengthen social relationships among Lapor Pak! members and create a friendly and relaxed atmosphere of togetherness. The psychological function ranks second with 65 data points (33.0%), indicating that humor is often used to relieve tension, cover up mistakes, or overcome awkward situations in stage interactions. The power function appears 51 times (25.9%), especially when certain characters use humor as a tool to show dominance or control the direction of the conversation. These findings show that Lapor Pak! is not only entertaining, but also serves as a social arena where humor is a means of maintaining harmony while negotiating roles and hierarchies among the players.

Humor Creation Techniques

Analysis based on Berger's (1998) classification revealed a variety of humor creation techniques. Table 3 presents the distribution, with **pun** being the most dominant technique (21.8%), followed by **sarcasm** (18.3%), and **irony** (15.7%). These findings suggest that humor in *Lapor Pak!* relies heavily on linguistic manipulation, such as playful use of words, double meanings, and ironic contrasts, which require active audience engagement for appreciation. Satire accounted for 14.7%, highlighting the program's tendency to critique social and political issues humorously. Outwitting (16.8%) also appeared frequently, showcasing the competitive banter among participants. Sound play, though the least frequent (12.7%), still contributed significantly to the humor repertoire by leveraging phonological features of language.

Table 3. Humor Creation Techniques in Lapor Pak!

Humor Creation Techniques	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sound Play	25	12.7
Irony	31	15.7
Pun	43	21.8
Satire	29	14.7
Sarcasm	36	18.3
Outwitting	33	16.8
Total	197	100

Based on Berger's theory (1998), six main techniques were found in the creation of verbal humor in Lapor Pak! namely sound play, irony, puns, satire, sarcasm, and outwitting. Of these six techniques, puns (double meaning) were the most frequently used technique with 43 occurrences (21.8%). This technique often appears in the form of puns, shifts in meaning, and homonym games that create a funny effect without offending others.

The techniques of sarcasm (36 times, 18.3%) and irony (31 times, 15.7%) are also frequently found, showing that humor in Lapor Pak! is often inserted in the form of subtle or sharp satire. Meanwhile, outwitting (33 times, 16.8%) shows how the players "catch" and reverse their opponents' logic to create spontaneous laughter. Satire (29 times, 14.7%) is often used to lightly mock social or political phenomena, while wordplay (25 times, 12.7%) reinforces the phonetic elements of humor that are easily captured by the audience.

From these results, it can be concluded that the techniques used to create humor in Lapor Pak! do not rely on a specific pattern, but rather are a combination of linguistic creativity, spontaneity, and the social sensitivity of the comedians.

Categorization Using the Three-Box Method

Based on the cumulative scores from the analysis, it was found that the overall verbal humor in Lapor Pak! fell into the moderate to high category. This means that the intensity and diversity of humor in the show was strong enough to maintain the audience's interest and keep them laughing.

Quantitatively, most humor techniques fall within the range of 100.01–150.00 (moderate category), while retorts and solidarity functions occupy the high category (>150.00). These results show that humor in Lapor Pak! is not only

a means of entertainment, but also a form of social representation that reflects the dynamics of interaction and verbal intelligence characteristic of urban Indonesian society.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that verbal humor in *Lapor Pak! Trans7* is dominated by retorts or clever responses. This dominance reflects the distinctive character of the show, which emphasizes spontaneity, wit, and interaction between hosts and guest stars. This is in line with the concept of conversational humor proposed by Attardo (1994), in which humor arises from contextual, spontaneous conversations that are greatly influenced by the communication situation. This phenomenon also shows that humor in the program emphasizes responsiveness rather than long narrative humor such as anecdotes.

In terms of function, the study found that humor was mostly used to build solidarity among participants. This is in line with Hay's (2000) finding that humor often serves as a means of strengthening social relationships, creating a sense of togetherness, and reducing hierarchical distance in conversation. In the context of television shows, this solidarity function applies not only to the players but also to the audience, creating an emotional closeness between the viewers and the show. Psychological functions, such as reducing tension, are also commonly found, especially in scenes laden with social criticism. Meanwhile, the function of power emerges when the host uses humor as a means of controlling the conversation, asserting roles, or delivering sharp criticism in a subtle manner.

In terms of technique, the results of the study show that humor is often created through wordplay and logic, such as puns, irony, sarcasm, and satire. Berger (1998) asserts that linguistic and logical strategies are the two main pillars in the creation of humor. Thus, the results of this study reinforce Berger's theory and show that these strategies are relevant to the context of Indonesian popular culture. Interestingly, self-denigrating humor is also quite frequently used. This phenomenon reflects a communication strategy that aims to create familiarity while reducing the host's dominance in front of the audience.

Academically, these findings enrich the literature on linguistic humor in Indonesia, which has mostly focused on humor in advertisements, social media, or literary works. This study confirms that humor on television, particularly in the program *Lapor Pak!*, has a distinctive pragmatic dimension, namely a combination of entertainment, social criticism, and interaction strategies. The contribution of this research lies not only in mapping the types, functions, and techniques of verbal humor, but also in enriching cross-cultural humor theory.

Thus, this study implies that verbal humor on Indonesian television functions as an effective medium of social communication. It is able to elicit laughter, strengthen solidarity, and convey criticism in a way that is more acceptable to the public. This can be a reference for linguistic research, media studies, and entertainment practitioners who want to understand the role of humor as part of Indonesia's popular cultural discourse.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examines the phenomenon of verbal humor in the television program *Lapor Pak! Trans7*, focusing on the types, functions, and techniques of humor creation. Based on the analysis of 197 humorous utterances from 13 episodes studied, it can be concluded that verbal humor in this program is dominated by retorts or clever responses. This form of humor demonstrates the actors' ability to provide spontaneous, quick, and contextual responses to the communication situations that occur on stage. The dominance of this type of humor shows that *Lapor Pak!* features very dynamic and lively interactions, in which the linguistic intelligence and social sensitivity of the players are key to creating humor.

In addition to retorts, other forms of humor such as wordplay, light teasing, and self-denigrating humor also appear as variations that maintain the rhythm and balance of the show's atmosphere. This shows that the humor in *Lapor Pak!* does not only rely on text or script, but is formed through spontaneity and linguistic improvisation between the actors. In this context, humor serves not only to provoke laughter, but also as a means of negotiating social roles and maintaining warm interpersonal relationships among the show's participants.

The most prominent function of humor in this study is the function of solidarity, followed by psychological and power functions. The solidarity function shows how humor is used to strengthen the sense of togetherness and familiarity between the performers and the audience. This type of humor strengthens social relationships, builds a comfortable working atmosphere, and creates a fluid and egalitarian climate of communication. Meanwhile, the psychological function shows the role of humor in reducing tension, covering up minor mistakes, and maintaining emotional stability in an improvisational stage situation. The power function, although smaller in scope, shows how humor can be used to assert dominance or certain social roles, for example by the main character towards supporting characters, without creating an oppressive impression. These three functions collectively show that humor in *Lapor Pak!* plays an important role as a social glue that smooths interactions between individuals and maintains harmony in public communication.

In terms of humor creation techniques, this study found that the most frequently used strategies are puns, irony, satire, and sarcasm. These techniques reveal the connection between the linguistic abilities, logical thinking, and social sensitivity of the performers. Puns utilize similarities in sound, shifts in meaning, and word associations to create clever humor. Meanwhile, irony, satire, and sarcasm show how humor functions as a means of subtle social criticism, often touching on political, social, and cultural issues without causing open conflict. These findings prove that the humor theories proposed by Berger (1998) and Hay (2000) are relevant for application in the Indonesian cultural context, as both are able to explain how linguistic and social aspects are intertwined in the formation of humor.

Academically, this research makes an important contribution to the development of humor linguistics studies in Indonesia. Until now, humor research

has focused more on literary texts, social media, or advertisements, while studies on humor in television programs are still relatively limited. This research enriches the field of applied linguistics by showing that verbal humor in television media is a complex form of communication that combines elements of language, context, and culture. Thus, humor cannot be understood merely as wordplay, but rather as a form of communication that is rich in social, cultural, and pragmatic values.

In the context of Indonesian culture, humor also functions as a mirror of society. Through the humor presented, the public can laugh at social situations that are actually serious, but are conveyed in a light and easily acceptable manner. This confirms that humor in *Lapor Pak!* is not just entertainment, but also a medium for social expression and an educational tool for the community to reflect on the realities around them.

Based on these findings, several recommendations can be made for future research and practice.

First, for future researchers, it is recommended to expand the object of study by involving digital platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, or other social media, which are now the main spaces for the dissemination of humorous content. Thus, a comparison can be made between the strategies for creating humor in television and digital media to see the shift in comedy communication styles in the era of media convergence.

Second, for education practitioners, the results of this study can be used to develop more interactive and enjoyable learning strategies. Verbal humor can be used as an effective pedagogical tool to build rapport between teachers and students, create a positive learning atmosphere, and foster critical and reflective thinking. Humor used in proportion can also help students understand complex material in a light but meaningful way.

Third, for media creators and producers, this research provides an overview of the importance of maintaining the quality of humor in public broadcasts. Humor should not only be intended to provoke laughter, but should also contain contextual educational and moral values. Media creators are expected to be able to present a form of humor that is intelligent, critical, polite, and relevant to people's lives, so that it can serve as a means of entertainment that is also educational.

Finally, this study confirms that verbal humor is a reflection of the way modern Indonesian society thinks and interacts. Through programs such as *Lapor Pak!*, we can see how language becomes a tool for creatively expressing intelligence, solidarity, and social criticism. Thus, humor is no longer seen as mere entertainment, but as a dynamic and useful form of culture for the nation's social life.

FURTHER STUDY

This study has several limitations that should be noted. First, the research data was only taken from 13 episodes of *Lapor Pak!* over a period of six months, so the results may not fully represent the entire range of verbal humor in the program. Second, this study is limited to linguistic and pragmatic analysis, so it does not examine other dimensions such as audience reception or the impact of humor on public opinion. Third, the descriptive qualitative research method

makes the analysis results more interpretive, so that generalizations to other media contexts are still limited.

Based on these limitations, further research is recommended to: (1) expand the scope of data by involving more episodes or other comedy television programs as comparisons, (2) combine linguistic analysis with quantitative or mixed methods approaches to obtain more comprehensive results, and (3) examine audience reception of television humor in order to provide a more complete picture of the role of humor in shaping social and popular cultural interactions in Indonesia.

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