CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL BASES

This chapter explains about theory of humor in general, humor theory by Ermida, comedy show, discourse analysis, the explanation of Opera Van Java and some previous study in humor.

2.1 Humor in general

From time to time, the development of the theory of humor may be developing by linguists and other researchers. It seems that it is difficult to state what is humor for exact. On my opinion, humor is something that makes us laugh, it can be joke between friends or a play that other people perform which have purpose to make the audience or the viewer laugh. As Chaetau stated (in Attardo, 1994:3) that humor must be the opposite of the seriousness and far from the tragedy.

Disagreeing Chaetau’s statement, sometimes in an event or show, to put some tragedy that absurd in our mind can cause the laughter itself. It can be prove by Socrates’ statement (in Ermida, 2008: 15) “we laugh at the ridicule of our friends, reasoning shows that, by mixing envy with laughter, we also mix pain and pleasure; for we know that envy is a pain of the soul whereas laughter is a pleasure, and both of them coexist on such occasion”. It is clear from Socrates’ statement that when a person suffers in tragedy, one feels it is funny for what other’s tragedy. It mix joyful to see one bear in tragedy, it pleases them to know that one are suffer in pain, the cause of laughter in this case mix hatred and funny at once.
In other hand in Aristotle’s statement (in Attardo, 1994: 18) said that humor is counterfeit of the ugliest things of human, the deformity but not resulting pain or harm, but at the opposite it stimulating laughter by the ugliness and the blemish. As same as Chateau’s statement, Aristotle statement is also not completely true, because sometimes the deformity, ugliness or the blemish that suffered by someone makes them bear in pain, other laugh at one because of it. The result of the pain came from the laughter of other that makes one feel banished and feel suffer because of it. It is support by Plato’ statement (in Attardo, 1994: 18) that stated humor is the combination of human feelings, it including pleasure or even pain. It makes clear that humor also came from someone’s pain, when someone feel endure because of their lackness that other people laugh at, it resulting laughter that mix joyful to know that someone feel terrible because of the lackness and also hatred in it.

As the conclusion, humor is something that triggers laughter. Sometimes the laughter came from knowing that others suffer from tragedy or pain. Tragedy or pain are result from other hatred and laugh at one’s handicap or lackness, they mix laughter and envy at once.

2.2 The concept of humor theory by Ermida

Over centuries, many humor researchers try to define and classify humor. Many of them came up by classified humor into humor theory families, Keith Spiegel (in Ermida, 2008: 14) classified humor theories in eight category division such as; biological, superiority, incongruity, surprise, ambivalence, release,
configuration, and psychoanalytic theory. Whether Morreall classified three families of humor theory:

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<th>Cognitive</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Psychoanalytical</th>
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<td>Incongruity</td>
<td>Hostility</td>
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<td>Contrast</td>
<td>Aggression</td>
<td>Sublimation</td>
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<td>Disparagement</td>
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Attardo (3394:47)

Many of the humor researchers use different term in classifying the theory of humor; for example, Attardo use the commonly usage of humor theory classification such as; incongruity theories (also known as contrast), hostility or disparagement theories (also known as aggression, superiority, triumph, derision), and release theories (also known as sublimation, liberation).

Ermida as one of the humor researchers is use the term disparagement, release and incongruity theory in her theories of humor. The three theories of humor will explain further below and supporting with several researchers’ statements.

2.2.1 Disparagement theory

For a long time, humor can be classified as something that trigger laugh by someone pain, it include funny emotion and mix hatred on it that result one feel superior than the other. As Ermida (2008:24) stated “humor is regarded as an interactive phenomenon that is based on asymmetrical relationship between two or more individuals-and it is the perception of this asymmetry that cause enjoyment in those that consider themselves to be superior”. Based on Ermida’s statement, when people interact to each other, they put themselves dissimilar with
the opposite, the way they put it by making themselves higher than the opposite, this place can put a person in a feeling of joyful to find other are lower than them.

To employ humor by disparagement theory put a person feel superior than other, the way to put one self superior than other is by humiliating, result of the humiliation put the one that humiliate suffer because of it and one as the humiliator feel superior and pleases because of it. As Descartes (Ermida, 2008:32) argued “mockery and scorn are a type of joy mixed with hatred and they are caused by a problem that one is happy to find in another person. One hates this finding but at the same time enjoys that the other person deserves suffering from it”. Based on Descrates’ statement, employing humor using disparagement theory put two people or more in their interaction and makes one feel superior than the other, and to make them feel superior is by humiliating or disparage other. It resulting feels of joyful to find that other endure the pain, but at the same time feel sorry to make one feel suffer from it.

It is clear that disparagement theory is the humor theory which in its implementation puts a two or more people in different status, one as the high level which put his/her self superior than the others. To apply the feeling of superior or disparagement manner, sometimes people express it in comic emotion which linked to negative expression of mockery or scorn. As the example given by Ross:

The conversation is the sketch by Dawn French and Jennifer Saunders ‘Record Choice’, Dawn is a successful woman doctor.
Jennifer : before we go for your Record Choice, let’s see if we can paint a picture of the young Eleanor Wood and maybe recall a few childhood memories for you. You excelled in
school academically and at sport. I love to imagine this picture of you, this Cornish dumpling, probably goalie in the hockey team, cheerfully bouncing around in goal, lifting everyone’s spirits. You were, I should imagine, a happy, jolly, sturdy person.

Dawn : I suppose so.
Jennifer : the class clown, perhaps? So many people with physical disadvantages like yourself often end up compensating. Was it, dare I say, your chunkiness, the fact that you were and are fuller-figured person, that made you more determined to succeed?

Dawn : oh all right, you can describe me as chunky, ample, bubbly, huggable, and so on, as long as I can describe you as slow-witted, uninteresting, obtuse, dull, tedious, mentally stagnant.. because what you’re really wanting to say about me is ‘fat’ and what I’m skirting around about you is ‘stupid’

Ross (2005:52)

From the conversation above, I can say that the object of the humor is implicitly about physical insult, Jennifer starts the humiliation by saying Dawn as ‘Cornish dumpling’ Jennifer also say “… your chunkiness, the fact that you were and are a fuller-figured person that made you more determined to succeed?” Jennifer implicitly mocking about the physic of Dawn by saying Dawn is fuller-figured person. Dawn responds it by humiliating Jennifer by saying “I can describe you as slow-witted, uninteresting, obtuse, dull, tedious, mentally stagnant” the butt of the humor is in Dawn lines that says “… what you’re really wanting to say about me is ‘fat’ and what I’m skirting around about you is ‘stupid’” it is clear both of
them insulting each other’s weakness to feel they are better or superior than the opposite.

2.2.2 Release theory

Ermida (2008:22) stated “Regarding humor as form of escape before the inhibitions that society imposes upon the individual has become a popular line of psychological research”. This principle considers humor as a form of relieving tension from the rule that made by the society which serves boundary line of human expression or feeling. When someone laughs, s/he expresses emotion which sometimes prohibited. By laughing, s/he is temporarily like dreaming, releasing tension, breaking link from reality and loosing herself/himself from the logic. According to Ross (2005:61)” the psychic release theory of humor explains the triggering of laughter by the sense of release from threat being overcome-such as a reduction of fears about death and sex”. Based on Ross’ statement I can say that when someone wants to release tention of taboo things, they intend to do it by employ humor to say taboo things that normally in society is unordinary to say.

I can say that release theory is humor theory that makes a person who tend to releasing mentally pressure which caused from boundary line made by the society, s/he tries to release it by joking or humor, the common taboo in society like sex, death, and religion can be formulating in joking by breaking some rules but still have limitation. It can be formulating by using language explicitly or implicitly whether in general or specific. Such as Ross’ (2005: 62) example “Gwedolyn, a young Welsh woman, returned from her honeymoon. Her mother
asked how it went. ‘Oh, mother, what a penis!’ ‘No, Gwedolyn, you mean “what happiness”’.

The most common taboo area for humor is sex (Ross, 2005:63), from the example above, the reference to ‘penis’ was caused by one character misunderstanding. Gwedolyn breaking the rule to say taboo things by referring ‘happiness’ by the word ‘a penis’ which have similar sound in pronunciation.

2.2.3 Incongruity theory

The concept of humor as the result of the integration from distinctive aspect and cost constructing of the surprise effect, at this perspective, contrasting and surprising is the main aspect in humor. As Ermi da (2008:25) argued that when someone finds out something funny, it is because of the misinterpretation of something that the expectation is totally different with the reality. In every case, laughter is the result from the sudden sense that is incongruent between what are in our thought and the reality. As Beattie (in Ermida, 2008: 28) claimed that incongruity is the basic aspect which triggers laugh, it is happened because of the perception of erratic, irrelevant, absurd aspect or condition.

I can say that incongruity theory is humor theory that put people in situation which makes their expectation equally reverse from the reality, it can cause by the irrelevant perception of a condition. The larger distance between expectation and reality makes it funnier and the greater laugh effect can happen.

Ross gives an example of incongruity theory:

A rabbit goes into a butcher’s shop and asks, ‘have you got any lettuce?’ the butcher says, ‘we don’t sell lettuce here. You need the greengrocer’s across
the road.’ The next day the rabbit comes into the shop and ask for some lettuce again. The butcher tells him, ‘Look, I told you yesterday, we don’t sell lettuce. You need the greengrocer.’ The rabbit comes in the next day and asks the butcher again, ‘have you got any lettuce?’ the butcher goes mad. He says, ‘Look, I’m sick of this. How many times do I have to tell you I don’t sell lettuce? If you come in here again asking for lettuce, I’m going to nail your ears to the floor.’ The next day the rabbit comes in and asks the butcher,’ have you got any nails?’ ‘Nails? No.’ ‘Right,’ the rabbit says, ‘have you got any lettuce?’

Ross (2005:42)

From the example above, it is obvious the situation is irrelevant between what the rabbit asking for and the shop he was visiting, the rabbit makes the butcher mad with the same questions over and over again, and swear will nail the rabbit’s ears to the floor, but the rabbit ignore it and keep coming to ask lettuce, it is getting funny by the conversation between the rabbit and the butcher “you got any nails?’ ‘Nails? No.’ ‘right,’ the rabbit says, ‘have you got any lettuce?’

2.3 Comedy show

Before going further to know what comedy show is, let us know what comedy is. Comedy is a play that have purpose to make the audience laugh. According to Phelps (2011) “Comedy is a humorous deviation from the normal and ordinary in human affairs into the abnormal and extraordinary, provided the consequences of this deviation are ultimately minor.” Based on Phelps’ statement, comedy is a play that makes a contrary from common things to uncommon things by using humorous way, it maybe take some effects but just a small effects because it already add shumor on it.
In performs comedy, it is good when it presented the incongruity between audiences’ expectations and the reality that play by the characters because it is common way to triggers laughter, for example in the story line about superhero, instead of playing as superhero, the line of the characters play as election candidates or else. As Kenny states (Kenny, n.d) “In comedy the appeals are made to the head, not the heart, as audience members the playwright expects us to see the incongruity (an intellectual process) of an action”. So, it means that comedy are made to see the audiences reaction by what they expect or think by their brain, as not same as cinema or drama that made to have purpose to entertains audience by playing with their emotion.

Based on the explanation above, comedy show is a play that include humor on the play of the characters which have purpose to entertain the audience by playing with their minds or thoughts. A good way to play with the audiences’ mind or taught is by present the incongruent whether between the story line and the characters way in performing, or between characters in interaction.

2.4 Discourse Analysis

For all researchers in linguistic study, it is important to know what discourse analysis is. Firstly they have to know what discourse is, Ross (2005: 41) state that “Discourse is used to describe the rules and conventions underlying the use of language in extend stretches of written and spoken text”. Based on Heigham & croker (2009: 244) discourse is a piece of an authentic data from spoken or written language which can explain the relationship between language meaning and structure that related to the communicative purpose and function. On
my opinion, discourse analysis is analysis of language whether in written or spoken language, to analyse discourse it is important to get the data clear and if it is spoken data, the data have to record and transcribe to corpus data.

It is important for language learners to understand and interpret the discourse, they have to know how the language is structured and the meaning of language based on their interpretation. To develop their understanding and interpretation in language, they have to learn to analyze discourse so that is why there is a discourse analysis. Discourse analysis as in Heigham & croker (2009: 244) can be used in many roots of studies; there are ways or approaches to study language usage. In applied linguistic there are several ways in analyzing discourse such as conversation analysis which analyze the systematic way of how is the interaction between people in their conversation. Speech act analysis which has purpose to analyze language usage in its correlation to the response such as compliments, complaints, and excuses. Cohesion analysis is an analysis which focuses on how the language structure in phrase or in sentence. Contextual analysis is an analysis in how language form is different in usage according to its context.

The conclusion is discourse analysis in its practice in applied linguistic is used to analyze authentic data whether in spoken or written data, it focuses mostly in the interaction of speaker and hearer. For the analysis in spoken data the data must be collected and transcribed so that can be presented. The data of discourse analysis is ‘grounded data’ which may allow researcher to have several ways in
interpreting the data in every aspect of language features. The present of the data can be presented in data extraction or examples in spoken or written language.

To collect the data, based on Heigham & Croker (2009: 247) there are steps that can be followed in discourse analysis. First, researchers have to search for topic being analyzed. Second, they get approval from the people who the data they want to collect whether in written or spoken data. In University, researchers are allowed to do research after they present their proposal and get permission to do research from the lecturer.

After all data are collected, researchers are ready to analyze, they can use instruction that Heigham & Croker (2009: 250-251) give to follow. Firstly they have to organize and interpret the data. To do it, they can use corpus as their data organization. To interpret the data, they can make boundary of what will be analyze. The important things in interpreting the data is to know and understand what being done of the participant in the data, and researchers have to search how and why it being done. It is the difficult part because it takes their understanding of the data because sometimes they have to identify the participant in its role and interaction.

After researchers organize and interpret the data, they can present their findings. In presenting the findings, they have to be careful in every aspect from how the data being present, also the amount of the data because it is clear that in discourse analysis there are a lot of data that researchers can collect in their findings.
In qualitative research, it is important to present the *quality* of the research and not about the quantity of the research data. As the researcher, it is important to state the evidence of the data clearly, presenting it in form of example and making an exception for several data. In making an exception for the data, researchers have to ask to their self which data that fits to the object of research or not.

2.5 OVJ (Opera Van Java) at glance

Opera Van Java (OVJ) is the comedy show in Trans7, it takes the idea of "wayang" which played by human. Taking place as the "dalang" is Parto, he have the authority to control the story. The unique concept of this comedy show is only Parto who play as dalang knows the story in every show so the reaction and spontaneous action of the other character will flow naturally. The other unique thing of this comedy show, the character or the wayang can object the story from the dalang if they feel uncomfortable with the story. During the show, Parto accompanied with several "sinden" or singer that will comment on the play and also sing several modern song with the special style of a sinden. Besides Parto, Sule, Andre, Aziz ‘Gagap’ and Nunung who play as permanent character, in this show sometimes they invite guest star.

2.6 Previous Studies

To prove the originality of this research, I present variant research in humor which have been conduct in vary of study field.
Rustono (Universitas Indonesia, 1998) in his study *Implikatur Percakapan Sebagai Penunjang Pengungkapan Humor Di Dalam Wacana Humor Verbal Lisan Berbahasa Indonesia*. His research is to find out and to explain conversational implicature which cause by the violation in cooperative or politeness principle to support humor expression in Indonesian verbal humor. As the references, he uses Grice’s theory of cooperative principle and Leech’s theory of politeness principle.

Chyndy Febrinda Sari (Universitas negeri Surabaya, 3412) with her title *Humor dalam Stand Up Comedy Oleh Raditya Dika*. Her study is to describe kind of speech act used in Stand Up comedy by Raditya Dika and also to see the implication of violation of cooperative and politeness principle in this comedy and to find out kind and function of humor used in Stand Up comedy. As references at her study, she uses Leech’s book *Principle of Pragmatics* and also to see the function of humor she uses Danadjaja books *Humor Mahasiswa* and *Folklor Indonesia: Ilmu Gossip, Dongeng, dan Lain-lain*.

Hana Tripuspita Rini (Universitas Diponegoro, 2010) in her title *Kekerasan dalam Comedy Opera Van Java*, this research is semiotic research which the aim of this research is to find out the naturalization of violation in Opera Van Java and to find out dominant value shows in Opera Van Java, to find out the dominant value she use to find out code using *cultural study* from John Fiske in his book ‘Television culture’ (3392) in this perspective in comedy, code which produce in comedy are reality, representative, and ideology and by this code she wanted to find out how comedy Opera Van Java imply this code into their comedy, the
The finding of Hana’s research is to find out how the production of the comedy show produce the code into reality level such as make-up of the artist, environment, dress, behavior, gesture, expression, representative level such as camera, lightening, editing, sounds, music, ideology level such as individualism, patriarchy, race, and social classification.

The difference between their research and my research, I conduct my research in linguistic approach using the theory of humor by Ermida that define humor in three theory such as disparagement theory, release theory and incongruity theory as my reference to analyze the conversation of the actors and actresses in comedy show Opera Van Java (OVJ). I also analyze it by using discourse analysis because as my purpose to see how the application of humor theory by Ermida in comedy show OVJ, I want to see the application in their conversation using discourse analysis which have branch conversation analysis.

What makes my research different with their research, my research found out the way how the actors and actresses mostly apply incongruity theory of humor because of it is a good way to present humor and also because of the tradition and polite norm of Indonesian people, the application of release theory is deficient in its application.

The similarity of the research is in Hana Tripuspita Rini’s (Universitas Diponegoro, 2010) research, the similarity is both of us use Opera van Java (OVJ) as our subject of research, if Hana’s research to find out naturalization of violence in OVJ by use semiotic study which consider the element in performing humor from the setting until the player. My research only have purpose in linguistic
approach to analyze the language of characters in OVJ, I want to see how they use language to employ humor theory by Ermida in their conversation and interaction between characters.