

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the theoretical frameworks related to the topic of study in 3 parts: 1) The General Theory of Humor, 2) Analysis of Humor, and 3) Joke Analysis. Included in this chapter are the previous studies of humor found in text corpus and media corpus.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 The General Theory of Humor

2.1.1.1 Theory of Incongruity

The Theory of Incongruity is the idea that a surprise creates the laugh. This means that the humor is built because it runs against things expected. Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804), a well-known philosopher in eighteenth century, is credited to have made the first conception of incongruity. His view is that “laughter is an affection arising from the sudden transformation of staid expectation into nothing” (Kanjana 18). This idea leads to the understanding that jokes are basically generated when there is conflict between what is expected to occur and what actually occurs. For example, it is funny when clowns wear outrageously large shoes, people have an especially big nose or politicians tell the truth. Kant also stated that humor cannot be grasped in a single concept or frame since laughter is a kind of reaction which spontaneously depends on the different complex intellectual and emotional stimuli.

The incongruity theory shows the interaction between the set-up which leads to the humor and being surprised by the punch line.

2.1.1.2 Theory of Superiority

The Theory of Superiority, according to Hobbs (qtd. in Kanjana 14), states that humor arises from jokes involving one's mistakes. This concept says that people always laugh at things or people "being lower" than the others. In addition, humor arises from the jokes which basically play on one's mistakes or weaknesses, typically on political, ethnic or gender grounds. The laughter reflects the people or situation which has been made to look stupid. The following is a classic example showing how the humor can be contributed from superiority:

A woman goes into a café with a duck. She puts the duck on a stool and sits next to it. The waiter comes over and says: "Hey! That the ugliest pig that I have ever seen. The woman says: "It's a duck, not a pig." And the waiter says: "I was talking to the duck.

It can be seen that the joke is humorous by playing on an image of beauty. The sense of humor is created from the woman's appearance which looks unpleasant. No words were said to the woman about how ugly she is, but the joke itself compares her to the appearance of an animal. This means the joke indirectly expresses the aspect toward the characteristic of woman in a negative way. The joke has made fun of the woman, where she misunderstands the waiter's words as referring to her duck, but it's actually referring to her instead. It can be said that the woman is the target of the superiority to build up the laughter.

2.1.1.3 Theory of Relief

The Theory of relief is that humor occurs when tension is released. Here the laughter is a kind of energy released from the pressure in a human's life. It is a kind of reflection of excessive energy which converts an aggressive desire into an acceptable one. According to Sigmund Freud (1905), the energy that would have repressed some pressure or pain is saved and can be released in laughter when it is discharged by one's social taboos such as gender, dirty jokes and religion. The following provides an example which the theory of Relief is used to create humor.

An officer is posted to a god-forsaken garrison. After a while, he asks his batman who has spent a few years there, "What do you do for sex? There isn't a single woman here." – "Oh, Sir, we all use the old camel over there."

"Really? Officers too?" – "Yes, Sir."

After much hesitation, the officer decides to try it. That night he comes back to his quarters, disheveled, dirty, and frustrated. "How do you all manage it? The camel does not seem to be used to it at all. She threw me off each time I tried."

"We use the old camel to get to the village six miles from here, Sir."

(Raskin 1985: 161).

Most dirty or taboo jokes are basically seen as this kind of releasing of repressive energy. From this perspective, it is interesting to study jokes as a reflection of social aspect which is repressed, and then released by making fun of it.

2.1.2 Analysis of Humor

2.1.2.1 Text analysis

Humor can occur in many forms including verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts. These forms are based on some objective characteristics of humorous text

or other acts (situation, event, or picture). In Arthur Koestler's work "The Act of Creation," it is assumed that every such act involves two different frames of reference. These two are mutually incompatible, but also include a certain common part which makes the shift from one to another possible. Koestler's view towards humor is that it is a part of creativity which is considered in its meaning as the comic collision of or oscillation between two frames of reference. It involves a paradox because laughter is a universal physiological reaction to a very great variety of different complex intellectual and emotional stimuli. Therefore, humor in his view cannot be grasped in a single conception or theory. This idea is related to the main components common to the incongruity theory noted by Schopenhauer who suggests that "the cause of laughter in every case is simply the sudden perception of the incongruity between a concept and the real objects which have been thought through it in some relation, and the laugh itself is just an expression of this incongruity." In Schopenhauer's observation, the laughter is from the verbalized humor which is created by humorous incongruity – for example, a difference between the object and its meaning association, a presentation of a joke narrative, a multiple of codes, myths, script, a presentation of falseness of the narrative's congruity, etc.

2.1.2.2 Linguistic Analysis

Linguistic research of humor is related to a variant of the incongruity theories of humor. In Schwarz's study, the figurative language found in standup comedy is considered the basis of linguistic features which are used to express the real intention of comedians without direct and offensive language. Such linguistic devices are as follows (122-137):

Wordplay

Wordplay is one of the most common techniques of making jokes by using the different meanings of a word in an amusing or clever way. They can be found in various forms, including punning, ambiguity, sarcasm, mocking or banter. Consider the following riddle: “Who was the first man to bear arms?” Answer: “Adam. He has two”. In this example, the noun “arm” is used as a pun because in this question it stands for “weapon”, whereas in the answer it stands for “the human limbs”. This example of humor uses a homonym – a form of identical spelling and pronunciation – of which only one meaning is appropriate to the joke’s context so that the other meaning serves to express incongruity.

Implication

Implication is crucial for the effect of parody, satire, and sarcasm. It allows seeing the possibility of referring to socially sensitive and even taboo topics using indirect language. For example, the sentence "Mary had a baby and got married" strongly suggests that Mary had the baby before the wedding, but the sentence would still be strictly true if Mary had her baby after she got married.

Allusion

Allusion is an indirect reference to some event, person, place, or artistic work, the nature and relevance of which is not explained by the writer but relies on the reader’s familiarity with what is mentioned. The statement “*Oh stop being such a Romeo*” is amusing because the joke remarks about Romeo and Juliet who sacrifice for love. Allusion often allows the comedians to create solidarity with the audiences when telling the joke which is a reference to someone.

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is a figure of speech which contains an exaggeration of emphasis. It is often used to increase the funniness expressed in a joke because it completely overstates the situation being ridiculed. Hyperbole is a common feature in standup comedy, serving mainly to exaggerate familiar situations, thus making audiences appreciate the joke telling and enhancing laughter. Hyperbole can be found in many forms, for example when the comedians try to exaggerate someone's appearance as in "*Yo' mama's so fat, a picture of her fell off the wall.*" The exaggeration of mama's weight is found in the statement "a picture of her fell off the wall." assuming the comparison between the mama's weight and her picture.

2.1.2.3 Jokes Analysis

According to Schwarz (105-115), the use of techniques to create the jokes in standup comedy can be found in various ways. One way of studying laughter produced by the standup comedian should be viewed through the non-verbal and verbal performance.

Paralanguage

Paralanguage refers to the use of the manner to communicate particular meaning. Paralanguage sometimes plays a central role in inviting the laughter in general and represents a crucial characteristic in a standup comedy show. The outstanding technique which basically find in the standup comedy is wink. It is a facial expression made by closing one eye. A wink is an informal mode of non-verbal humor usually signaling shared hidden knowledge or intent, which may also include all contexts.



Ridicule

Ridicule refers to the use of the speech or techniques to insult or attack someone. Ridicule is a feature of a joke telling technique that reflects the impoliteness and aggressiveness. It contributes to the sense of humiliating another person's or group's identity. The following example shows a sense of ridicule of women.

Q: What do you call a woman who marries an old, ugly and poor man?

A: Stupid!

Here the word "stupid" is used to ridicule women for marrying men who are old, ugly, and poor.

Satire

Satire is close to ridicule and both are used to make fun of people superior to themselves. It can be considered as a subcategory of ridicule and is thus a further humor technique that can be regularly found in the session of standup comedy (Schwarz 113).

A black guy walks into a tavern with a parrot on his shoulder...the bartender looks up and says "where the hell did you get that thing? The Parrot replies "Over in Africa, there are millions of them" !!!!

The above example obviously shows humor contributing by making fun of people. The look alike Africa seems to be the main strategy that the joke uses to create the laughter. It can be said that satire is the use of irony, sarcasm and ridicule in exposing or deriding.



Power, Solidarity and Politeness

Power, solidarity and politeness refer mostly to the social phenomena. The topic of humor according to these techniques is always concerned with situations in everyday life. They are made up by the verbal humor which contains a referential and affective function. The referential function of language means the transmission of information, whereas the affective function has to do with the expression of people's feelings and the display of various social relationships. For example, the use of pronoun "we" can refer to the solidarity which the comedian makes a use to include his or her audiences.

2.2 Previous Studies

As humor can be found in various genres, so, there are many relevant works that study humor.

2.2.1 Thai Humor Studies

A linguistic study by Chalermchai aimed to examine the use of the linguistic approach in Lan Na jokes. The study shows that the verbal humor of Lanna jokes can be observed in the multiple common components related to the theory of Script based Sematic Theory of Humor and General Theory of Verbal Humor. In addition, Chalermchai's analysis also finds the use of Script Opposition in order to create the sense of humor.

Another interesting study is by Kanjana Jaroenkiatboworn, a discourse analysis aiming to analyze humor in Thai jokes through the linguistic strategies. The study analyzes the use of linguistic features that are used to create humor and the

relationship between language and society. The result shows that two major linguistic strategies, punning and discourse, contribute to the sense of humor targeted at the social group in Thai society. There are some groups of powerful people, ethnic minorities and women represented as stupid people in order to make fun of them. It was concluded that the linguistic strategies used to create humor reflect social relationships in Thai society.

กลวิธีและการใช้ภาษาเพื่อสร้างอารมณ์ในละครค้นรายการวาไรตี้เกมโชว์ “ชิงร้อยชิงล้าน” (The Strategies and the Use of Humor Language in the Series of the Variety Game Show “Ching Roy Ching Laan”) by Thanit Eiamutama studied the strategies and verbal humor used to invoke the sense of humor of the audiences. The result demonstrates that humor-boosting strategies can be found in various forms, including bullying, shifting topics, changing the moods and emphasizing actors’ characteristics. Language is one strategy used to invite laughter from the audiences. It was found in the forms of puns, tones, jargon, riddles, metaphors, and exaggeration.

Yada Chanbanchee wrote a thesis entitled “The Techniques of Thai Humor in the Prose of Ketsepsawas Palakawong na Ayudhya”. The study focused on the analysis of the techniques and implication in Thai humor in the Prose of Ketsepsawas Palakawong na Ayudhya. In addition, the study looked into the context and social situation. According to the study, the prose consists of 18 techniques which are divided into 2 groups, the lexical and discourse techniques. The discourse plays a major role in contributing to the humorous effect when Ketsepsawas aims to talk about social problems.

The first study of Note’s performance was conducted by Ajchara Yuttanond in 1998. Her thesis “The Perception and Understanding in Note – Udom

Taeapanich Comedy to the Audiences' Sense and Gratification" studied with the aid of a questionnaire which targeted those who were exposed to any of the 4th One Standup Comedy shows organized in Bangkok and provincial areas. Ajchara's study has two main objectives; to study the correlativity between the variability of One Standup Comedy audiences' demographic, and to search for the correlations between the factors on perception and understanding of message, as well as the relation of its use and gratification. By surveying 395 samples, the researcher concluded that the main reason for audiences to see Note's performance is from their own motivation in order to relax and bring back the subject matters for discussing with relatives and close friends. Adolescent star idols, fashion and sponsor products are considered as the favorite topics for discussion.

2.2.2 Western Humor Studies

Studying humor in movies is another interesting work which can demonstrate the linguistic devices used for creating humor. Ye Hi studied Humor in Discourse: A Linguistics Study of the Chinese Dialect Film, Crazy Stone. Ye analyzed the study in three levels including Linguistic level, Societal Perspective and Interaction between Language and the Socio-political Context. The result presents that phonetic, lexical and discourse devices are found in order to contribute humor, for example; homophone, the laughter particle, vernacular dialectal slangs and some vocalization. In addition, the current societal situation in China is also found to build up humor through the sense of irony and satire, especially the socio-political context of modern China. It can be said that humor has related to the culture and identity of some groups of people.

Jeannine Schwarz demonstrated in her study that the linguistic technique use in standup comedy can be seen in many forms such as narratives, proverbial phrases, one-liners, knock-knock jokes or riddles, each of which have their own particular structure. According to Schwarz, the techniques of telling jokes can be studied through the frame of humor theories, especially the theory of incongruity which views humor as the unexpected. Standup comedians basically present conversational joke telling in three parts – build up, pivot and punch line. Additional techniques which the comedians use to create the humor are wordplays, puns, ridicule and funny personal anecdotes. Schwarz's study concentrates on the specific aspect of verbal humor through her analysis of Seinfeld's *I'm Telling You the Last Time* and concluded that Seinfeld's performance demonstrated that standup comedy is not only a string of different jokes for entertaining the audience, but a complex piece of art in which everything said is based on the script and is well thought out by the comedian.

Another interesting study, by Oskar Falk, demonstrated that humor in standup comedy reflects the sociological aspect by focusing on some social topics such as class, group, ethnic, gender or other social differences. His study examined linguistic features which are used to portray the characters of different ethnic groups and to find how these characters are conveyed to the audience in the standup comedy show by Dave Chappelle. The notion of Phonology and Grammar of African-American Vernacular English are selected to analyze the language and portrayals of ethnic image. It was found that such linguistic features as grammar, phonology and lexicon play an important role in portraying the characteristics of the American African ethnic group.

Another study of humor in the standup comedy by Sahrinna T. Emanuelsson (2009) found language use in the performance related to ethnic identity. Her study also focused on the language which is the main source available to comedians for interacting with their audiences. The results show that the African American character is constructed by the grammatical and some specific lexical features of the African American Verbal Language. Emanuelsson suggests that the American AAVE is not only used to contribute to the sense of humor, it also reflects the views of the comedians sharing their social experiences. It was suggested that language is a good tool in studying the sense of humor as a reflection of society.

2.3 Note's Sense of Comedy

An example of Note' humor in his standup comedy show episode IV is as follows: Note is telling the audiences how everyone can pursue happiness from a 100 baht bank note. Taking a photo from a Sticker Photographic Machine is his answer.

1 Note: เราสามารถหาความสุขง่าย ๆ จากเงินเพียง 100 คับ

(A pursuit of happiness is just from 100 baht)

2 Note: นั่นก็คือการถ่ายสติ๊กเกอร์คับ

(That is "taking sticker photograph".)

3 Note: อันเน่ ไม่เคยกันละซี

(Note said that his audiences may not use to take the photo from the machine.)

4 Audience: ((laughter))

5 Note: ไม่ยากคับเพียงแค่ว่าคุณมีเงิน 100 บาทอยู่ในมือแล้วไปตามตู้ที่มีพนักงานขายอยู่

(It is easy. You only have 100 baht and walk to the machine with the service girls.)

6 Note: ตู้นี้ยะ.. มันมาจากญี่ปุ่นเพราะฉะนั้นพนักงานชายทุกคนจะต้องถูกแต่งตัวให้เหมือนกับญี่ปุ่น

(The machine is actually from Japan. So, these service girls are told to dress as Japanese girls.)

7 Note: ใส่กระโปรงสั้นๆ แบบญี่ปุ่น

(Dressing mini-skirt as Japanese)

8 Audience: ((Laughter))

9 Note: สวมถุงเท้ายาวๆ แบบญี่ปุ่น

(Putting on long stocking as Japanese)

10 Audience: ((laughter))

11 Note: สวมแว่นตากลมๆ แบบญี่ปุ่น

(Putting on the rounded glasses as Japanese)

12 Audience: ((Laughter))

13 Note: ผูกเปียสองข้างแบบญี่ปุ่น

(Double plaiting the hair as Japanese)

14 Audience: ((Laughter))

15 Note: แต่ “หน้าตาเหมือนแรงงานพม่า

(BUT 'look like Myanmar Labor')

16 Audience: (((((((Laughter)))))))))

Note's entire segment about taking a sticker photograph from the machine represents a specific group of people and expresses the aspect of solidarity. He built

up the story by talking about the sticker photographic machine, and the audiences were pivoted on the repetition of the word ‘ญี่ปุ่น’ /Japanese/. The laughter happened when ‘หน้าตาเหมือนแรงงานพม่า’ / look like Myanmar labor/ was said. The main humorous text is the opposition between ‘beauty and ugliness’. The word ‘ญี่ปุ่น’ /Japanese/ refers to good-looking people. In contrast, the word ‘แรงงานพม่า’ /Myanmar labor/ represent the opposite. This example shows hyperbole and allusion in which hyperbole is used to ridicule the characteristics of the service girl, one in the other, the allusion can link to the audiences’ experiences that the service girl at the sticker photograph machine is generally viewed as being an uneducated and unpleasant looking girl. Thus, Note draws up his jokes by ridiculing a comparison between Japanese dressing and the service girls’ characteristics and shows the sense of humor which is concerned with the aspect of superiority by making fun of someone’s inferiority.