

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The humor analysis in the 4th episode of Note's standup comedy represents an attempt to gain insight into the creation of humor based on humor theories and linguistic devices. As demonstrated in chapter 4, the construction of Note's humor results from various interactions of techniques and strategies as follows.

5.1 Analyzing Note's jokes in terms of humor theory

Among the 32 monologue excerpts from the 4th episode standup comedy by Note, 28 excerpts were basically based on the Theory of Incongruity, 4 on the Theory of Superiority, and none on the Theory of Relief. Thus, it can be said that the majority of Note's monologues is based on The Theory of Incongruity. They mostly elicit laughter from the audience because they show conflict between what the audience expects to hear and what Note delivers.

In term of incongruity, Note's jokes make use of false expectation to surprise his audiences at the punch line. He begins the jokes at the introduction and then provides the unexpected utterance at the end. The findings of incongruity were found to coincide with the views of Kant which indicate that laughter result from putting the audience on the wrong track in order to surprise them through the revelation of the punch line.

Regarding superiority, Note creates humor by diminishing and humiliating certain groups of people to invite laughter from the audience. In this study, four

groups were found to be the butt of humor. Two groups, women and immigrants, are universal targets. The other two groups, transgender and the Southern people, are culturally, socially, and politically specific to Thailand. The findings of superiority were found to coincide with those in Hobbes' study which indicates that laughter results from a sense of superiority when it is directed at the faults of other people and, thus, expresses their inferiority.

As Alison Ross points out, the butts of superiority jokes are interesting in a socio-cultural perspective, because they reveal a great deal about the attitudes within the society in question. In many superiority jokes, the social groups which are the butts are typically referred to via a stereotype. Because of the continuous bombings in the South, the portrayal of the Southern people in the media is one of aggression. This negative regional trait is picked up by Note using both verbal and non-verbal devices to create the perception for the audience (excerpt 27). Another social group serving as the butt of the joke is the transgender, who is mocked for both their physical and mental ability (excerpts 18, 19, 20). These two groups are highlighted on the features of stereotype representation which can be said as typical of the Thai audience. The interesting thing is that Note also engages in superiority joke on the powerful social groups like politicians (excerpt 22), highlighting the disagreeable aspects of the group and bringing them down.

Finally, as stated by Lane, stand-up comedy not only reflects the already existing attitudes in the society but also helps perpetuate the negative view of the groups. From this view, it can be said that Note's butts of jokes specifically reflect the existing shared attitudes of the Thai audience and generally explain the social aspect of Thai humor.

Relief theory was the least found in Note's jokes. A strict interpretation of the Relief Theory involves dark jokes and dirty jokes or other types of joke that deal with taboo topics. In this sense, none is found. A loose definition, however, provides that humor is generated when giving the sense of release from some threat that is being overcome. The few jokes found were based on suppressed embarrassing topics such as Broken English (Excerpts 2 and 4). When Note makes use of this suppression in a joke twice, it can be seen that the audience feel relaxed in being able to release their negative emotions and pressure in a form of laughter. The findings of release were found to coincide with Freud's concept that humor is used to release tension or to make one feel liberated when talking about serious topics.

Interestingly, none of the jokes involves obscene jokes or jokes of a sexual nature which serve to overcome inhibition and, at the same time, to satisfy shameful thoughts or ideas that people normally repress because their content is generally considered unacceptable. This perhaps says something about what is considered strictly taboo in the Thai society which is not to be laugh at in public places.

Although some excerpts reveal the combination of theories, the Theory of Incongruity is considered fundamental to Note's performance. The other two theories, the Theory of Superiority and the Theory of Release, if represented in the jokes, are reported as secondary. For the superiority theory which states that humor is generated at the cost of others, the situation in Excerpt 1 in which Note mocks those with the cheapest ticket, for example, involves the feeling of superiority and inferiority.

To sum up, all of the 32 jokes fit into the classic theories of humor, incongruity, superiority and relief. In all but 4 jokes, Note's performance is based on

the incongruity theory focusing on the humorous effect of the conflict between what the audience expects and what Note actually presents.

5.2 Analyzing Note's jokes in term of linguistic device

Witticism is the linguistic characteristics of Note's standup comedy for all types of humor, incongruity, superiority, and release. It is represented in the form of sarcastic remarks used as retorts, ridicule, and mockery (excerpt 1) in situations where the audience can readily relate to. In addition, Note repeatedly makes use of wordplay, a technique regularly occurs in joke telling (excerpt 11). The types of wordplay to create humor in Note's performance are homophone, punning, parody, and analogy. The use of paralanguage or body language is also an effective linguistic device in Note's performance in order to invite the laughter from his audience. Throughout Note's performance, paralanguage is found in various forms such as speaking style of a television personality (excerpt 32). He does this to strengthen the comic effect of the material. In this study, Note also employs not only lexical patterns but also pronunciation or accent used specifically by certain individuals or groups of people in Thailand (excerpt 20). This is in accordance with Ji He's finding that the grammatical and specific lexical features of dialectal language can elicit laughter.

According to Freud, there is a distinction between verbal humor and conceptual humor. Note employs both the aspects of language and concepts or ideas to achieve a humorous effect. He does this through personal anecdotes or fictitious characters like Wittaya (excerpts 10-17). Other types of humor such as visual humor

(excerpt 31) and musical humor (excerpt 30) are also represented in Note's performance.

To sum up, the linguistic findings of this study supports the study of Schwarz, who found that successful stand-up comedians rely on the use of a chain of various linguistic aspects rather than specific type of stage persona or specific performance style.

5.3 Recommendation

The study has found that the 4th episode of Note's standup comedy is based on the classic theories of humor and that wordplay and sarcasm are the linguistic devices to create humorous monologues. The findings have also revealed a great deal about the social structures, social attitudes, and linguistic structures relevant to the reaction of the Thai audience in the form of laughter or silence.

It would be interesting and worthwhile to conduct further comparative research in other episodes of Note's standup comedy in order to describe the characteristics of Thai jokes more accurately. A good performance of a standup comedian needs to meet the demand of the audience who wants to be entertained constantly. Since Note's series of performance have been highly popular among the Thai audience, further investigations on the comedians' organization and presentation of the material at the discourse level can also provide more insights into humor in the Thai socio-political context.