

## Pragmatic Aspects of Humor Discourse at Higher Education of Indonesia

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**Abstract:** Humor is important in our life. With humor, we can reduce stress, stimulate creativity, enhance communication, intimacy and self-confidence, release fatigue and tension and motivate to work. Anyone can do humor including the lecturers at IAIN Kendari. This study examines humor discourse of IAIN Kendari lecturer in socio-pragmatic perspective. This study aims to determine the deviation of pragmatic aspects in creating humor and its socio-linguistic factors. The result shows that the lecturers of IAIN Kendari always use the deviation of pragmatic aspects namely the deviation of cooperation principles, irregularities of politeness principles and pragmatic parameter deviations. Socio-linguistic factors which underlying the emergence of lecturer humor discourse consist of setting, scene, participant, ends, act of sequence, key, instrumentalities, norm of interaction and genre.

**Key words:** Pragmatic aspects, humor discourse, higher education, Indonesia, communication, Kendari

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### INTRODUCTION

Laughing may make human beings to be healthier. By laughing they can release themselves from burdens of life. Laughing has many advantages both in psychological and sociological perspectives (Lynch, 2002). In the perspective of psychology, laughing can increase mental function (Morreall, 2009), decrease stress and mind burden hormones (Abel and Maxwell, 2002; Parrish and Quinn, 1999), build and keep good relationship (Holmes, 2006; Perks, 2012; Golozubov, 2014), train and relax muscle, increase respiratory system (Miller and Fry, 2009), improve blood circulation (Bennett and Lengacher, 2008), strengthen friendship (Kuipers, 2009), reduce stress and boredom (Plester, 2009), enhance performance and creativity (Benjelloun, 2014; Feagai, 2011; Lang and Lee, 2010) as well as bear the pain (Ganz and Jacobs, 2014). In the perspective of sociology, laughing may reduce conflict (Norrick and Spitz, 2008; Smith *et al.*, 2002) and control precarious situation (Cameron *et al.*, 2010).

One medium may make people laugh is humor. Humor means an ability to feel something fun and pleasant (Francis, 1994). Nevertheless, sometimes something considered fun by someone may not be considered by others and vice versa, since people senses of humor may different from each other (Dyck and Holtzman, 2013; Fry, 2009). Student's humor is exactly different from lecturer's one (Torok *et al.*, 2004). Humor of lecturers is also exactly different from politician's humor.

Humor of lecturers of Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kendari conducted to release themselves from fatigue, improve communication, chumminess, friendship and help

to stimulate their creativities. To create humor, they deliberately violate principles of cooperation, politeness and pragmatic parameter, since humor is based on the concepts of misalignment, opposition and exemption which can be explained linguistically (Shelley, 2003; Kuipers, 2009; Holmes, 2006; Morreall, 1991). In the perspective of linguistics, concepts of misalignment and opposition are caused by the violation on pragmatic norms both principles of cooperation and politeness and pragmatic parameter.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research was a descriptive qualitative research. Data were obtained from lecturers of State Islamic Institute of Kendari, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. Research data were in the form of verbal funny stories. Data collection was performed for 3 months using listening method with recording and noting techniques (Septiandi and Syahrani, 2015). Data analysis was done using analysis of contents based on humor theory. To discuss about humor and social factors underlying it the researcher used Grace cooperation theory (Davies, 2007), Leech politeness principle (Suganda, 2007; Leech, 2007), Wijana pragmatic parameter (Wijana, 1997) and Hymes socio-linguistic factor.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In natural communication, each participant engaged in a conversation was attempting to obey the principles of communication are informative, truthful, appropriate to the

context of talks, concise and clear (Yus, 2003). But to make jocosity, humor is created to violate all the communication principles. This can be seen as shown by data as follows.

**Data 1:**

- Context: Conversation between two lecturers regarding to fish in Cia-Cia language in the room of technical implementation unit of language center
- Azam: There are many words to say 'fish' in buton language are ikane ika, ica, kenta, icca
- Awan: Whoa' Ica is name of person. Probably she is considered as a fish
- Azam: That is the meaning. Ica in Cia-Cia language means fish. Words in Cia-Cia language are frequently found containing consonant 'C'. Golu-Golu Cumene Cumorro Cumoro Conto "A ball doesn't bounce back is a stone". Ask Mr. Burhan. That is his language

**Data 2:**

- Context: Conversation between two lecturers about research in a room of Institute for Research and Community Services
- Mansur: There is so plenty of time allocated for lecturers to write
- Mashur: How long it is
- Mansur: So long 2 h and 65 min

**Data 3:**

- Context: Conversation between two friends going to do official travelling to socialize programs of State Islamic Institute of Kendari to schools in Southeast Sulawesi
- Rahma: We will go to CSP program today, Sir?
- Mansur: Yes
- Rahma: We use SPPD (Surat Perintah Perjalanan Dinas/The warrant for Official Travel), Sir?
- Mansur: Yes, no. I use car

**Data 4:**

- Context: Non-formal conversation between a lecturer and a member of Regional People's Representative Assembly of Kendari
- Nur: Where are you? I've waited for you so long
- Alim: I've been on the road, Sir. Wait a moment. A half an hour later, Nur called again
- Nur: On which road are you? This is your house number isn't it. Alim: No, I bring the house's phone

Data 1 violate the principles of cooperation in the form of maxim of quantity since Adi has contributed to his interlocutor excessively. Such excessive contribution was seen by his use of consonant 'C' in Cia-Cia language as said: Golu-Golu Cumene Cumorro Cumoro Conto meaning

"a ball doesn't bounce back is a stone". Data 2 show a deviation of maxim of quality since there were illogical facts. Such illogical facts are, among others, on the phrase of 2 h and 65 min. The mention of 65 min led their laughing since 1 h, logically has just 60 min. Delivering information out of the context and topic of talks in data 3 was found in the response which was not in line with expectation as the clause "I will not use SPPD but car instead". Data 4 is also considered violating maxim of performance since the information delivered was rambling and confusing interlocutors. Such information is in the phrase "I've been on the road" which has double and ambiguous meaning. Besides violating principles of communication this was also violating principles of politeness and pragmatic parameter. Principles of politeness violated were, among others, maxim of wisdom, maxim of generosity, maxim of acceptance and maxim of humility. Meanwhile, the pragmatic parameter violated was parameter of social status. Those can be seen in data 5-9 as follows:

**Data 5:**

- Context: Conversation between two lecturers about research in a room of Institute for Research and Community Services
- Abdul: According to the regulation, the proposal should be 7-12 pages, Sir
- Wahab: What if more?
- Abdul: Should be rejected. It can't be
- Wahab: Show me your paper! Abdul then gave his proposal to Wahab. Sir, my research should be rejected, since it >12 pages. You revise this. Or you reject it, otherwise

**Data 6:**

- Context: Discussion about raid on a boarding house within an area of campus. There were the Head of Citizens Association, accompanied by some lecturers
- RW: The door of boarding house was banged on frequently but not opened. But when the door would be broke down, the resident opened. Who is he/she. The Head of Citizens association asked
- Sari: My friend, Sir
- RW: Your bedmate? (No answer). I must wed you immediately. I will inform to your parents
- Sari: No, Sir, please. I still want to study
- RW: No. You should get married foregone. How come you break your chastity for this one? For free (no answer)

**Data 7:**

- Context: Discussion about black campaign of Prabowo between Prabowo supporters and lecturers supporting Jokowi within the lobby of rector room

- Kemal: Kemal talked about some information about Prabowo, based on issue circulated on Television
- Adi: Adi was speechless for a while and then said, “all what you have delivered I have watched on the TV. Don’t be talkative, Sir. Do not deliver information taken from TV without any analysis. We are academics. Should have analysis. We are not villagers who take information for granted

**Data 8:**

- Context: Discussion about Prabowo as a psychopath in the campus auditorium by some lecturers
- Kemal: Hendri Priyono said that Prabowo is a psychopath
- Adi: Do not talk nonsense. Hendro Priyono was the former commander of Prabowo. He was a commander who had smoothened Prabowo’s career so that he became the commander of Special Forces. If he said that Prabowo was psychopath, it was very wrong. Which one is the more severe psychopath? Hendro or Prabowo?
- Kemal: Surely, it was so hard to talk with layers. They do not want to be outdone in talks

**Data 9:**

- Context: Discussion of lecturers on strategic plans arrangement in senate meeting room
- Rector: What a dangerous meeting’ these are the teams. The extraordinary teams
- Lecture: We are apparatus ready to be employed all the time. We are focusing on and devoting attention to agenda ordered. But do not forget when we are employed, it would be like this to be scattered. Therefore, one should be thought heavily before employing us. Do not even try to employ us if do not want to find like this

Data 5 attempted to maximize loss upon the speaker whereas the speaker himself was the policymaker about the writing manner of research proposal. This can be seen in the clause “revise this, please. Or you would be rejected, otherwise”. Data 6 clearly maximized advantage for the speaker himself. It can be seen on the clause saying that if the immoral action is for free he wants too. Data 7 showed a violation of maxim of acceptance where the participants did not respect interlocutors. Such maxim violation was appeared on the clause “do not be talkative like villagers who take information for granted” which show the absence of respect to the interlocutor. Data 8 confirmed that Adi had done a violation of maxim of humility by saying that Prabowo was a psychopath or Hendro was more severe psychopath since he was his

former top. Violation of social status parameter is found in data 9. This violation is found in the clauses “don’t forget when we are employed, it would be like this, to be scattered. Therefore, one should be thought heavily before employing us. Do not even try to employ us if do not want to find like this”. These clauses won’t be appearing unless for humor purpose. Since, the social status of common lecturers is different from the rector’s.

These creations of humor discourse occurrence were motivated by socio-linguistics factors. Factors in question are factors of setting (situations), scene (mood), participants (talk members), ends (objectives and results), act of sequence (talk’s subject), key (intonation, method, spirit), instrumentally (media), norm of interaction (norms) and genre (type of discourse). These factors are found in the humor discourse in State Islamic University of Kendari.

This research is different from other researches since the discussion is limited on the humor of the lecturers of Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kendari. The typical characteristic is on the academic discourses which are often garbled. The issues of talks are hot political, cultural, social and religious issues. As for the similarity of this research with the others is on the pragmatic aspects both coordination principle aspect and politeness aspect and pragmatic parameter such as researches of Budiyanto on Gusdur’s humor (Budiyanto, 2004) and of Mulyani on humor using Java language (Mulyani, 2002).

**CONCLUSION**

Violation of pragmatic aspect in lecturer’s humor discourse should be happen. Such violation was done to create amusing and funny effects. The violation was of principles of communication and politeness and pragmatic parameter. Violation of communication principles in this research was violation of communication principle including violations of maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relevance and maxim of implementation. Violation of politeness was including violations of maxim of wisdom, maxim of generosity, maxim of acceptance and maxim of humility while violation of pragmatic parameter was including violation of social status parameter. As for socio-linguistics factors underlying the emergence of lecturer’s humor discourse were factors of setting (situations), scene (mood), participants (talk members), ends (objectives and results), act of sequence (talk’s subject), key (intonation, method, spirit), instrumentally (media), norm of interaction (norms) and genre (type of discourse).

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