A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF HUMOR FOUND IN *IT CROWD* SITCOM

THESIS

Submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Strata one (S1) degree

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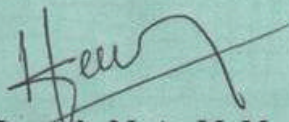**STATE UNIVERSITY OF PADANG**
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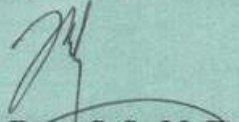
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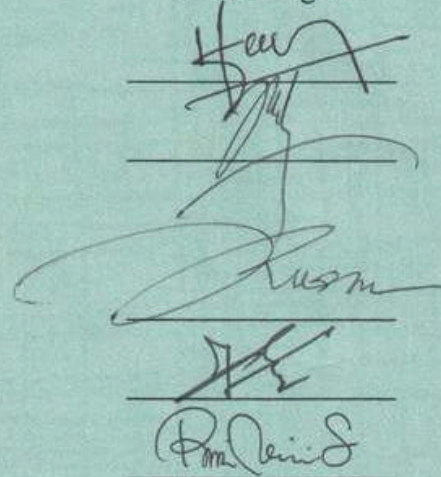
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ABSTRAK

Annisha Dyuli Adha (2012). *"A Linguistic Analysis of Humor Found in IT Crowd Sitcom."* Skripsi. Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris. Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni. Universitas Negeri Padang.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisa *Semantic Mechanism of Humor* atau mekanisme semantik dari humor yang terdapat dalam sitkom *IT Crowd*, dan juga untuk mengetahui penyimpangan elemen-elemen linguistik yang terdapat dalam humor tersebut. Dalam penelitian ini yang menjadi sumber data adalah dialog-dialog yang mengandung humor yang terdapat dalam sitkom *IT Crowd* dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif. Data yang dianalisis berjumlah 25 dari 50 percakapan, dan kemudian diteliti dengan menggunakan teori dari pengharapan-pengharapan linguistik.

Hasil penelitian menunjukan bahwa elemen-elemen linguistik yang ditemukan dari seluruh percakapan dalam sitkom tersebut meliputi *lexical ambiguity (LA), structural ambiguity (SA), truth conditional semantics (TCS), causal fallacy (CF), presupposition (Pr), locutionary (Lc), topic progression (TP), and background knowledge (BK)*. Berdasarkan kedelapan elemen linguistik di atas, penyimpangan elemen yang sering muncul dalam humor sitkom ini adalah *topic progression (TP)* (28 %) dan *presupposition (Pr)* (18 %). Selain itu *semantic mechanism of humor* juga diperlukan dalam penelitian ini karena dari mekanisme tersebut bisa dipahami apa yang menyebabkan humor tersebut menjadi lucu. Setelah memahami mekanisme tersebut, barulah bisa diketahui penyimpangan-penyimpangan pengharapan linguistik apa yang terdapat dalam humor tersebut, serta penelitian menunjukan bahwa kebanyakan humor terjadi karena munculnya *unexpected meaning* [M2] dari apa yang diharapkan [M1].

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

Many days in our life we have been made busy by our daily routines; therefore we need something to make us amused as well as relaxed through laughing. In this case, humor that always offers the chance for us to laugh has become interesting thing to entertain us and refresh our mind. Besides, many people like humor to refresh their mind. Not only comedian, but also ordinary people like to do that because they have sense of humor.

Wilson (1979:19) says that humor is a feeling that stimulates us to laugh, it can be a sense or consciousness in ourselves (senses of humor), and can be a reaction from inside or outside of ourselves. Humor happens because there is opposition between sense of seriousness and fun, happiness and sadness in ourselves.

Therefore, the uniqueness of humor is how it makes people laugh. However, some humor cannot be understood easily. It needs more understanding on the mechanism that arrange the humor so that people can find it funny. For example:

> "Senator", an aide called from the next room, "there's someone on the phone who wants to know what you plan to do about the abortion bill". Flushing the politician spluttered, "Er... tell them I'll have a check in the mail by morning".

(Ravin, 1987: quoted in Soedjatmiko 1988: 70)

In this humor, what the caller asks is the senator's planning in opposing abortion. Yet, the senator thinks the caller asks about the abortion bill of his unwanted baby. This humor might be rather difficult to understand because the senator's answer does not seem relevant to the question. To understand it better, the reader may use the mechanism of humor which can be observed through Wilson's synthesis that will be described in Chapter II.

Bergson in Wilson (1979:12) claims that something is funny when it belongs to two different ways. The first defintion appears extremely restricted but it is not. When the humor begins to be told, the readers or listeners get their first defintion about the meaning of the humor. Suddenly (usually at the end of the humor), they realize that the defintion is wrong because of the unexpected meaning. We can see from the example above.

Although humor deals with funny stories, funny situations, or even funny thought, it has special uniqueness, that is how it makes something sounds funny. That is why the writer is interested to analyze humor, especially humor that is found in *IT Crowd* sitcom. There are two reasons that support why the writer chooses this comedy program. The first reason is *IT Crowd* is a British sitcom that has run for 4 series of 6 episodes of each. It means that the program has enough quality to be analyzed in a thesis. The second reason is this comedy program contains a lot of humor that can be the data of the writer's research. Hence, analyzing humor that is found in *IT Crowd* sitcom is interesting to be investigated.

B. Identification of the Problem

Verbal humor which uses language as one of the most essential elements has a close relationship with linguistics. It develops and gives contribution to linguistic study, including discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, semantics, and pragmatics.

In discourse analysis, conversation in humor of comedy programs can be studied from its language construction that discuss about how to create a good and interesting language of comedy programs. Besides, humor can be studied from the sociolinguistics point of view. It is important to be known that in comedy program, it will concern with the social factors such as social status, education, social position and culture that influence the listener in understanding and interpreting the message in conversation of comedy programs.

Furthermore, in semantics, humor can be studied from the meaning of a word or sentence. The word or sentence in humor might contain more than one meaning that causes ambiguity or something funny if the interpretation is wrong. The semantic elements that can be studied are lexical ambiguity, structural ambiguity, truth conditional semantics, and causal fallacy. Meanwhile, in pragmatics, humor can be studied from language in use. It emphasizes on how a sentence can carry out the message of a speaker who utters it to the listener. The pragmatic elements that can be studied are, presupposition, locutionality, topic progression, and background knowledge. Therefore, this research is focused on

Semantic and Pragmatic point of view that study about meaning of word or sentence, and language in use.

C. Limitation of the Problem

This research is limited to semantic mechanism and linguistic expectations which are violated by humor in *IT Crowd* sitcom. The linguistic expectations consist of Semantics, including semantic ambiguity that consists of lexical ambiguity and structural ambiguity, truth conditional semantics, and causal fallacy. Also there is Pragmatics, including presupposition, locutionality, topic progression, and background knowledge. The data of the research is humor that is found in *IT Crowd* sitcom. The writer takes four episodes of the first series from that program, they are episode 1, 2, 5, and 6.

D. Research Questions

The following questions of the research are:

1. What are the semantic mechanisms of humor that are found in *IT Crowd* sitcom?

2. What linguistic expectations are violated by humor that are found in *IT Crowd* sitcom?

E. Purposes of the Research

The purposes of the research are:

1. To identify the semantic mechanisms of humor that are found in *IT Crowd* sitcom.

2. To identify linguistic expectations are violated by humor that are found in *IT Crowd* sitcom.

F. Significance of the Research

By doing this research, the writer wants the readers to understand humor from the Linguistics point of view. The analysis of the research shows the reader how humor sounds funny and how it violates linguistic expectations. Besides, the writer hopes this research will be useful for other students that are going to make further analysis on humor.

G. Definition of Key Terms

1. Semantics: the study of meaning. The analysis of semantic emphasizes on the meaning of a word or a sentence.

2. Pragmatics: the study of language in use. The analysis of pragmatic emphasizes on how a sentence can carry out the message of a speaker who utters it to the listener.

3. Linguistic expectations: the elements of linguistic that are violated by humor.

4. Lexical ambiguity: which caused by a word that has more than one meaning.

5. Structural ambiguity: which caused by a sentence that has more than one interpretation.

6. Truth conditional semantics: which states the conditions of a sentence must support the truth of that sentence.

7. Causal fallacy: caused by mistakes in causal reasoning.

8. Presupposition: something the speaker assumes to be case.

9. Locutionality: the basic act of uttering a meaningful linguistic form.

10. Topic progression: the progress of talk in one topic.

11. Background knowledge: the structure of knowledge in interpreting something unwritten or unsaid.

12. Humor: something funny that is caused by joking aimed to entertain.

13. IT Crowd: a British TV comedy program that contains with a lot of humor from the actors.

14. Sitcom: "situational comedy" is a genre of comedy that features characters sharing the same common environment, such as a home or workplace, accompanied with jokes as part of the dialogue.