

CONSUMING CONCERNS: LANGUAGE STYLE OF HUMOUR ON FOUR FEMALE STAND-UP COMEDIANS

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ABSTRACT

Comedy is a male-dominated world as sociolinguistics theory also mentions that women employ less humour compared to men. However, female comedians also appeared on television. In Indonesia, Stand-Up Comedy Indonesia (SUCI) is a popular stand-up comedy competition broadcasted by a reputable national network channel, Kompas TV. Interestingly, numerous young female stand-up comedians also took part as participants of SUCI. This study aimed to analyse humour performed by four female comedian finalists from different cultural backgrounds such as Arab-Indonesian, Chinese-Indonesian, British expatriate, and Indonesian with Batak ethnicity. This study employed a qualitative method by applying various techniques such as video selection, downloading, transcribing relevant data, reducing data, applying theories, and concluding. The data were analysed using the theory of women's language and the theory of types and functions of humour. The study found that women employed humour in stand-up comedy to speak up their minds and share their concerns with the audiences using various language styles, including rhetorical questions, hypercorrect grammars, taboo words, and rising intonations. The humour was employed primarily to share their concerns toward sensitive cultural issues such as stereotypes and identity, sexism, relationship and gender equality, and body positivity. In addition, it contributes to enriching the theory of women's language style and humour.

Keywords: *humour, stand up comedy competition, women's language style, identity*

INTRODUCTION

Since a theory called women's language was introduced by (Lakoff, 1973), some studies were extensively conducted on how women employed their language. In this theory, women's language features included hedges, rising declarative intonations, tag questions, empty adjectives, naming of colours, intensifiers, hypercorrect grammar, super polite forms, avoidance of strong swear words, and emphatic stress. Besides, some other studies also

showed that women used more standard and modest use strategies, approaches, word choices to communicate than men (Labov, 1990; Tannen, 1991; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003; Holmes, 2004, 2006).

These numerous studies indicated that greater attention was given to women's language. However, there was very little concern on how these women's language features appeared regarding humour. Humour itself has complex definitions and circumstances. Humour is a specific human communication that aims to lighten the mood and establish friendship by producing laughter (Berger, 1976, p. 113). The speaker's intention in humour defined it as any communication with witty and funny intention already known in advance by the speaker (Winick, 1976, p. 124). Hay (1995) asserted that the taxonomy of humour falls into twelve categories: anecdote, fantasy, insult, irony, jokes, observational, quote, role-play, self-deprecation, vulgarity, wordplay, and others. Further, it is also mentioned that humour serves three primary functions such as solidarity (to share, to highlight or capitalise on similar experience, to clarify and maintain boundaries, to tease), to power (to foster conflict, to control and set boundaries, to tease), and psychological (to defend, to cope with a situational problem, to cope with a general problem).

Humour has been studied in various disciplines such as health, psychology, politics, literature, and linguistic. It showed that humour is an unseparated aspect of human life. Thus, the language used to convey humour is significant and worth investigating. A study found that humorous language can be used to create a friendly and comfortable atmosphere for negotiating and transferring knowledge, especially for sensitive and taboo issues such as the case of HIV/AIDS (Chimbwete-Phiri & Schnurr, 2017, p. 4).

Furthermore, when concerning women and humour, some studies have been conducted. In the classroom setting, female students were warier in using humour than their fellow male students (Sev'er & Ungar, 1997, p. 99). Women employed humour to rework gender identity through resistance to gender stereotypes (Green, 1998, p. 181). Humour was salutogenic and vital for older women in Swedish (Forssén, 2007, p. 232). Women employed humour as personal, emotional management and bonding, highlighting its power to share similar issues, differences, and obstacles within a safe circumstance (Schnurr, 2008, p. 304). Humour and laughter were also employed by elderly Japanese women as coping strategies when talking about the death and the pain of losing their significant other (Matsumoto, 2009, pp. 948–949).

An investigation on gender-based humour on the Internet found three types of humour between women and men: sexist joke, feminist, and postfeminist joke regarding the perception of feminism and masculinity (Shifman & Lemish, 2010, p. 884). Female comedienne were seen to be less appealing due to the gendered perception that they lacked skills, and the topic brought was often about femininity that was less relevant to male viewers (Bore, 2010, p. 152). A study revealed that humour employed by young women on the Internet has functioned as the diminution of sadness, bitterness, and dissatisfaction (Kanai, 2019, p. 13). In addition, although stereotypically, women were not involved in humour, they employed humour to perform leadership in a masculine work environment, and it helped women balance professional work and gender identities (Sinkeviciute, 2019, pp. 128–129). An extensive study of female firefighters found that they employed humour to negotiate with the adversity working in a male dominance world (Eriksen, 2019, p. 5).

Although studies on the roles and functions of humour primarily for women had been conducted extensively, the language features of the humour remained uninvestigated. In Indonesia, humour has long been part of the entertainment industry and broadcasted on television in a comedy show. Previously, several comedy programs that broadcasted traditional and modern comedy shows, including Ketoprak, Srimulat, Campursari, Opera van Java, were conducted with a large group of comedians. Interestingly, most of these comedy groups always have at least one female figure. To this day, Indonesia has a few well regarded female comedians, such as Mpok Atih, Omas, and Nunung. Recently, stand-up comedy gained popularity in many of Indonesia's national television broadcasters. As a result, stand-up comedy or solo comedy shows were essential in encouraging young female comedians to perform comedy.

Kompas TV, owned by Kompas Gramedia Group, the biggest media group in Indonesia, has been one of Indonesia's national television broadcasts popular stand-up competition for nearly a decade. The stand-up comedy programme, Stand-up Comedy Indonesia Kompas TV or abbreviated SUCI, has been broadcast for nine seasons, from 2011 to the present in 2021. It successfully orbited young stand-up comedians to the Indonesian entertainment industry. Interestingly, a few numbers of female stand-up comedians also took part in SUCI as the finalists.

Until the present day, when this study was conducted, SUCI winners were all-male stand-up comedians. However, the study was still worth the attention to give further insight

into the language style and humour employed by female stand-up comedians in Indonesia. Therefore, this study examined female stand-up comedians' language style, humour types, and functions within the Indonesian context. Furthermore, from the humour delivered, the author looked for its cultural implications. This study contributed to the studies on linguistics and culture because humour is also a part of social interaction, and it has cultural elements. In addition, this study also enriched the discussion on language and gender, which is also a field studied in sociolinguistics.

METHOD

Four female stand-up comedians were purposefully selected based on their cultural background. The first stand-up comedian was an Arab-Indonesian who also became the finalist of SUCI season one in 2011 when she was named Indonesian's first female stand-up comedian. The second stand-up comedian was a Chinese-Indonesian from SUCI season two in the following year, 2012. The third stand-up comedian was a British expatriate who, until this study was conducted, remained the first and the only foreigner ever to join SUCI season three in 2013. Lastly, the fourth stand-up comedian was an Indonesian with Batak ethnicity who happened to be the finalist of SUCI season four in 2014. Thus, it can be concluded that in the first four years of SUCI, it had attracted many young potential female stand-up comedians to demonstrate their ability to perform humour to a broader audience. However, up to now, the female stand-up comedians never came out as the winner. Despite that, these women still successfully made their name in stand-up comedy and other entertainment industries.

Data collection was conducted by selecting the performance of each female-stand up comedian. The videos were selected based on a few reasons, such as video availability from the subject of SUCI 2011 and SUCI 2012, where not many options of videos were available, the most viewed video for the subject of SUCI 2013, and the stand-up comedy theme from the subject of SUCI 2014. After selecting suitable videos, the author downloaded the videos selected from the official Youtube account of Kompas TV. These videos were then transcribed and analysed using data reduction. Next, the results were analysed by applying the women's language features and humour theories. After that, the conclusion of women's language styles, types, and functions and the cultural implications of their humour was drawn.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Stand-up comedy is a short comedy performance, so the average time is five to eight minutes. Four female stand-up comedians selected in the first four seasons of SUCI came from various backgrounds such as Arab-Indonesian, Chinese-Indonesian, British expatriate, and Indonesian with Batak ethnicity. The results obtained found that these four stand-up comedians used their humour as a safe place to share their struggles, thoughts, and critics about stereotypes and identity, sexism, relationship and gender equality, and body positivity. In addition, they also employed humour to share concerns with the audiences who were facing the same circumstances.

Sakdiyah Makruf was named Indonesia's first female Muslim stand-up comedian. She was the first and only female finalist in SUCI season one in 2011. She was known to bring racial issues, stereotypes, and identity struggles from an Arab-Indonesian in her stand-up comedy performance. In this study, the author analysed one of her performances during the elimination round. Sakdiyah delivered her comedy in a well-arranged and formal language except for data (1), where she intentionally used the language to mimic Chinese-Indonesian. She used the first-person *saya* to refer to herself instead of informal forms such as *aku* or *gue*. She also employed some rhetorical questions during her performance. In the opening of her comedy speech, Sakdiyah started her comedy with data (1) mimicking the Chinese-Indonesian followed by data (2) where she teased a fellow Chinese-Indonesian in the competition and data (3) stating her identity crisis as the result of being labelled and stereotyped as an Arab-Indonesian, as follows:

(1) *Lu olang jangan belani ngina-ngina olang Alab lu! Jangan belani-belani lu!*

Do not you dare to insult the Arabs! Do not you dare!

(2) *Yang ngadepin biar Ernest.*

Let Ernest confronts (you).

(3) *Memang susah jadi orang Arab. Seumur hidup ga pernah ditanya nama. Ini saya sebutin lagi. Saya Sakdiyah.*

It is hard being an Arab. I have never been asked my name in my life. So here I say it once again. I am Sakdiyah.

Data (1) was a role play because Sakdiyah tried to mimic the stereotype of how Chinese-Indonesian people speak by replacing r with l from a word. After that, she continued with data (2), which was a joke to a fellow contestant who was a Chinese-Indonesian. Finally, data (3) was an anecdote from her personal experience that people did not bother calling her name but simply by her ethnic group. The function of humour in data (1) and data (2) was to show solidarity of Arab-Indonesian and Chinese-Indonesian. Meanwhile, data (3), it was to show how Sakdiyah had to cope with how she perceived herself and how others perceived her.

Furthermore, in her humour, Sakdiyah also mentioned the stereotype of an Arab-Indonesian woman primarily related to physical appearance in data (4), as follows:

- (4) *Begitu mau make up, masnya nanya, "Mbak, Arab ya?" Maksud kamu apa? Mau nanya apa? Apa hubungannya Arab sama riasan wajah? Oh mungkin kalo Arab itu ga perlu di-shading. Itu untungnya.*

As soon as he wanted to makeup, he asked, "Miss, are you an Arab?" What do you mean? What do you want to say? What does being an Arab have to do with makeup? Oh, maybe an Arab does not need shading. That is luck.

Data (4) was an anecdote from her personal experience that being an Arab-Indonesian made people around her asking an awkward question related to her background. Data (4) functioned to cope with ethnic and physical discrimination. Furthermore, besides being stereotyped for language and physical differences, Sakdiyah also stated that she was stereotyped as being more religious. It was shown in data (5), data (6), and data (7) as follows:

- (5) *Lebih beruntung lagi, orang Arab berwajah sholeha seperti saya. Ada ibu-ibu keluar melihat saya langsung, "Mbak, jadwal shalat di daerah ini jam berapa ya, Mbak?" Dari mana ibu itu yakin saya tahu jadwal shalat? Memangnya saya bedug?*

Even luckier, an Arab who has a pious face like me. A woman came out, and when she saw me (she said), "Ma'am, what time is the praying in this area?" How could she be sure that I knew the prayer times? Am I a *bedug*?

- (6) *Sekalian aja nanya, "Mbak, lebaran nanti kapan?" Saya tidak tahu, Bu. Kalau nanya saya, tergantung saya datang bulannya kapan.*

While at it, (she) might ask, "Miss, when will Eid be?" I do not know, Ma'am. It depends on when my month comes.

- (7) *Ada ibu-ibu langsung gelar sajadah di sebelah saya agak ke belakang. "Mbak, imam, ya." Dari mana dia bisa yakin saya bisa jadi imam? Saya dari subuh sampai isha, Al Fatihah sama Qulhu aja.*

There was a woman who immediately took the *sajadah* next to me, slightly behind. "Miss, you are the imam, okay?" How did she can be sure that I could become the *imam*? From *fajr* to *isha*, I only recite Al Fatihah and Qulhu.

Data (5), data (6), and data (7) were anecdotes from Sakdiyah's personal experience that when she was identified as being an Arab-Indonesian, people assumed that she was as being more religious. Furthermore, in data (6), Sakdiyah also added wordplay. The wordplay was shown when Sakdiyah was asked when Eid will be, to which she replied with "when my month comes" or in the original language, Indonesian, "*datang bulan*", which means menstrual period. The function of humour from data (5), data (6), data (7) was to cope with the stereotype as being more religious than others.

In addition, Sakdiyah also mentioned that aside from being stereotyped as an Arab-Indonesian, in the social setting, she also had to face a certain friendship etiquette from the opposite gender. They were shown in data (8) and (9) as follows:

- (8) *Ketemu temen di kantor, cowok, tidak mau salaman sama saya. Kenapa? Kudisan? Cakep begini tidak mungkin kudisan.*

(I) met a friend at the office, a man (who) did not want to shake hands with me. Why? Mange? This cute does not have mange.

- (9) *Memang susah. Besok lagi ketemu sama cowok itu lagi sedang berbicara dengan cewek yang lain, tidak menatap matanya. Katanya menahan pandangan. Eh jadi cowok ya, menahan pandangan sama yang sebelah, tidak menahan sama Sakdiyah.*

It is hard. The next day, (I) saw this man again, (he) was talking to another woman, (he) did not look at her eyes. He said (he) was lowering his gaze. Oh, man, you can lower (your) gaze to (the woman) next to you, but you do not lower gaze to Sakdiyah.

Data (8) and (9) were anecdotes of Sakdiyah's personal experience in the friendship context that being an Arab-Indonesian influenced how the opposite gender perceived and interacted with her, such as avoiding handshaking and lowering the gaze. The function of data (8) and data (9) was to cope with interaction etiquette with the opposite gender. Lastly, in data (10), Sakdiyah mentioned that she was identified as a member of the Arab-Indonesian community that it became her identity as she said, as follows:

(10) *Makanya kalau ada yang mau sewa saya untuk sinetron katakan sekarang ini. Saya siap untuk amnesia di sinetron. Kenapa? Seamnesia-amnesianya orang Arab tidak akan pernah nyasar. Pasti bisa pulang ke rumah. Kenapa? Kalau nyasar di Jakarta, "Mbak, Arab Condet, ya?"*

So if anyone wants to hire me for soap operas, say so now. I am ready to play amnesia on soap operas. Why? The Arabs' amnesiacs will never go astray. I definitely can go home. Why? If (I) get lost in Jakarta, "Miss, Arab Condet, huh?"

Data (10) can be categorised as jokes and fantasy because she wished if she were asked to be an actor who played a woman with amnesia. She further explained that she could easily find a way back home in the soap opera and real-life due to her Arab appearance that people quickly recognised and helped her find the community where she belonged. Therefore, data (10) functioned to cope with her identity as a member of the Arab community in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Jessica Farolan was a Chinese-Indonesian with psychological health training background who competed in SUCI season two in 2012. Unfortunately, Jessica's performances during SUCI season two were not widely available online; thus, the author analysed a video of her first audition to be analysed in this study. Like Sakdiyah, who delivered her comedy in a well-arranged and formal language, Jessica also used formal language and tone such as the first-person personal pronoun *saya* to deliver her humour. However, at the end of her comedy performance, she surprisingly employed a taboo word

commonly practised by male stand-up comedians, but it is unlikely, according to the theory of women's language features, that women tend to avoid strong or taboo words. It was shown in data (11) as follows:

(11) *Yang terakhir yang paling bikin sebal itu adalah yang namanya penyelewengan kosakata Bahasa Indonesia. Kosakata yang paling fenomenal yang pernah saya temui adalah ***. *** itu artinya merengek demi apapun.*

The last thing that irritates me the most is the misuse of Indonesian vocabulary. The most phenomenal vocabulary I have ever encountered is *** (censored word). *** (censored word) it means whining for anything.

In Jessica's short comedy, she talked about the misused vocabulary in the Indonesian language. In the beginning, her humour delivery was very formal, as if she read a speech instead of performing comedy. Then, however, she employed a strong word resulting in censorship. Thus, the type of humour in data (11) was vulgarity due to her use of a taboo word. The function of data (11) was to highlight phenomena related to the violation of language use. Interestingly, unlike many stand-up comedians who explicitly deliver their humour, Jessica's taboo word implicitly showed sexism in the language that many people did not realise the actual meaning of the word ***. The word *** is commonly associated with a female's vital organ and is often used as a swear word, with little information available to know that the word has an entirely different meaning.

Alison Victoria was a British expatriate nominated as the first foreigner who joined the Indonesian stand-up comedy competition SUCI season three in 2013. There were several videos of her stand-up comedy performances, and in this study, the author employed the most viewed video on Youtube as the data. Alison delivered her comedy in Indonesian with very little code-switching to her native language, English. However, unlike Sakdiyah and Jessica, who preferred to go with the first-person personal pronoun *saya*, Alison used the first-person personal pronoun *gue* primarily used by the Jakarta Metropolitan Area. It indicated that very formal language was not always the option for a female stand-up comedian who preferred to be perceived as more sociable. Alison also employed some rhetorical questions during her stand-up comedy performance that can be seen in the data (12) and data (13) as follows:

(12) *Ada yang mau perbaiki keturunan malam ini? Kebetulan gue jomblo. Tapi jomblo yang beranak satu. Ya hitunglah buy one get one free lah.*

Anyone wants to improve the offspring tonight? I happen to be single. But single with one child. Yes, it is a buy one get one free.

(13) *Masalahnya cuman kalau gue nikah lagi, gue tidak mau jadi istrinya. Kayaknya lebih enak jadi suami ya. Kan kalau suami, pulang kerja capek, dilayani sama istri. Kalau istri pulang kerja capek, tetep harus melayani suami dong. Siapa yang melayani istri? Supirnya?*

The only problem is that if I remarry, I do not want to be a wife. I think it is better to be a husband. If the husband comes home (and) he is tired from work, his wife serves him. If the wife comes home from work tired, she still has to serve her husband. Who serves the wife? The driver?

Data (12) and (13) were categorised as anecdotes and jokes based on her marital status and made a funny commentary about how people usually stereotype her foreigner has a better gene and thus better offspring. Furthermore, Alison's joke contained critics about inequality in the relationship within a household. Data (12) and data (13) functioned to cope with her current marital status and the inequality in the household.

In addition, Alison further went talking about the stereotype of her and other fellow foreigners presented in data (14), as follows:

(14) *Tapi sampai sekarang hubungan yang paling gue nikmati itu sama pembantu gue. Ya kalau selera bule emang begitu ya?*

However, until now, the relationship I enjoy most is with my maid. Yes, the foreigners like it, right?

Data (14) was categorised as the stereotype of Caucasians and white who dated exotic Asian women. The function of data (14) was to tease as she did not reject nor accept the stereotype.

She then proceeded to another example of inequality in the household, as presented in data (15), as follows:

(15) *Waktu itu gue yang kerjain semua tugas cowok. Ya duduk manislah di sofa nonton bola dan dia yang sibuk beres-beres, masak dan gosip ama tetangga. Gue yang kerja keras untuk menafkahi dia dan anak gue. Kurang sempurna apa coba?*

At that time, I did all the men's jobs. Sitting on the couch watching football, she is busy cleaning, cooking and gossiping with the neighbours. I work hard to provide for her and my child. Am I not perfect?

Data (15) was a joke and irony as she mentioned what men typically do in the household that working and providing the family was the excuse not to involve in the domestic chores. The function of data (15) was to highlight inequality between women and men regarding domestic chores and responsibility.

Lastly, she emphasised that for many Indonesian, it was an internalised concept that the Caucasians were a superior race, and thus they were the desirable ones to marry and have offspring.

(16) *Itu tukang bakso lihat aku, "Kok sendirian? Apa mau nikah sama abang saja?". Kalau dipikir-pikir, dapat pahala juga bantu tukang bakso memperbaiki keturunan.*

The meatball seller looked at me, "How come you are alone? Do you want to marry me instead?" (I) was thinking that (I) would get rewarded for helping the meatball maker to improve (his) offspring.

Data (16) was an anecdote based on Alison's personal experience related to people's views on her and what they expected from her as a Caucasian if they were in a relationship. The function of data (16) was to cope with how Alison perceived herself and how people perceived her as a Caucasian.

Gita Butarbutar was one of two female stand-up comedians in SUCI season four in 2014. As a member of the Batak ethnic, known for their loud voice, Gita delivered her humour with rising intonations in declarative sentences. In addition, she employed the first-person personal pronoun *aku* that more informal than *I* but less exclusive than *gue*. Gita also used rhetorical questions in her performance. In this study, she talked about being a plus-size woman. It began with data (17) and data (18), as follows:

(17) *Aku ga sadar kalau misalnya aku gendut. Jadi aku baru sadar kalau aku gendut itu baru-baru saja.*

I did not realise that I was fat. So I realised that I have been fat just recently.

(18) *Waktu temen-temenku masuk ke dalam café itu, pelayannya bukain pintunya satu. Waktu aku datang, yang dibukain pintunya dua. Aku pikir mereka bukain dua pintu itu gara-gara aku cantik dan menawan. Itu sakit!*

When my friends entered the cafe, the waiter opened one door. When I arrived, two doors were opened. I thought that they opened those two doors because I was pretty. It hurts!

Data (17) and (18) were anecdotes that Gita experienced as she was treated differently due to her plus-size physical appearance and how this treatment had affected her. Data (17) and data (18) were functioned to cope with an unpleasant situation such as being treated differently because of looks.

Another problem when it came to her plus-size physic was related to following the latest fashion trend. Through her humour, Gita criticised fashion trends for not giving many options for plus-sized women like her. In addition to her critics, she mentioned how she dealt with this situation and maintained a positive view of herself. Her critics and the positive view were stated in data (19) and data (20) as follows:

(19) *Dan jadi orang gendut itu sakitnya luar biasa woy. Ih, sakit sekali. Apalagi jadi cewek gendut. Kenapa? Karena kami itu tidak bisa untuk ngikutin mode. Tren busana terkini itu tidak ada sama orang gendut.*

Moreover, being a fat person hurts so much. Ugh, that hurts! (I was) especially being a fat girl. Why? Because we cannot follow fashion. The latest fashion trends do not fit fat girls.

(20) *Aku pernah itu ngelihat trend masa kini, legging kuncup bunga. Aku cari sampai sampai dapat, ya kan? Rupanya ada leggingnya ukuran aku. Tapi setelah aku perhatikan ya*

kan, kayak ada yang salah sama legging ini, ya kan? Apa yang salah ya? Motifnya ganti, bunganya mekar.

I once saw the current trend, flower bud leggings. I searched until I got it, right? There are leggings my size. Nevertheless, after I looked at it, right? There seemed to be something wrong with these leggings, right? What is wrong, huh? The motive changes, the flowers bloom.

Data (19) and (20) were anecdotes based on Gita's experience of the fashion industry with a plus-size problem and how she perceived and maintained a positive attitude toward herself despite the circumstance.

As it was clear from the finding description, there were some important discoveries of the language styles, types and functions of humour, and the cultural implications of humour by the selected female stand-up comedians. In this study, all four female stand-up comedians communicated their concerns on complex and challenging issues by employing humour. Humour helped them as the safer and lighter way to deliver their comments, critics, and messages. If it were not through humour, the topics covered by the female stand-up comedians would be susceptible to be discussed—for example, the narrative of being the Arab and or Chinese Indonesian and their relationship with the indigenous. It was in line with a previous study that mentioned that through humorous language, the process of negotiating and transferring knowledge, especially for sensitive and taboo issues, can be done in a friendly way (Chimbwete-Phiri & Schnurr, 2017, p. 4).

This study fulfilled the gaps in the previous studies and discovered how the triad, such as language, gender, and humour, were intertwined in delivering sociocultural concerns. For example, in delivering complex issues such as racial stereotypes, especially the Arab-Indonesian, Sakdiyah's language was mainly rhetorical questions. In Lakoff's (1973) theory, women are said to use question tags more than men. It is in line with the current study finding that Sakdiyah primarily employed question tags that functioned as rhetorical questions.

Furthermore, another significant finding from Sakdiyah's humour was that she attempted to share solidarity with another fellow contestant in SUCI, which happened to be a Chinese – Indonesian. Thus, it indicated that Sakdiyah did not merely deliver her personal stereotypes problems but also shared concerns with the Chinese-Indonesian people who underwent similar circumstances. Typically, discussing the racial issue is complicated in

Indonesia, so the speaker must carefully select the words, primarily when broadcast on national television. However, Sakdiyah successfully depicted how she perceived herself and her identity as an Arab-Indonesian and how the indigenous perceived her. Furthermore, she employed her humour to cope with the positive and negative stereotypes heavily attached to her.

Further, a previous study found that female comediennes were less appealing due to a gendered impression that they lacked abilities, and the topics they delivered were frequently about femininity, which male viewers found less important (Bore, 2010, p. 152). In contrast, Jessica, a Chinese-Indonesia stand-up comedian, tried a different approach of bringing humour and delivering the message about femininity and sexism in a knowledgeable and less offensive way.

It was commonly found that the minority ethnics often use their ethnicity in stand up comedy; for example, Jimmy O. Yang, a Hongkong-American stand-up comedian based in the United States, primarily delivered humour about being a Chinese immigrant. Another name, such as Russell Peters, a Canadian, talked about being an Indian descent. Other stand-up comedians also used racial issues such as Mexican immigrants or African-American as the central theme of their stand-up comedy. Similarly, in Indonesia, a male stand-up comedian from Southeast Sulawesi, Arie Kriting, often employed humour with ethnicity as the central theme and even used stage names related to the stereotype.

In this study, unlike the common racial-ethnicity performed by other comedians, Jessica decided to take an approach and theme by bringing up a topic about language with the subliminal message about sexism in the Indonesian language. The language style employed by Jessica was the use of hypercorrect grammar as she employed well-structured sentences with a formal tone in delivering her humour. However, at the end of her humour, Jessica surprisingly used a taboo word that was not suitable with Lakoff's (1973) theory that said women usually avoid strong swear or taboo words. Through her well-structured sentences with an abruptly inserted taboo word, Jessica shared her concerns about language violation and the sexism in her mother tongue. Although the national television had to censor the word, she successfully delivered her humour that highlighted a concerning issue, especially a taboo word related to a women's reproductive organ. Jessica's attempted to show intellectual humour. She performed the most unlikely topic when most stand-comedians with similar backgrounds and circumstances would use ethnicity as the central part of the comedy.

Equally important, it was asserted that women used comedy to alter their gender identity by resisting gender stereotypes (Green, 1998, p. 181). Concerning that, altering gender identity by resisting stereotypes also appeared in Alison's humour. Even more, she did resist not only gender stereotypes but also racial stereotypes. In delivering her humour, Alison tended to employ rhetorical questions following Lakoff's(1973) theory. Furthermore, despite being a British expatriate, she delivered the humour entirely in well-spoken Indonesian, and she only slipped a small amount of code-switching from Indonesia to English. The issue that she addressed such as Caucasian stereotypes and superiority, domestic relationships, gender equality. Alison's humour implied that it was not uncommon for her to receive the stereotype that Caucasians were the desirable ones. She also mentioned that this stereotype affected how people perceived her and thus also the relationship. Lastly, she also criticised and delivered her concern to the fellow female that experienced inequality in the domestic sphere.

As a final point, it was mentioned in the previous study that women use humour to regulate their emotions and bond with one another, emphasising its power to discuss similar challenges, differences, and obstacles in a safe environment (Schnurr, 2008, p. 304). In line with the previous study, the current study found that Gita shared the problems universally faced by women and even men, beauty standards. In this study, Gita delivered concerns about beauty standards from a plus-sized perspective. In delivering this topic, as a Batak, Gita mainly employed high intonation along with rhetorical questions. Female and male Batakese have long been stereotyped by their raising of intonation, even in a declarative sentence and in line withLakoff's(1973) theory. The content of Gita's humour was against the ideal beauty standard that beauty must have a slim body to be accepted socially. She also projected body positivity as the central message of her humour.

CONCLUSIONS

The four female stand-up comedians in this study used their ethnic background and sociocultural concerns as elements of their humour, but the points they expressed were not pretending to represent their ethnicity but more personal and universal concerns. From the results of this study, it can be concluded that these female stand-up comedians employed humour primarily to show their identity, solidarity, desire to articulate their aspiration for gender equality and rejection of stigmatisation. These women did not stop themselves from

using various humour techniques, even taboo words from the language used. Their performance, however, was pure humour without ethnic bias or sentiment. Despite the results, the study also has some limitations.

This study investigated women's humour in broadcasting a stand-up comedy set-up and not in a natural setting. Thus, the humour presented may have been adapted to be suitable for viewing by the wider audience, and some words may be censored. The data used was also still limited to cases of four female stand-up comedians in the Indonesian context. Further researchers have the opportunity to investigate other aspects of stand-up comedians life and their perceptions of it in the context of highly monetised life.

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