

**THE CHARACTERIZATION OF HASAN MINHAJ'S HUMOR  
LANGUAGE IN THE DAILY SHOW WITH TREVOR NOAH'S SHOW  
*THE BEST OF HASAN MINHAJ – MUSLIM BAN, WOMEN'S SOCCER &  
CANADA***

**A GRADUATING PAPER**

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Gaining the Bachelor  
Degree in English Department



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**2022**



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Atas perhatiannya, kami mengucapkan terima kasih.

*Wassalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb*

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Tugas Akhir dengan judul : THE CHARACTERIZATION OF HASAN MINHAJ'S HUMOR LANGUAGE IN THE DAILY SHOW WITH TREVOR NOAH'S SHOW THE BEST OF HASAN MINHAJ - MUSLIM BAN, WOMEN'S SOCCER, & CANADA

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## A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

I certify that this graduate paper is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this graduating paper. Other researcher's opinion or finding included in this research is quoted or cited in accordance with ethical standards.

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**MOTTO**

*Hompimpah Alaium*

From God to God



## **DEDICATION**

Myself

My parent



## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First and foremost, thanks and praise belong to Allah SWT, the Lord of the universe, who is always blessing and giving mercy on us, so that I can complete my graduating paper entitled "The Characterization of Hasan Minhaj's Humor Language in The Daily Show with Trevor Noah's Show *"The Best of Hasan Minhaj – Muslim Ban, Women's Soccer, & Canada."* well and effectively. Then, I would like to express my gratitude to the following individuals for their assistance and support in finalizing my graduation paper. These are the people:

1. Prof. Dr.Phil. Al Makin, S.Ag., M.A. as the Rector of Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga.
2. Dr. Muhammad Wildan, M.A. as the Dean of Faculty of Adab and Cultural Sciences in Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga.
3. Ulyati Retno Sari, S.S. M.Hum. as the Head of the English Department.
4. Dr. Ubaidillah, S.S., M.Hum. as my Academic Advisor. Thank you for your advice and support.
5. Dr. Ubaidillah, S.S., M.Hum. as my Graduating Paper Advisor. Thank you for your help, guidance, suggestion, and encouragement during creating my graduating paper.
6. All of the lecturers in English Department: Ulyati Retno Sari, S.S. M.Hum., Dr. Ubaidillah, S.S., M.Hum., Febriyanti Dwiratna Lestari, SS., MA., Harsiwi Fajar Sari, SS., M.A., Dr. Arif Budiman, S.S., M.A., Aninda Aji Siwi, S.Pd., M.Pd., Dwi Margo Yuwono, M.Hum., Fuad Arif Fudiyartanto, S.Pd. M.Hum., M.Ed., Ph.D., Dr. Witriani, S.S. M.Hum., Dr. Danial

Hidayatullah, SS., M.Hum., and others. Thank you for advising and teaching me.

7. All of my friends in English Department year 2018, especially class A. Thank you for being my friends.
8. All of the people who come in my life. Thank you for making me as a better person.

May the Angels record all their good deeds and Allah SWT accepts all of their prayers. Finally, the author anticipates that this research will be useful to a wide range of people, especially for English Department students and people who want to do similar research. However, the researcher realizes that this paper is still imperfect, so suggestion will always be accepted for the improvement of this research. Thank you.

Yogyakarta, January 14, 2022  
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

LA	: Language
SI	: Situation
NS	: Narrative Strategy
TA	: Target
LM	: Logical Mechanism
SO	: Script Opposition



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**The Characterization of Hasan Minhaj’s Humor Language in The Daily Show with Trevor Noah’s show *The Best of Hasan Minhaj – Muslim Ban, Women’s Soccer & Canada***

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**ABSTRACT**

Humor can be presented as a method to communicate with others. The humor language used to communicate with others has several types, which also have their own styles, characteristics, and uniqueness, to deliver the ideas. As an occupation that uses humor to communicate with people, comedians want to deliver the topic or issue which happens in daily social life with their own style. The focus of this research is to identify the types of humor language used by Hasan Minhaj in the variety show The Daily Show with Trevor Noah. The researcher applies the combinations of two theories which are the semantic script-switch trigger concept by Raskin as the main theory and the general theory of verbal humor by Attardo as the supporting theory. Moreover, this research uses a descriptive qualitative method. The data of this research comes from the variety show The Daily Show with Trevor Noah’s script entitled *The Best of Hasan Minhaj – Muslim Ban, Women’s Soccer & Canada*. In this research, the researcher found 2 data of regular ambiguity, 1 data of figurative ambiguity, 2 data of situational ambiguity, 4 data of contradiction trigger, and 1 data of dichotomizing trigger. Based on the findings, it can be stated that the most used type of humor language used by Hasan in The Daily Show with Trevor Noah is the contradiction trigger. After that, there is situational ambiguity and regular ambiguity, which have 2 data for each type. Then, figurative ambiguity and dichotomizing trigger with each of the types has 1 data.

**Keywords:** Hasan Minhaj’s humor language, humor language, semantic script-switch trigger, linguistic

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**ABSTRAK**

Humor dapat dijadikan sebagai salah satu cara untuk berkomunikasi. Bahasa humor yang digunakan untuk berkomunikasi bersama orang lain memiliki tipe tersendiri. Bahasa humor juga mempunyai gaya, karakteristik, dan keunikannya tersendiri untuk menyampaikan ide atau topik yang akan dibahas. Sebagai salah satu pekerjaan yang menggunakan bahasa humor untuk berkomunikasi, komedian ingin menyampaikan informasi dan isu yang terjadi di lingkungan sekitar menggunakan caranya sendiri. Fokus utama dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi tipe dari bahasa humor yang digunakan Hasan Minhaj di acara ragam yang berjudul *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah*. Peneliti menerapkan kombinasi dari dua teori yaitu teori *semantic script-switch trigger* yang dikemukakan oleh Raskin sebagai teori utama dan *general theory of verbal humor* yang dikemukakan oleh Attardo sebagai teori pendukung. Dalam penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif. Untuk data yang digunakan dalam penelitian adalah naskah dari video *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah* berjudul *The Best of Hasan Minhaj – Muslim Ban, Women’s Soccer & Canada*. Dalam penelitian ditemukan 2 data *regular ambiguity*, 1 data *figurative ambiguity*, 2 data *situational ambiguity*, 4 data *contradiction trigger*, dan 1 data *dichotomizing trigger*. Berdasarkan temuan tersebut, dapat dinyatakan bahwa *contradiction trigger* merupakan tipe yang paling banyak digunakan, disusul dengan *regular ambiguity* dan *situasional ambiguity* dengan masing-masing 2 data, dan *figurative ambiguity* dan *dichotomizing trigger* dengan masing-masing 1 data.

**Kata kunci:** bahasa humor Hasan Minhaj, bahasa humor, *semantic script-switch trigger*, linguistik

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of Study

People have their own way or language characteristics to communicate with others, especially to talk about funny stories. Rabiah (2018, p. 01), in her journal claimed that language is a communication device in daily life manifested in the meaningful, intentional purpose to deliver information and arguments to others. According to Daniel (2018, p. 21), communication is an interaction that requires exchanging signal codes or meaning from the speaker to the listener. The language that the speaker uses to communicate with others has to be clear. Thus, the listener can identify the speaker's meaning properly and avoid misunderstanding. There are plenty of jobs that use communication to inform the information and ideas, such as reporter, newsperson, comedian, and others.

Besides, comedy is an activity presented by the comedian to make people happy or laugh. According to Amaral (2020, p. 80), comedy is what makes happy endings possible. On the other hand, comedy is by definition open to continual adaptation, and as such, offers greater opportunity for freedom of expression. Salvatore (Attardo, 2017, p. 01) claimed that even humor which produced entirely outside of language, visually or musically, needs to be discussed and explained in language. In what follows, only humor expressed linguistically will be considered. It means that language has the privileg to

produce humor because language is the media of humor. Corrigan (1981) said, as cited in Amaral, that the only thing existing in comedies are not the structure or the narrative effect but an optimistic attitude to face the problems and challenges that the world may bring (2020, p. 80).

Comedian is one of the occupations which uses communication to tell the ideas to others, and the occupation also uses different humor language's types to present their own comedy styles, characteristics, and uniqueness. There are many well-known comedians in America. One of the well-known and successful comedians who is also an American Muslim comedian, is Hasan Minhaj. He is an Indian-American that was born in Davis, California, United States of America (Admissions, 2020, para. 3). He majored in Political Science. Moreover, *Homecoming King*, his special debut of stand-up comedy, got a Peabody Award in 2017. In 2018, he began presenting Patriot Act with Hasan Minhaj, a weekly Netflix talk show program. He was also selected to be in the Time magazine's list of the 100 most important people in 2019. In 2014, he gained his popularity as a senior correspondent on *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah* (Admissions, 2020, para. 1).

*The Daily Show with Trevor Noah* is an entertaining show which delivers satirical news about America or international politics. Hasan Minhaj has his own ways to deliver the news or social event, and it becomes his characteristics. The ways Hasan Minhaj acts and delivers the message are unique, and those show the types and characteristics of his humor language. In addition, Nzeaka stated that language is an aspect of human existence and



peculiar identity which has created uniqueness in human life (2021, p. 192). It can be stated that language is a medium of communication that creates uniqueness and characteristics in human life. Moreover, Hasan Minhaj is well-known for his satire in his jokes. *The Best of Hasan Minhaj – Muslim Ban, Women’s Soccer & Canada* video, is about the compilation of Hasan Minhaj’s comedies in the Daily Show with Trevor Noah, which is a phenomenal social concern that happened in America at that time.

The first compilation video’s topic is about the Prime Minister of Canada, who helped Syrian refugees by allowing them to come to Canada. The second compilation video’s topic is about inequity between women’s soccer and men’s soccer. The last compilation video’s part is about The President of the United States of America, Donald Trump, who banned Muslims from living in America. Hasan delivers his materials or topics by using his own style. He also makes the topic funny, even though those are quite sensitive topics for some people. Below is one of the examples of humors or jokes delivered by Hasan Minhaj.

Hasan. “Luckily, I had allies across the border, these Canucks were actually doing something about Trudeau’s refugee invasion, and they were more pissed off than any Canadians I had ever seen.

Person 1. “People are really upset.”

Hasan. “Oh, yes, good.”

Person 2. “We’re demanding that the immigration minister bring in more refugees and do it really quickly.”

Hasan. “What?”

(00:01:04-00:01:24)

From that conversation, Hasan and his guests talked about the prime minister who helped the Syrian refugees. In that conversation, Hasan thought that helping the Syrian refugees could also bring ISIS to Canada, and they should stop helping refugees. However, his guests thought that the prime minister could help more refugees to come to Canada. Besides that, this is how Hasan Minhaj delivers his humor sense and topic to the viewers. He has his own style and characteristics to deliver his topic with humor.

Based on Hasan Minhaj’s ways to deliver the topic, it is shown that he uses short narrative as his narrative strategy. He also uses the opposite statements or opinions from his guests. Moreover, Hasan Minhaj talked about Canada that helped Syrian refugees from the US, which attacked Syria and accused Syria to be part of ISIS. He uses paradox in that statement which is the same as the contradiction triggers in semantic script-switch triggers. He claimed that his guests are more pissed off than any Canadians. Besides, the guests said that they asked the prime minister to bring more refugees and do it quickly. It means Hasan Minhaj’s statements are contradictive with the fact that the guests said.

Therefore, since Hasan Minhaj is an American Muslim comedian that has unique and different types of humor language for delivering social phenomena which happens in America with his comedy, the researcher is interested in analyzing the characteristics of the type of humor language used by Hasan Minhaj. Instance, in the conversation above, he uses contradictive statements to make a joke. Furthermore, Desfri Handika (2019, p. 19) claimed Hasan Minhaj uses Metaphor, Simile, Metonymy, Irony, Allegory, Personification, and Hyperbole as his types of humor language. Furthermore, the video of *The Best of Hasan Minhaj* is discussing Muslim, Syrian refugees, and inequity between men and women phenomena which are sensitive topics. He can manage and deliver sensitive topics and social phenomena which happen in America by using humor. Because of the reasons above, the researcher chooses Hasan Minhaj's transcript video as the object of the research.

The transcript will be defined by the semantic approach, which is the semantic script-switch trigger and the general theory of verbal humor. Semantic-script theory of humor or SSTH is an updated version of incongruity theory that uses semantic aspects. The semantic script-switch trigger is a component of the semantic script theory of humor which makes the jokes in the script introduced by Raskin. According to Raskin, semantic script-switch trigger or *trigger* in simple jokes has two types which are ambiguity and contradiction (1985, p. 114). There are some types of ambiguity and contradiction, such as regular ambiguity, figurative ambiguity, syntactic

ambiguity, situational ambiguity, quasi-ambiguity, contradiction triggers, and dichotomizing triggers.

Attardo and Raskin said that the General Theory of Verbal Humor is the updated version of the Semantic Script Theory of Humor which has broadened areas of linguistic (1994, p. 222). It is analyzed with six Knowledge Resources. Those are the script opposition (SO), the logical mechanism (LM), the target (TA), the narrative strategy (NS), the language (LA), and the situation (SI). Since the General Theory of Verbal Humor has a parameter for language, it can specify the characteristics of humor language used by Hasan Minhaj.

In this research, the researcher will find the characteristics of the types that Hasan Minhaj uses his humor language. The researcher will analyze the types and define more about the characteristics of humor language by Hasan Minhaj by combining the semantic script-switch trigger and the general theory of verbal humor. The data of this research is The Daily Show with Trevor Noah titled *The Best of Hasan Minhaj – Muslim Ban, Women's Soccer & Canada*, which was published on August 15, 2018.

## 1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, there is one problem to be answered in this research.

1. What are the types of Hasan Minhaj's humor language used on *The Best of Hasan Minhaj – Muslim Ban, Women's Soccer, & Canada*?

### 1.3 Objectives of Study

As seen from the background of the study and the problem statement, the objective of the study is

1. To identify and classify the types of humor language used by Hasan Minhaj on *The Best of Hasan Minhaj – Muslim Ban, Women's Soccer, & Canada*.

### 1.4 Significances of Study

The researcher indicates this research to be beneficial to both the readers, the researcher herself, and the other upcoming researchers. The researcher also anticipates more information about semantic fields with semantic as the approach. This research can be used as a reference by the next researchers who have the same topic of research. Furthermore, this research intends to help the readers and the researchers broaden their knowledge about linguistics study.

### 1.5 Literature Review

In this literature review, the researcher shows four types of researches that have already been done by others. Those are the relevant researches that contain some similarities in the content, especially about analysis of humor or types of humor language.

The first research is from Indah Ita Utami titled “*Strategi Humor Pada Acara Stand Up Comedy*” which explains the pragmatic aspect strategy, language aspect strategy, humor function, and people’s responses about humor

in stand-up comedy. This research was published by *Adabiyat: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra* in 2018. From the data, the researcher found out that the pragmatic aspect of stand-up comedy is implicature which is caused by the violation of maxim and the violation of cooperative principle. Moreover, the similarity found in Indah Ita Utami's journal and this research is that both analyze the humor language. The differences between Indah Ita Utami's journal and this research are the theory, the object, and the focus of the analysis. The theory of the journal is a pragmatic approach which is implicature, and the focus is the pragmatic aspect strategy used by stand-up comedy. On the other hand, this research uses semantic script-switch trigger as the main theory and focuses on the types of humor language on *The Daily Show* with Trevor Noah.

The second research is a journal entitled "*Language Style of Humor on Stand-Up Comedy Video*" written by Merry Rullyanti and Nurdianto from the English Literature Department Faculty of Letters University of Dehasen. This journal was published in 2019 in the *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literature* Vol. 4(1). The researcher uses the theory of language styles by Keraf to identify the language styles used by stand-up comedy videos by Chris Rock. However, the research only focuses on rhetorical language styles and figurative language written by Keraf. The researcher found out that Chris Joke uses figurative language that can be categorized as Rhetorical-Figurative language style or a mix of two styles. In correlation, there is difference and similarity between Rullyanti's journal with this research. The similarity in both Rullyanti's journal and this research is finding the characteristics of humor

language used by a comedian. In addition, the difference is that this research uses the general theory of verbal humor and the semantic script-switch trigger. Besides, this research's object is also different from Rullyanti's journal.

The third research is a journal from Desfri Handika, Hermawati Syarif, and Leni Marlina entitled "*An analysis of Minor Figurative Language used in Stand-up Comedy Performed by Hasan Minhaj Entitled Homecoming King.*" This research was published by the English Language & Literature Study Program of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang in 2019. The researcher wanted to find the types of minor figurative language used in stand-up comedy by Hasan Minhaj. Furthermore, the differences between Desfri Handika, Hermawati Syarif, and Leni Marlina's journal and this research are the theory and the focus of research. The theory that Desfri Handika, Hermawati Syarif, and Leni Marlina's journal uses is minor figurative language that focuses only on the types of humor language. The similarities between Desfri Handika, Hermawati Syarif, and Leni Marlina's journal and this research are in the object and the findings, which are the types of humor language used in the stand-up comedy.

The fourth journal entitled "*COVID-19 humor in Jordanian social media: A socio-semiotic approach*" by Ahmed T. Hussen and Lina Nabil Aljamili was published in 2020 by Heliyon. This journal focuses on how Jordanian social media contributes to overcoming pandemic anxiety burdens and offering relief. There are two data of this journal which are questionnaires of two main sections and fifty samples of coronavirus pandemic's memes or caricatures published on Jordanian social media. Based on the data, the

researcher found out that coronavirus pandemic memes and caricatures have psychological impacts on people, which are reducing stress and maintaining emotional well-being. Yet, Hussien and Aljamali's journal and this research have differences and similarity. The similarity between Hussien and Aljamali's journal and this research is that both of the researches analyze humor. Moreover, the differences between Hussien and Aljamali's journal and this research are the object, the focuses, and the theory. Hussien and Aljamali's journal theory is the socio-semiotic theory, while this research uses the general theory of verbal humor and the semantic script-switch trigger.

### **1.6 Theoretical Framework**

In this research, the researcher focuses on the characteristics of humor language by Hasan Minhaj's comedy. The researcher uses Semantic Script-Switch Trigger Theory of Humor by Raskin and General Theory of Verbal Humor by Attardo and Raskin. Raskin (Raskin, 1985, p. 76) claimed that semantic theory consists of two components. First component is the lexicon, which contains lexical information approximating, the speaker's knowledge of the meaning of the words. The second component is the combinatorial rules which combine the meanings into the semantic interpretation of the whole sentence.

Semantic-script theory of humor or SSTH is an updated version of incongruity theory, which uses semantic aspects. Moreover, semantic script-switch trigger is component of semantic script theory of humor, which makes



the jokes in the script introduced by Raskin. According to Raskin (1985, p. 114), semantic script-switch trigger or *trigger* in simple jokes has two types which are ambiguity and contradiction. There are some types of ambiguity and contradiction, such as regular ambiguity, figurative ambiguity, syntactic ambiguity, situational ambiguity, quasi-ambiguity, contradiction triggers, and dichotomizing triggers.

Attardo and Raskin (1994, p. 222) said that General Theory of Verbal Humor or GTVH is the updated version of the Semantic Script Theory of Humor which has broad areas of linguistic. It is analyzed with six Knowledge Resources. Those are the script opposition (SO), the logical mechanism (LM), the target (TA), the narrative strategy (NS), the language (LA), and the situation (SI). Since GTVH has a parameter for language, it can specify the characteristics of humor language used by Hasan Minhaj. The researcher will analyze the characteristics of humor language by Hasan Minhaj using the semantic script-switch trigger and the general theory of verbal humor. By using these theories, this research will show the types and the characteristics of humor language by Hasan Minhaj in The Daily Show with Trevor Noah.

## **1.7 Method of Study**

### **1.7.1 Type of Research**

The researcher uses the descriptive qualitative method to conduct this research. Flick stated that qualitative data collection is the selection and production of linguistics (or visual) material for analyzing and

understanding phenomena, social fields, subjective and collective experiences, and the related meaning-making processes (2018, p. 07). It suits the focus of this research because the researcher analyzes the language that the speaker uses in the video. Qualitative research is an approach to study about people's lives in a detailed way by using a certain research method, such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussion, observation, content analysis. Visual methods and life histories or biographies (Hennink et al., 2019, p. 10). Leavy (2017, p. 124) said that; a qualitative approach is an approach to research meaning and subjective experiences that create a concrete understanding of a topic or interpret people to ascribe, such as activities, situations, circumstances, people, and objects. Moreover, the researcher explains the types and characteristics that occur with the perspective of semantic theory in *The Best of Hasan Minhaj – Muslim Ban, Women's Soccer & Canada*.

### 1.7.2 Data Sources

This research requires both primary and secondary data. The primary data is a talk show entitled *The Best of Hasan Minhaj – Muslim Ban, Women's Soccer & Canada*, which is from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-0-81q-fGo&t=845s>. The secondary data is the video's transcript which is downloaded from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-0-81q-fGo&t=845s>.

### 1.7.3 Data Collection Technique

The researcher uses a visual analysis technique. Vanderstoep and Jhonston (2009, p. 189) stated that qualitative studies have some data collection techniques, which are interviewing, ethnographic observation, analysis of documents and material culture, and visual analysis. Besides, the researcher chose a visual analysis. Visual analysis is a technique that allows the researcher to understand a text as a form of communication, such as a movie or a talk show. It is appropriate for this study because it examines *The Best of Hasan Minhaj - Muslim Ban, Women's Soccer, and Canada's* script in order to explain the characteristics that occur in the types of humor language that the character uses. There are some steps that the researcher has done to collect the data, such as watching the video, downloading the subtitle, transcribing the subtitle, categorizing and identifying the types, and ascribing the characteristics of humor language in the video.

### 1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis technique is a process to develop and guide the researcher to analyze the data and to answer the specific research question (Hennink et al., 2019, p. 236). According to Vanderstoep and Jhonston (2009, p. 200), there are five methods of qualitative analysis research which are ethnography, phenomenology, case study, textual analysis, and applied research. Moreover, textual analysis is about the analysis of language and symbols found in text or conversation. The researcher uses textual analysis

because it is related to the text data which interpreted to answer the research question.

The researcher has done steps after deciding the method of data analysis, such as taking the data from the video *The Best of Hasan Minhaj – Muslim Ban, Women’s Soccer & Canada*, categorizing the data based on the research question and put it in the datasheet, analyzing the categorized data based on the research question, interpreting the data to answer the research question, explaining the findings in textual description, and concluding the findings.

### **1.8 Paper Organization**

This research paper contains four chapters. The first chapter is the introduction which includes sub-chapters, such as the background of study, the research questions, the objective of study, the scope of study, significance of study, the literature review, the theoretical approach, the method of study, and the paper organization. The second chapter is the theoretical framework. In this chapter, the researcher describes the theories used by to analyze the object of the research. The third chapter is findings and discussion. The researcher explains the finding of characterizations and types that Hasan Minhaj uses in *The Best of Hasan Minhaj – Muslim Ban, Women’s Soccer & Canada* video. The last chapter is the conclusion and suggestion. In the last chapter, the researcher summarizes the points of the analysis.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

#### 4.1 Conclusion

In reference to chapter three, which is about the findings and discussion, the researcher uses the semantic-script theory of humor, which is the semantic script-switch trigger's concept by Raskin and the general theory of verbal humor by Attardo. The researcher is aware that the characteristics of humor language are different depending on someone who tells the jokes.

Considering this research, the researcher found ten jokes as the data cases that use semantic script-switch trigger in *The Best of Hasan Minhaj – Muslim Ban, Women's Soccer & Canada's script*. The result is, from seven types of the semantic script-switch trigger, only five types of the semantic script-switch trigger are found. Those are four data that use contradiction trigger. This is followed by two data of situational ambiguity and regular ambiguity, and one data of figurative ambiguity and dichotomizing trigger.

The result of combining the second theory, which is the general theory of verbal humor shows six knowledge resources that make the analysis more detailed. The six knowledge resources also reduce the possibility of misunderstanding. Through those six knowledge resources, it is found that each humor language uses different types of logical mechanisms. The most dominant logical mechanism used in the jokes is reversal. Then, the narrative strategy in humor language also uses different types, which are dialogue, question and answer, and short narrative.

Moreover, the humor language needs factors and strategies to tell jokes to others. The situation which happens when the comedian tells their jokes is also critical to support the jokes.

In conclusion, the most dominant type is contradiction trigger with four data, followed by situational ambiguity and regular ambiguity with two data for each type, and the last is figurative ambiguity and dichotomizing trigger with one data for each type. For the specific characteristics of humor language, the variety of logical mechanism, situation, script opposition, narrative strategy, language, and target are used by Hasan in *The Best of Hasan Minhaj – Muslim Ban, Women's Soccer & Canada* to support the jokes.

#### **4.2 Suggestion**

To finalize this research, the result of the types and the specify of humor language are found. The researcher uses two theories to find the research question. Raskin's theory and Attardo's theory. Even though the results are already found, the researcher realizes that this research is not perfect yet and still can be developed. Thus, the researcher appreciates the readers' feedback and recommendation. Furthermore, the researcher advances to analyze the interpretation of humor. Besides, the researcher also suggests that the upcoming researcher analyze the function and effect of verbal humor.

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