# REGISTER AND GENRE ANALYSIS IN MO AMER'S STAND-UP COMEDY ENTITLED *"THE VAGABOND"*: A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS

## A GRADUATING PAPER

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Gaining The Bachelor's Degree in English Literature



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## ΜΟΤΤΟ

"The moment you give up, you start to look for excuses. The moment you think

you can do it, you find a way ... "

(Master Kim, 'Doctor Romantic')

"There's only one way a parrotbill can keep up with a stork. It can be done by looking in the same direction as the stork. Without feeling intimidated by the stork's pace and going at its own pace. It may take some time, but they'll eventually arrive at the same place. It won't lose direction or tear its legs apart."

(Dr. Bae Moon-Jeong, 'Doctor Romantic')

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this graduating paper to:

My beloved parents, as my source of strength and happiness,

Mr. Parman and Mrs. Margiyem

My whole family, and

All of my friend

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kami menyatakan bahwa skripsi tersebut sudah dapat diajukan pada sidang Munaqosyah untuk memenuhi salah satu syarat memperoleh gelar Sarjana Sastra Inggris.

Atas perhatiannya, kami mengucapkan terima kasih.

Wassalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb Yogyakarta, 17/05/2024 Pembimting STATE ISLAMIC UNVERT Dr. Arif Budiman, SS., M.A NIP: 19780309 201101 1 003



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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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Lastly, the researcher believes this graduating paper is still imperfect. Maybe, there are some mistakes found, therefore suggestions are needed to make this graduating paper better. The researcher hopes that this graduating paper can be useful for readers.

GYAK

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## REGISTER AND GENRE ANALYSIS IN MO AMER'S STAND-UP COMEDY ENTITLED "THE VAGABOND": A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS Khofifah Dwi Astuti

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#### ABSTRACT

Stand-up comedy is a medium that someone can use to express thoughts, experiences, and ideas in society in a humorous way. So, it isn't easy to understand the meaning of the utterance conveyed by the comic without looking at the background of the event, both in the context of the situation and culture. Therefore, this research aims to determine the register and genre of the utterance trascription of Mo Amer's Stand-up Comedy entitled "The Vagabond" using the Systemic Functional Linguistics approach theory from M. A. K Halliday. This research focuses on realizing three metafunctions in this utterance to determine the use of register and genre. The analysis includes three aspects of context: field, tenor, and mode. In analyzing data, the researcher used the descriptive qualitative method. In this research, 473 data were found. From the ideational metafunction analysis that realizes field, which involves the transitivity process, the result is that the process most used in speech is the material process. Then, the interpersonal metafunction that realizes the tenor shows that the relationship between the comic and the audience is unequal. Last, in the textual metafunction that realizes mode, the theme most often found in speech is the unmarked topical theme. It means that the ideas in a stand-up comedy speech are conveyed through a series of clauses that focus on the comic himself. Furthermore, the genre in Mo Amer's stand-up comedy utterance is a type of recount genre because the material presented contains ideas about events that began to occur decades ago.

Keywords: Systemic Functional Linguistics, Register, Genre, Stand-up Comedy

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#### ABSTRAK

Stand-up Comedy merupakan salah satu media yang dapat digunakan seseorang untuk menyampaikan pemikiran, pengalaman, dan gagasan terhadap isu yang terjadi di masyarakat dengan cara yang jenaka. Oleh sebab itu, tidak mudah untuk memahami makna dari tuturan yang disampaikan seorang komika tanpa melihat latar belakang peristiwa, baik dalam konteks situasi maupun budaya. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui register dan genre di dalam naskah tuturan Stand-up Comedy karya Mo Amer yang berjudul "The Vagabond" menggunakan teori pendekatan Systemic Functional Linguistics dari M. A. K Halliday. Pemelitian ini berfokus pada bagaimana tiga metafungsi diwujudkan di dalam tuturan untuk menentukan penggunaan register dan genrenya. Dalam menganalisis data, peneliti menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Dalam penelitian ini ditemukan 473 data. Dari data yang ditemukan, analisis metafungsi ideasional yang merealisasikan mode melibatkan proses transitivitas. Hasilnya menunjukan bahwa proses yang paling banyak digunakan di dalam tuturan adalah proses material. Kemudian, metafungsi interpersonal yang mewujudkan tenor menunjukan bahwa hubungan antara komika dan penonton tidak setara atau timpang. Terakhir, metafungsi tekstual yang mewujudkan mode menunjukkan bahwa tema yang paling banyak digunakan di dalam tuturan adalah tema topikal tak bermarkah. Artinya bahwa gagasan di dalam ujaran stand-up comdy disampaikan melalui serangkaian klausa yang berfokus pada diri komika sendiri. Selanjutnya, tuturan stand-up comedy Mo Amer menunjukan masuk ke dalam jenis genre recount karena materi yang disajikan mengandung gagasan tentang peristiwa yang telah mulai terjadi sejak puluhan tahun yang lalu.

Keywords: Linguistik Sistemik Fungsional, Register, Genre, Stand-up Comedy

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#### **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. Background of Study**

Language is a means used by humans to communicate with each other and interact with living things. Language comes in the form of texts, both written and spoken. In life, humans cannot be separated from a language. However, many variations of language spread worldwide come from various societies. Language variations exist because of the different backgrounds of society, such as race, religion, ethnicity, and culture (Chaer, 2007, p. 61). A language is used for various needs. Humans can use it to express their thoughts and ideas, persuade, influence, and be able to provide information to others about something.

One way to express thoughts using language is through stand-up comedy. Stand-up comedy is a performance in which a comic tells stories or jokes in front of a live audience. Stand-up comedy is where comic can be outspoken and express their strong opinions and comments. The comics usually write and then present material about life, experiences, or social criticism they have seen or experienced entertainingly. They use humor and facts to discuss social issues and societal taboos. Through their performances, comics want to be a medium to influence the audiences to contemplate and take action toward a particular cause or issue in society. Therefore, the audience must be able to understand the meaning of the words conveyed by comics in their performance. It is because comics have a way of communicating that involves humor. Comics usually use satirical sketches in their humorous language to express their thoughts. Ross (1998, p. 2) stated that humor is created in stand-up comedy through taboo words or satire in the language. Hence, understanding and interpreting the meaning of utterances in stand-up comedy is difficult because most of the meaning is implied. The difficulty of implying meaning can bring ambiguity and misunderstanding to the audience, which creates laughter. Thus, the audience should look at and relate the importance of the utterances to the context.

The audience's ability to understand the context is necessary in determining the meaning of the text. Context can provide meaning and clarity to a message that the speaker is trying to convey. Besides that, context can also create a relationship between the speaker and the receiver. Moreover, according to Wiratno (2021, p. 46), context plays an essential role in determining the meaning of a text in various language variations. The variation in language based on how it is used is called a register. In this case, the context is the bridge between the text and the situation in which the text actually occurs (Halliday & Hasan, 1989, p. 5).

In line with this statement, Halliday (1978, p. 10) sees language as 'social semiotics," in which language is considered a means by which people interact and express social relationships. Language is a social institution in the form of social practice. On the other hand, context of situation has a role in explaining the content of the conversation. Some elements contribute to language use, such as the primary social activities that take place, the people involved in them, and the role and function of the text in these social activities.

From the explanation above, conveying a sentence without looking at the context of situation can give the audience a different meaning. However, to interpret a text, the context of situation still needs to be improved. According to Wiratno (2021, p. 46), two kinds of context accompany a text: context of situation and context of culture. In line with Wiratno, Halliday & Hasan (1989, p. 7) also state that the context of situation and culture is needed to understand a text. Context of culture is necessary because it is the context behind the existence of a text.

To provide a more profound knowledge of these two contexts, Halliday uses context of situation and context of culture to analyze the situational and background aspects of the text of the register and genre. In tune, Martin (1992, p. 496) state that register, genre, and ideology form social context. The analysis that will be carried out is part of the Systemic Functional Linguistics approach, which is about the function of the language based on how it is used. Moreover, Halliday, cited in Wiratno (2021, p. 7), stated that language in a text is always appropriate to the context of its use. In Systemic Functional Linguistics, it is indicated that language does not only consider elements of groups of words or clauses but also grammatical elements because language is arbitrary, not natural (Wiratno, 2021, p. 5). In Systemic Functional Linguistics, the register can be determined through the context of situation, which is built on three features: field, tenor, and mode (Halliday & Hasan, 1989, p. 12). The field, tenor, and mode can be associated with the realization of meaning through three metafunctions, which are ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The field refers to the background of the text that is realized and expressed as ideational meaning, which is examined by analyzing the transitivity pattern of the grammar. Then, tenor refers to the relationship between the participants that is realized as interpersonal meaning, which can be examined by analyzing the mood patterns. The last one, mode, refers to the role of language used in situations and the proper way of presenting meaning. It is realized as textual meaning, which can be examined by analyzing the theme patterns. Applying these three metafunctions will create a link between the text and the context of situation.

On the other hand, the genre relates to the cultural context, which refers to the background of the existence of a text. Genre can be defined by exploring the structure of the text, which can be used to find out and diagnose the social function of the text (Halliday & Hasan, 1989, p. 108). In addition, the genre is essential because it is about analyzing the whole text to know about the purpose of the text to the audience and social environment.

It is essential to analyze the register and genre in this Stand-up Comedy performance because Mo Amer delivers the social issues and his experience about Muslims, Islamophobia, anxiety, and Palestinian identity by using comedy. He uses many techniques to make information for the audience much more enjoyable. He raps, sings, and uses dialogue to make his performance feel balanced between tragedy and history. The Vagabond is a stand-up comedy about the journey of a comedian of Palestinian descent living in America named Mo Amer. Mohammed Amer tells the story of his life as a refugee struggling to gain citizenship and equal rights in an Islamic minority country.

Therefore, the researcher feels that Mo Amer's Stand-Up Comedy performance is very appealing to discuss because there is a register and genre facet of context that is implied in the text and influences how he delivers the text of his performance. The usage of language variation in his stand-up comedy can create ambiguity and misunderstanding in the utterance's meaning. To overcome this problem, the researcher will use Halliday's theory about register and genre to explain the aspect of the context of the object.

#### **1.2. Research Questions**

By explaining the background of the study above, the researcher formulates research questions:

- 1. How are the three metafunctions applied in Mo Amer's stand-up comedy?
- 2. How is the register applied in Mo Amer's stand-up comedy?
- 3. What is the genre in Mo Amer's Stand-Up Comedy?

#### 1.3. Objectives of Study

The objectives of the study in this research according to the research questions are:

- 1. To explain the three metafunctions applied in Mo Amer's stand-up comedy.
- 2. To find out and analyze the register in Mo Amer's stand-up comedy.
- 3. To find out and analyze the genre in Mo Amer's stand-up comedy.

#### 1.4. Scope of Study

The scope of this study focuses on the analysis of Systemic Functional Linguistics. Furthermore, the study's limitations are needed to avoid expanding the problem. In this study, the analysis focuses on clauses taken from Mo Amer's stand-up comedy performance entitled "The Vagabond," which aired on Netflix.

To intensify the analysis, the limitation of this study is the register and genre employed in the text. The register consists of three features: field, tenor, and mode, along with the three metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal, and textual) that were applied in Mo Amer in his stand-up comedy performance, which addresses the non-Muslim community in the West.

#### 1.5. Significances of Study

This study has two significances, which are theoretical significance and practical significance. In theoretical significance, the results of this study in the form of a thesis can contribute to the field of linguistics, especially in the field of Systemic Functional Linguistics. In other words, the findings of this research are expected to add to and improve previous research, especially regarding register and genre. In addition, the results of this study can also be a reference for anyone who wants to conduct similar research.

Furthermore, in practical significance, this study hopes to benefit other researchers and readers. This study can be helpful for other linguistics researchers, especially those who study the Systemic Functional Linguistics approach, to enrich knowledge regarding register and genre. Meanwhile, it is hoped that this research can provide additional information for readers about the importance of understanding the meaning and aspects of reality used in a language based on the context using register and genre theory in Systemic Functional Linguistics.

# 1.6. Literature Review AMIC UNIVERSITY

The researcher found several kinds of research that had similar and different topics and discussions to this research. The previous research is one of the references for the researcher in conducting this research to enrich the theory and discussion.

The first research was written by Norvika Pasaribu (2017). In the research, the researcher analyzes the register in a short story. This research aims to discover the register, which is field, tenor, and mode, in the short

story "A Touch of Realism." This research uses qualitative descriptive methods. Furthermore, the research results show that the field in the short story is Christmas Party. Then, the tenor in the short story shows an equal relationship between Lady Blanche Boveal and the others. Lastly, the mode or role of language is spoken language, which contains high and complex lexical content. There are some similarities and differences in this research. One of the similarities in this research is that the researcher used the same theoretical approach, which is the register theory by Halliday in the Systemic Functional Linguistics approach. However, One difference with the current research is that the objects taken are different. In the research, the researcher used a short story as the object and did not discuss the genre applied to the object.

The second research was written by I Dewa Putu Wijana (2016). This research uses a Systemic Functional Linguistics approach to discuss the function of language and the register in stand-up comedy. To conduct the research, the researcher uses qualitative descriptive. The results of this research show that joking activities have a central role in human life because of their various functions, mainly to criticize various social conditions in the society of the speakers. Then, to create non-aggressive and constructive criticism, comedians must build a close relationship with the audience. Lastly, the mode uses an informal language style full of ambiguity, which can easily confuse the audience's perception. There are several similarities and differences in this research with current research. In this research, the researcher used the same theoretical approach and objects as the current research. Meanwhile, the difference is that the researcher in this research needed to analyze the genre of the text and the application of the clause's three metafunctions of Systemic Functional Linguistics.

Third, Samsudin and Sukarismanti (2020) analyze Obama's speech text in terms of the register (context of situation) and genre (context of culture) using the Systemic Functional Linguistics approach. The result of the research showed that the register can be known by determining terms of field, tenor, and mode. Furthermore, the cultural context that refers to the genre is determined in terms of social events that are happening in there or the background of the text. This research has some similarities and differences with the current research. The researcher uses the same register and genre theory in Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics approach. However, the object taken from this research is different. The researcher used a speech text as the object of the research, while the current research will use stand-up comedy.

Fourth, Anisa Khoirun Fauziah's research (2022) analyzes the realization of three metafunctions and register in Zamina Mithani's speech using M.A.K. Halliday's theory, which is Systemic Functional Linguistics. This research used a mixed method. It was found from the analysis of the three metafunctions that ideational involves a transitivity process. The most widely used transitivity process is the material process. The field shows the phenomenon of Islamophobia. Then, interpersonal metafunction, which realizes tenor, shows that the speaker positions himself in the same position as the listener. Last, in the textual metafunction, which realizes mode, it was found that the speech uses many textual themes. It means that the ideas in the speech are in the form of clauses joined by conjunctions. The similarity to the current research is the use of the same theory, namely Systemic Functional Theory by Halliday. Meanwhile, the most obvious difference lies in the research object. The research uses speech as the object research, while the current research will use text in stand-up comedy.

Last, research written by Reza Fahlevi (2015) analyzed the register in Martin Luther King's speech with the three metafunctions that used Systemic Functional Linguistics. In this research, the researcher looks for the register by explaining the three metafunctions in the text: ideational as the field, interpersonal as the tenor, and textual as the mode in the text of Martin Luther King's speech. There are some similarities and differences between this research and the current research. Both describe and explain the three metafunctions applied in the text to determine and analyze the register in the text. The difference between this research and the current research is the objects taken by the researcher. Apart from that, in this research, the discussion only reaches the register of the text.

From the explanation above, previous researchers and this research have several gaps that can produce similarities and differences in the analysis. The gap in the research lies in the taken of objects and the breadth of discussion. It can be seen that other researchers took research objects such as speech and short stories. Meanwhile, this research uses clauses from the transcription of Stand-Up Comedy performances as object material. However, the similarities can be seen in the theory used, where some use Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistic Approach, especially the register theory.

### **1.7.** Theoretical Approach

This research used Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach to register and genre theory. Systemic Functional Linguistics is a theory of language that examines the relationship between language, text, and context (Halliday & Hasan, 1989). Its scope is broad because it explains how language and other semiotic elements are used by humans to create meaning and to understand the relationship between language and society.

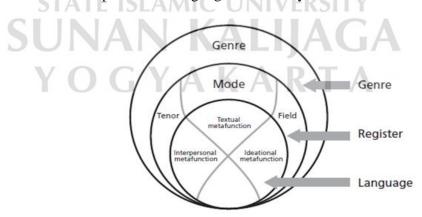


Figure 1. The Context in Relation to Language (Martin, 1997, p. 8)

According to Eggins (1994) and Halliday (1995), language has three metafunctions in Systemic Functional Linguistics. They are ideational, interpersonal, and textual. These three metafunctions are realized in three register elements: field, tenor, and mode as a unified function within the text.

The field reflects ideational metafunction. Ideational metafunction refers to the analysis of the types of processes within the clause, which can be carried out through transitivity analysis. Then, interpersonal metafunction belongs to MOOD and polarity analysis to determine tenor. Meanwhile, mood realized by textual metafunction belongs to themerheme analysis in clauses, which reflects the function and role of language in the text.

Furthermore, there is a relationship between register and genre in analyzing language texts to produce meaning. Genre refers to the whole text. In Systemic Functional Linguistics, the genre refers to the gradual organization of any speech activity determined by the overall purpose of the text and social conventions. Genre is one element of the social contexts of language use because the genre is an inherent element in understanding texts in language.

## 1.8. Methods of Research

#### 1.8.1 Type of Research

This research uses a descriptive qualitative research method to analyze the utterances in Mo Amer's stand-up comedy. According to Creswell, qualitative research methods use interpretation-based descriptions to analyze the data objects. It relies on text and image data (Creswell, 2018, p. 173). Therefore, in this case, the researcher is the main instrument for solving problems because qualitative research emphasizes the analysis, description, and researcher's interpretation of non-numerical data.

Furthermore, the descriptive method is intended to explain and analyze how the three metafunctions, register, and genre are applied in the stand-up comedy performance by Mo Amer. The researcher will interpret the data with a full understanding to achieve more in-depth results by collecting the data, classifying, analyzing, interpreting, and drawing a conclusion.

## 1.8.2 Data Sources

The source of this research comes from clauses and sentences in Mo Amer's stand-up comedy utterance entitled "The Vagabond," which officially premiered on Netflix in 2018 with the link <u>netflix.com/watch/80239503</u>. Stand-up comedy is a narrative and autobiographical that is performed by one comic. The performance tells the story of an Arab-American comedian named Mo Amer, who tells about his life journey as a refugee comic. Mo Amer experienced a lot of Islamophobia and lousy judgment with the name Mohammed on his way to getting citizenship. From his performance, Mo Amer makes people remember that many people still have prejudice and stereotypes towards Muslims. Furthermore, the data was taken from the clauses/sentences of the utterance in the Stand-Up Comedy performance. It is interesting because Mo Amer uses comedic language and many implied meanings in his words as a tool to talk about his experience as a Muslim in the West.

## **1.8.3 Data Collection Technique**

The data collection technique used in this research is the documentation technique. According to Creswell, documentation is a valuable source of information in qualitative research (Creswell, 2012, p. 223). The documentation technique can collect data from journals, books, videos, transcription, etc. Therefore, this technique is applied because the data from this research is in the form of clauses and sentences in stand-up comedy's transcription.

In conducting this research, the data was collected from utterances in Mo Amer's stand-up comedy performances. The data focuses on the clauses and sentences that refer to specific social issues that Mo Amer tries to explain with his humorous language. Collecting data is an activity that must be carried out before carrying out this research because it can make it easier for the writer to complete this thesis. In collecting the data, the researcher took some steps: First, watch Mo Amer's stand-up comedy performance, "The Vagabond." Second, read and collect data in the form of clauses and sentences obtained from Mo Amer's utterances in his performance. Third, identify and group these clauses and sentences for further analysis.

## 1.8.4 Data Analysis Technique

The data in this research is analyzed using the analysis technique by Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 10). In this research, the data was a transcription from a video performance of a stand-up comedy by Mo Amer on Netflix. According to Miles and Huberman, data analysis has three activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

- a. Data reduction involves selecting, focusing, simplifying, and transforming the data in written field notes or transcriptions (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10). In this research, the data will be focused on simplifying. The researcher will simplify by grouping the data from the transcript text into phrases, clauses, and sentences, which will be identified based on three metafunctions. It aims to make the analysis process easier.
- b. Data display refers to an organized, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and actions (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 11). This step simplifies the data into phrases, clauses, and sentences. Then, the researcher will present the research data in the form of tables. The table contains phrases, clauses, and sentences whose three metafunctions have been identified and will be analyzed in the register and genre.

c. Conclusion drawing contains implied or inferred information to make meaning out of what is not clearly stated. (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 11). In the last step, the researcher will conclude the data analyzed in three metafunctions into register and genre using SFL.

#### **1.9.** Paper Organization

This research consists of four chapters. The first chapter is the Introduction, which is divided into several sub-chapters; there is the background of study, research questions, objectives of study, scope of study, significance of study, literature review, theoretical approach, methods of research, and paper organization. The second chapter is about the theoretical framework of this research. Furthermore, the third chapter is about findings and discussions. In this chapter, the researcher will explain the data and analyze the realization of the register and genre in Mo Amer's Stand-Up Comedy. The last chapter is conclusion and suggestion. In this chapter, the researcher will present the main points of the research of the whole analysis.

#### **CHAPTER IV**

#### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

#### 4.1. Conclusion

After analyzing the data, conclusions were obtained for this research. The data findings in this research were analyzed using Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics approach theory, which focuses on the use of register and genre theory. This research data is taken from the clause in Mo Amer's stand-up comedy utterances, which aired on Netflix. He presented material that contained discrimination and prejudice against him in society related to Islamophobia, which has been going on for a long time.

Based on the Systemic Functional Linguistic analysis results, the three metafunctions can be applied to determine three aspects of the register of utterance. First, ideational metafunction realizes the field of speech through the transitivity process. Based on the analysis results of transitivity data, the highest percentage of the process used is the material process. The utterance contains information in the form of actions that describe events and ways to overcome the phenomenon of Islamophobia, which encourages discrimination regarding religious differences in society. Then, interpersonal metafunction realizes the tenor of utterance. In this utterance, the comic has an unequal relationship with the audience. Because the utterance comes from the comic's personal experience, the audience only plays a role as listeners who interpret what the comic conveys. Last, textual metafunction shows the mode of the utterance. It shows how utterance is delivered, spoken or written. The role of language here is to open up the audience's perception with a spontaneous and informal language style. The comic predominantly uses an unmarked topical theme. It means that the comic wants the audience's attention to be directly focused on the main issue of the clause.

Furthermore, based on the genre analysis, the genre of this utterance is the recount genre. The utterance aims to convey new information and change the audience's thinking through the comic journey based on the comic's personal experience in the past of experiencing discrimination and other bad treatment, which the comic retells again in the form of stand-up comedy. In addition, this is a dark comedy where the humor in stand-up comedy appears through variations in language, acts, and various comic improvisations in the performance to roast the audience.

## 4.2. Suggestion

After analyzing this research, the researcher realized that it still needed to improve in providing an in-depth explanation regarding applying the three metafunctions, register, and genre. In this research, a lot of material has yet to be fully explained, especially regarding other aspects of the genre. The researcher will provide suggestions for other researchers who want to conduct similar research. It is hoped that other researchers can explain other aspects of the genre. Several other aspects of the genre can be explained in more detail apart from its social function and generic structure, which are the language features of the recount genre. Understanding the object will become more comprehensive by providing a more in-depth explanation.



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