



**EXPLORING GEORGE CARLIN'S CONSTRUCTION AND FORMS OF
DEATH-THEMED HUMOR SCRIPT IN "IT'S BAD FOR YA" STAND-UP
COMEDY SHOW : A STUDY OF PRAGMATICS**

THESIS

By

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**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITY OF JEMBER**

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A thesis presented to the English Department, Faculty of Humanities, University of Jember, as one of the requirements to obtain the award of Sarjana Sastra degree
in English Study

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DEDICATION

I would sincerely dedicate this thesis to:

1. My mother Nur Aida and my father Rayes Abdullah who have fully supported me to finish this thesis. Thanks for the endless prayer you have given to my whole life.
2. My number one support systems, my siblings, Ahmad Baiquni, Ida Rahmawati, Ahmad Bahar, and Ahmad Busro, who have helped and become friend in discussing anything during my study. Thanks for the support, suggestions, dreams, and prayers that help me so much.
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MOTTO

"Through humor, you can soften some of the worst blows that life delivers. And once you find laughter, no matter how painful your situation might be, you can survive it." - Bill Cosby



DECLARATION

I hereby state that the thesis entitled “Exploring George Carlin’s Construction and Forms of Death-Themed Humor in “*It’s Bad for Ya*” Stand-up Comedy Show: A Pragmatic Study” is an original piece of writing. I certify that this thesis has never been submitted to any other degree or any publications. I certify to the best of my knowledge that source used and any help received in the preparation of this thesis have been acknowledged.

Jember, 4 December 2019

The Writer

Amrina
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Amrina

SUMMARY

Exploring George Carlin's Construction and Forms of Death-themed Humor in "It's Bad for Ya!" Stand-up Comedy Script: A Pragmatic Study; Amrina, 150110101047; 2019; pages 75; English Department, Faculty of Humanities, University of Jember.

This study deals with the exploration of the construction and delivering style of George Carlin's stand-up comedy show entitled "*It's Bad for Ya!*" especially in the death-themed part. There are two theories that are used in this research. They are Grice's cooperative principles (1975) to see how Carlin constructed the humor in his jokes and Berger's rhetorical devices of humor (1997) to know the way he delivered his jokes to the audience that could be accepted and laughed even though it was a taboo thing.

This research was conducted using qualitative method since the data were in the form of utterances and case study as its strategy research because this research was just focus on death-themed script in Carlin's stand-up comedy show. Meanwhile, the data were the humorous utterances which talk about death in the script of "*It's Bad for Ya!*". There were 24 jokes that were obtained by transcribing the utterances from the video that had characteristics of violation of Cooperative Principles.

The result of this research shows that there are four subtopics in Carlin's stand-up comedy show in death-theme. They are things related to death, people's sympathy on death, people's emotional thought on death, and people's belief on death. Carlin dominantly violated the maxim of relation when discussing about the things related to death. The jokes which talked about people's sympathy and emotional thought on death were dominantly constructed by violating the maxim of quality. He tended to use violation of manner when talking about people's belief on death. Subsequently, there have been found 4 forms of 15 rhetorical devices of humor in this research. They are sarcasm, exaggeration, facetiousness, and irony. He totally disagreed with people's perspective on death. He used humor as the media to show his thoughts about taboo especially death. In the first

subtopic, he used facetiousness as the way he delivered something that was related to death. The way people responded or the sympathetic on death were the things that he did not accept. He tended to use exaggeration in this subtopics. He mocked people's belief on death as well as he wanted to say that those thoughts were stupid thing. Furthermore, the emotional part of death which was not logic and very useless for him. He concluded that being too emotional on death can make people think illogically. He used sarcasm as the form of those two subtopics.

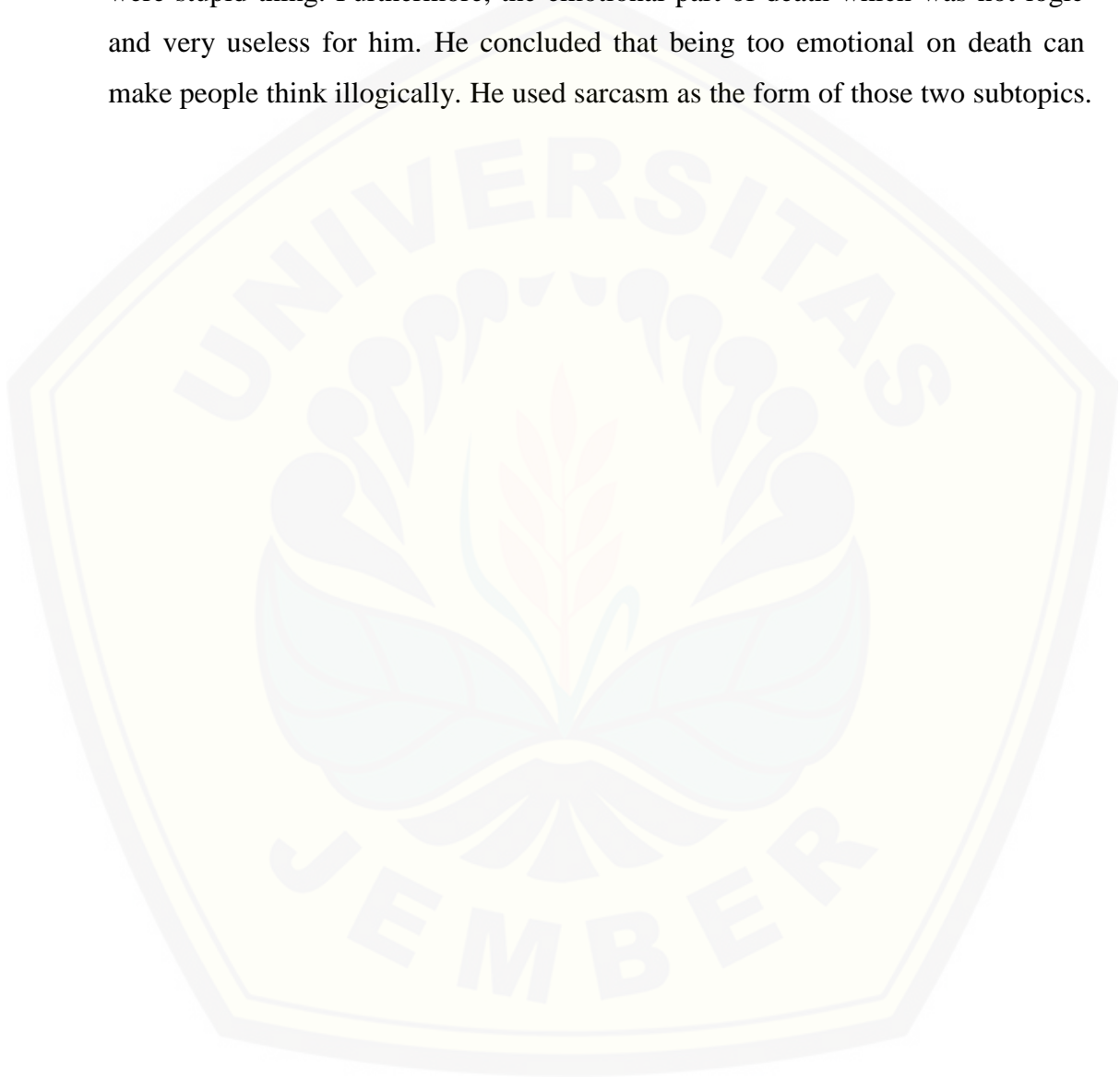
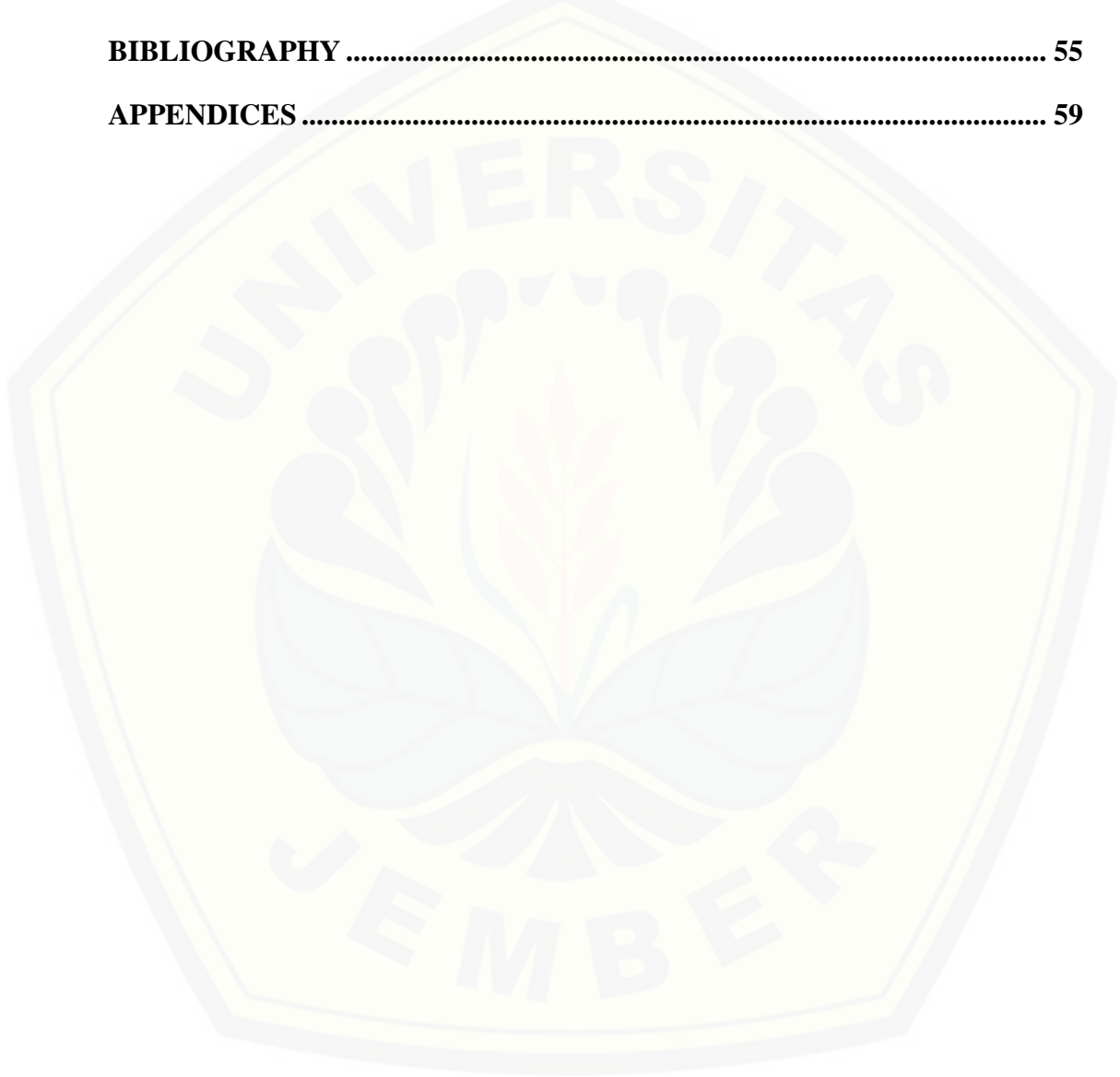


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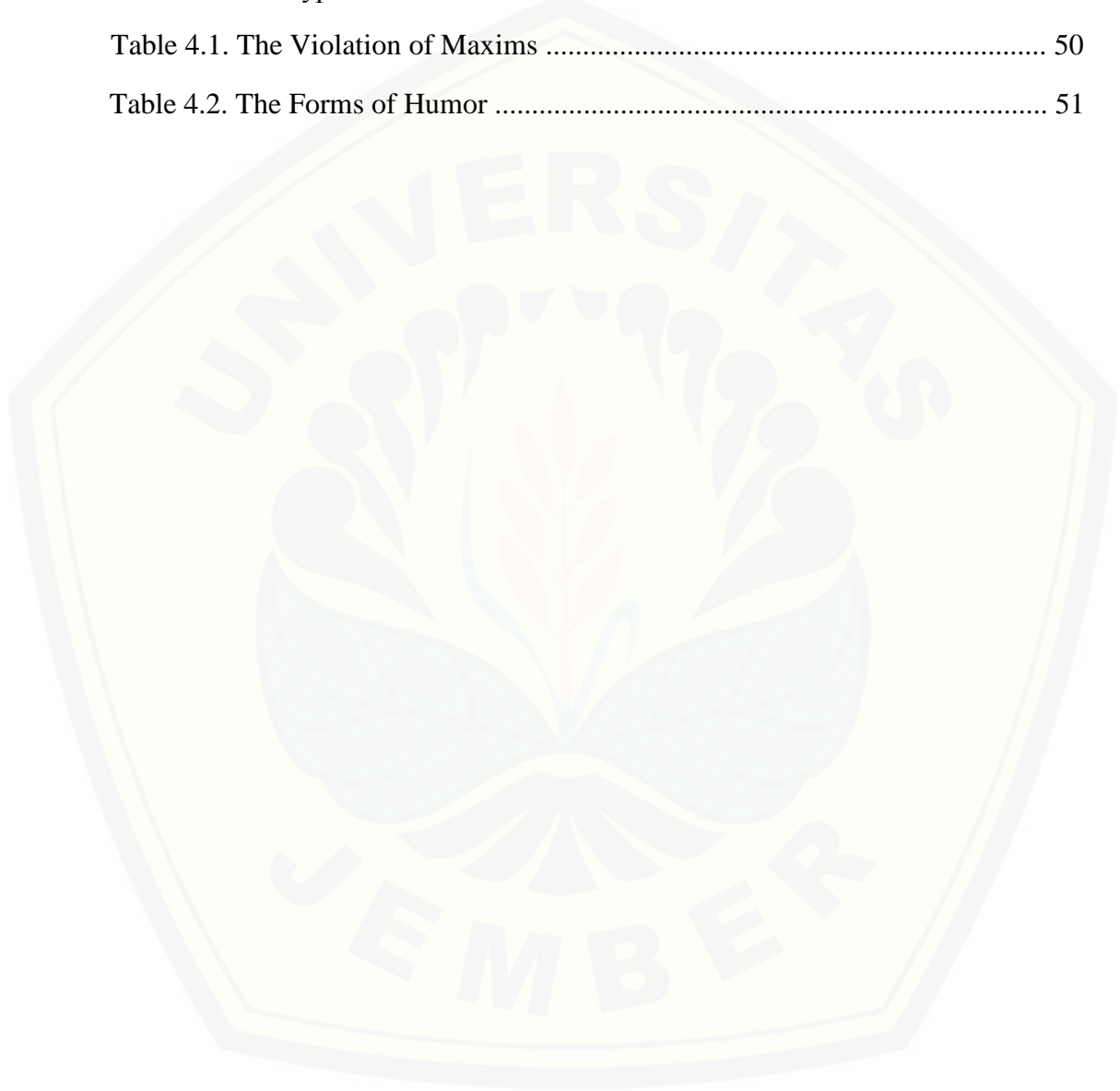
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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Humor is a prevalent phenomenon in our daily life. It becomes one of the important things in communication because it helps us to deliver our intention. Humor also functions as a catalyst to achieve certain purposes; Ziv (1984) states the functions of humor are airing social taboos, social criticism, consolidation of group membership, defense against fear and anxiety, and intellectual play.

Gallows humor or black comedy is known as one of the types of humor. According to Merriam Webster dictionary, gallows humor is humor that makes fun of a life-threatening, disastrous, or terrifying situation. Similarly, Bucaria (2008) defines dark humor as humor which aims at making fun of situations usually regarded as tragic, such as death, sickness, disability, and extreme violence, or of the people involved or subject to them. Conclusively, humor can be the medium to speak something which is unspeakable or taboo such as talking about death.

Most of people are sure that death is considered as a serious business. Durkin (2003) states that Americans, like members of many other societies, attach fearful meanings to death, dying, and the dead. He also mentions in his article that it has frequently been suggested that the United States has become a “death-denying” culture and when the American would refer to these topics, it is normative for them to use euphemisms, such as passed away or expired. Hereby, it is seldom that people make a joke about death. Death is something full of grief, tears, anger, disappointment, and regret. Death is something unspeakable in universal context. However in joking about death, humor can provide relief for our anxieties about death, help us cope with the death of others, and ease the stress that often surrounds grief.

Indonesian culture itself emphasizes that death means we lose everything of ourselves. Therefore, family and people around us are sad with that. However, it is not in line with Mexican cultures. They set aside a specific day each year to

mock death. It purposes to ease their loss. Different cultures may view death in different manners. However, the view that death is fearful and the talk about death being denied is still a prevalent reaction.

Although people see death as a taboo thing, there have been some ways that try to channel the talk about death. Attardo (1994: 332) states that the social goals of humor on the communicative process can be grouped into four classes: social management, decommitment, mediation, and defunctionalization. Hereby, humor is one way that is used to mediate something taboo especially death. In stand-up comedy, some comics try to use humor as the media to tell taboo thing. One of them is George Carlin, he is a stand up comedy who was born in United States. He is outrageously funny but also outrageously controversial. He is simply blatant and raw. He will be always remained as a comedian who was never afraid to challenge his audience through his controversial topic of stand-up comedy. Subsequently, he will be noted for his black comedy and reflections on politics, the English language, psychology, religion, and various taboo subjects.

Going through his videos on Youtube, the researcher comes across this special one entitled "*It's Bad for Ya!*", he channeled his perspective about death. There are several topics that he delivered in this special stand-up comedy show, those are death, religion, bureaucracy, patriotism, overprotected children and big business to the pungent examinations of modern language and the decrepit state of the American culture. This stand-up comedy show had been uploaded in Youtube and got so much attention from the viewers in Youtube up to 5 million. It was a show he had the same year he died and it was his latest performance. In this video, Carlin used humor to share his view of death. He informed us of the phrases and comments linked to the death of people. His jokes about death has successfully made people laugh. It makes the researcher curious about how he constructed and delivered his jokes in public that people will not feel offended or sad in watching his stand-up comedy performance. Therefore, this research aims to explore how George Carlin constructed the humor which uses the topic of death as well as how he delivered the jokes. In this case, more specifically this study is going to investigate the construction of humor and also the rhetorical devices of humor that

he used to deliver the death as a taboo thing. This study is going to be described by the use of Cooperative Principles proposed by Grice (1975). In addition, the way he delivered this joke is going to be specifically addressed by fifteen rhetorical strategies of humor proposed by Berger (1997).

1.2 Research Topic

This research is an investigation that runs under humor study which is specifically addressed to answer how humor is constructed and delivered under the theme of death using violation of cooperative principle proposed by Grice (1975) and the forms of his humor using fifteen types of rhetorical devices in humor: allusion, bombast, definition, exaggeration, facetiousness, insult, infantilism, irony, misunderstanding, over-literalness pun/wordplay, repartee, ridicule, sarcasm, and satire proposed by Berger (1997) to know which styles of language that he used in delivering his jokes in order to make humorous and can be accepted by the audience.

1.3 Research Problems

In this research, Carlin uses the taboo topic that is death in “*It’s Bad for Ya!*” stand-up comedy show. However, the humor was still laughed and accepted by the audience. This triggers question how one can deliver humor specially talk about death which is taboo. That is why this research tries to see the way he constructed and delivered the jokes in “*It’s Bad for Ya!*” stand-up comedy show.

1.4 Research Questions

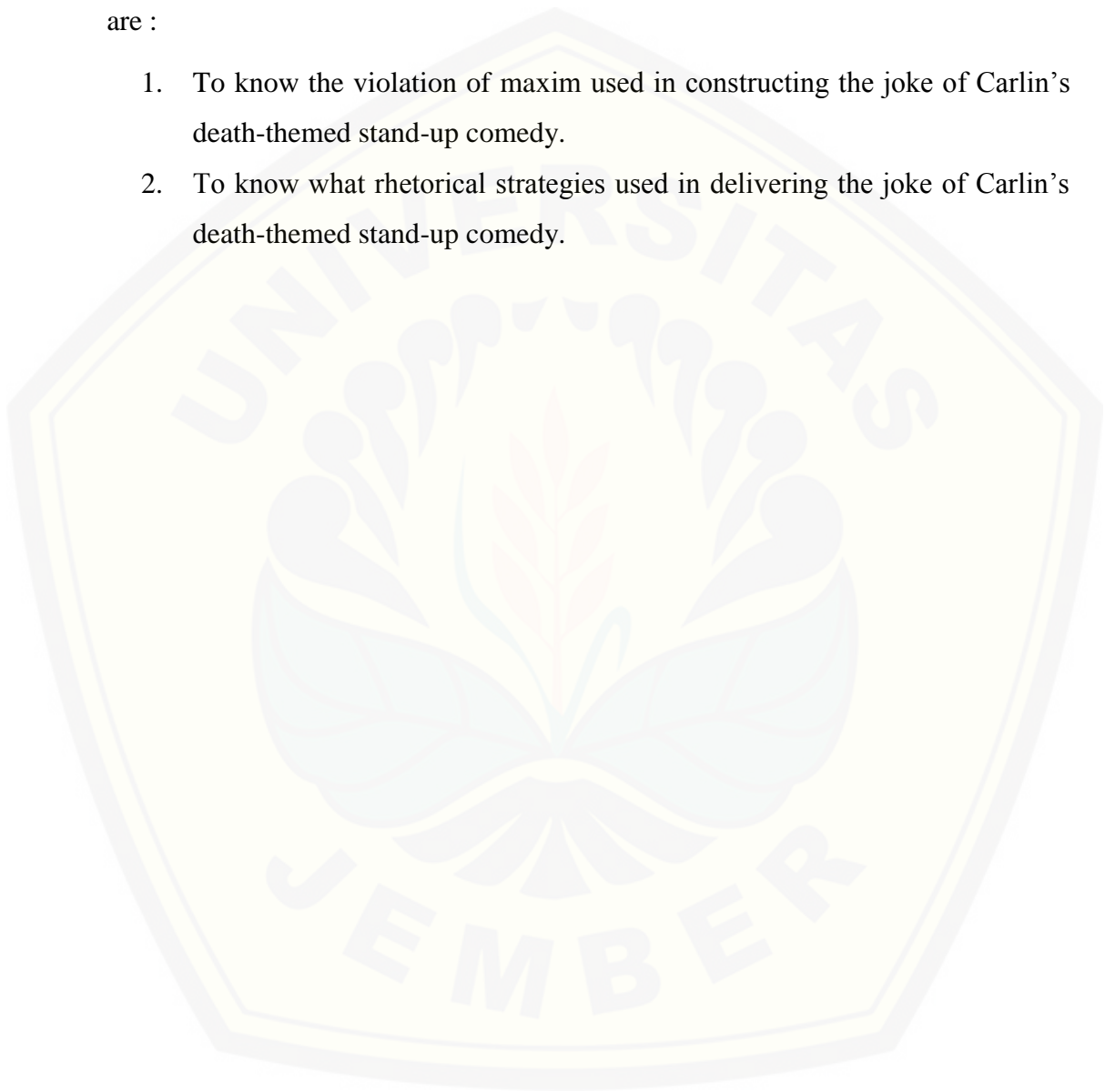
Based on the background which has been discussed above, the researcher conduct two questions to fulfill this research, these are :

1. How is Carlin’s humor about death in “*It’s Bad for Ya!*” constructed through the violation of cooperative principles?
2. What are the rhetorical strategies used in delivering the joke of Carlin’s death-theme stand up comedy?

1.5 Purposes

This study is conducted to know what rhetorical strategies used in delivering death as a taboo thing or unspeakable in public. Therefore, the researcher has two purposes which are in line with the research questions, they are :

1. To know the violation of maxim used in constructing the joke of Carlin's death-themed stand-up comedy.
2. To know what rhetorical strategies used in delivering the joke of Carlin's death-themed stand-up comedy.



CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Previous Studies

Previous research gives contribution along the process of understanding the case and leads the researcher to find the relevant theories. It is important to read and understand the previous study before doing a research.

The first previous research is an article written by Rochmawati (2017) which investigated about cooperative principles and rhetorical strategies in written-joke texts. This article attempted to analyse the violation of cooperative principles, such as violation of quality, quantity, relevance, and manner used Grice's cooperative principles (1975) and rhetorical strategies proposed by Berger (1997). In the selected written-joke texts in *Reader's Digest of Asian Edition* of 2011-2013 editions in the sections 'Laughter', 'All in a day's work', and 'Life like that', as well as from online sources www.ajokeday.com and www.jokes.com. The goals of this research were to describe how the rhetoric and pragmatic strategies which used in the jokes and to know how the pragmatic and rhetorical strategies complement to create humor. The result showed that there was a relationship between the two pragmatic theories i.e. speech act theory, cooperative principles, and Berger's rhetorical techniques.

The second is unpublished thesis by Santoso (2018). It was conducted to discover the violation of cooperative principles by using Grice's theory (1975) and to find what form of language was used in delivering the jokes using theory of Martin (2017) as well as finding the function of the joke itself by Attardo (1994). The result showed that the comic tended to violate the maxim of quality than other maxims. The maxim of quality was highly violated because most of the jokes in the transcript were delivered by giving overstatements. Then, it was found that there were only six forms of humor which was used by him, such as satire, sarcasm, overstatements, self-deprecation, teasing, and clever replies to serious statement. In addition, the functions of humor being used were social management and mediation. Each had 47,61 % from all the jokes delivered. The rest is decommitment, it reached only 04,76 %.

The last previous research is an article which represented an attempt to show that research in pragmatic theory can contribute to our understanding of humour by Kehinde (2016). This article explored how violation of the Gricean maxim was used to create humour in stand-up comedies at Nigeria. The paper was based on the transcription of five episodes of the popular comedy series, *A Night of a Thousand Laughs*. There had been found violation maxims in the forms of exaggerated, understated, incoherent and opposing information did not always show that the characters did not want to continue the conversation. In some cases, violation of maxims does not always point out that the speakers cannot fully participate in a successful communication. Indeed, they tend to achieve and arouse special effects as long as the communication takes place.

From those 3 previous research above, the second and third previous research used violation of cooperative principles. It aimed to know how the humor is constructed in the sentence. This cooperative principles will also be used by the researcher to know the construction of the jokes. Then the first one used Berger's theory of rhetorical strategies of humor (1997). This Berger's theory used in that previous research helps the researcher understand more about Berger's rhetorical strategies of humor. However they used different object as their data. Rochmawati (2017) used Written-English jokes in *Reader's Digest of Asian Edition* of 2011-2013 editions in the sections 'Laughter', 'All in a day's work', and 'Life like that' while Dewi (2014) used TV Series in US.

Although this research is similar with those previous research, this research tries to fill the gap of the previous research in which the investigation of humor using the taboo theme is very rare. This research then tries to contribute in revealing how humor is constructed and delivered when it is dealing with taboo topic. Specifically, the researcher focuses on delivering death as taboo thing through humor in "*It's Bad for Ya!*" stand-up comedy show by George Carlin.

2.2 Theoretical Review

The researcher uses two theories in conducting this research. Those are violation of cooperative principles and rhetorical strategies of humor.

2.2.1 Pragmatics

Pragmatics is defined as the study of language in context (Birner, 2012:2). Hence, pragmatics is concerned with what speaker means in a given context and how context influences what is said. In addition, pragmatics is the study of those relations between language and context that are grammaticalized, or encoded in the structure of a language (Levinson, 1983:9). It can be said that pragmatics is a study for analyzing the relation between the language used and the context of the language. There must be relation between those two elements because language can not be separated with context of the situation where the utterances occur. Speaker then often means more than what she/he says. Hereby, pragmatics deals with how speaker uses language, what speaker means and how hearer interprets the words. Levinson (1983:9) adds pragmatics as the study of the relationship between signs and their users alongside psychological, sociological and biological factors germane to the functioning of these signs. Overall, pragmatics is a field addressing communicative processes or language as deployed by its users and its relation to language form, coupled with the cognitive and socio-cultural study of language use.

2.2.2 Cooperative Principle

In communication, there must be some rules that are obeyed to make the conversation go smoothly. Grice (1975) proposes that participants in a conversation obey a general 'Cooperative Principle' (CP), which is expected to be in force whenever a conversation unfolds: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Grice, 1989:26). Here are four maxims that are proposed by Grice in 1975 :

a. Maxim of Quantity

Make your contribution as informative as it is required for the current purposes of the exchange (Grice,1975:45). You do not need to make your sentences more than what is expected or required by the people you are talking to. For example :

A : Hi, what would you like?

B : *Two hundred grams of the shaved ham thanks.*

In the interaction, speaker B observes maxim of quantity because the speaker gives exactly right amount of information needed.

b. Maxim of Quality

Try to make your contribution one that is true. Do not ever say what you believe to be false (Grice, 1975:45). Then, your contribution also has evidence for the sake of ensuring your statement that you are right in giving information. For example :

A : What is the capital of Venezuela?

B : *Caracas*

(Flowerdew, 2012: 96)

In the interaction, speaker B achieves maxim of quality because the speaker tells the truth that the capital of Venezuela is Caracas.

c. Maxim of Relation

Grice (1975:46) states that the utterance has to be relevant. Make sure that your topic is relevance to the previous topic or the topic which is being discussed in certain situation. It aims to lead your conversation with the opposite runs well. There will be no misunderstanding in your conversation. For example :

A : How do you like your steak cooked?

B : Medium rare, please.

The hearer contributes what is relevant for the purpose of the conversation. The maxim is observed in this conversation.

d. Maxim of Manner

Speakers are intended to avoid obscurity of expression and ambiguity. They must be a straight talker during the conversation. In fact, be brief and be orderly are quite enough to practice by the speakers (Grice, 1989:26-27). For example :

"She dusted the shelves and washed the walls" (Cummings, 2005: 12).

In the example, maxim of manner is observed because the speaker presents the events orderly.

Those four rules may be applied in our daily conversation. However, in some cases, those may also be not obeyed to give implicit meaning in the conversation. People are sometimes failing their conversation deliberately or accidentally. According to Grice (1989: 30), the failure to do so can take in various ways as follows:

1) Opting out

A Speaker opts out of observing a maxim whenever s/he indicates unwillingness to cooperate in the way the maxim requires. It short that the speaker intend to fail the maxim for certain purpose. For example :

"I'm afraid I cannot give you that information" (Cutting, 2002:41).

The example above is uttered by a police officer who refuses to release the name of an accident victim until the relatives have been informed.

2) Violating

The speakers may quietly violate maxims. Therefore, they are liable to mislead (Grice, 1989:30). The speaker are violating the maxims when s/he knows that the opposite does not know the real meaning. Therefore, the speaker tends to mislead them for certain purpose.

Violating a maxim is quite the opposite of flouting a maxim. Violating a maxim rather prevents or at least discourages the hearer from seeking for implicature and rather encourages their taking utterances at face value. For example :

Husband : How much did that new dress cost, darling?

Wife : *Less than the last one*

(Cutting, 2002:40)

In the example, the wife is not sincere in telling the real price of her dress. She instead covers it up by saying that the new dress is cheaper than the last one.

3) Infringing

When speaker infringes a maxim s/he unintentionally deceives or fails to observe the maxim. According to Cutting, infringing occurs when speaker does not master the language well enough or s/he is incapable of speaking clearly. Infringing may come about when speaker has inadequate command of language (Flowerdew, 2012: 100). An example of infringing is shown below.

My job is a decision-making job, and as a result, I make a lot of decisions (Flowerdew, 2012:100).

In the example, the speaker infringes maxims by giving illogical statements. The first statement has already given enough information that his main job is a decision-maker. The next statement has no additional meaning from the previous statement. Infringing occurs because the speaker unintentionally breaks the maxim. Hence, the speaker here might not master the language well that s/he is not able to speak clearly.

4) Flouting

A speaker blatantly fails to observe a maxim, not with any intention of deceiving or misleading, but because the speaker wishes to prompt the hearer to look for a meaning which is different from, or in addition to, the expressed meaning (Thomas 1995: 65). It means that the speaker wants to lead the hearer to another meaning which is implicit and the speaker knows that the hearer will understand what the speaker says. The speaker usually is aware of cooperative principle but she/he tends to flout the maxims to give another meaning to the hearer. It is the hearer responsibility to find the exact and appropriate points of what the speakers mean (Grice, 1989:30). For example :

A : How do I look?

B : *Your shoes are nice*

(Cutting, 2002:37)

In the dialogue, speaker B does not give complete answer. Speaker A asks to speaker B about the whole appearance. However, speaker B only comments on speaker A's shoes. Speaker B can imply that the rest of the part is terrible. In this case, speaker B flouts quantity maxim because of giving little information.

2.2.3 Cooperative Principles and Humor

Humor has become part of our conversation in daily life. In addition, there are some tools to analyze the construction of humor. In this research, cooperative principles take place in producing humor. The speaker can violate the conversation to give humor effect in each her/his conversation. Raskin (1985:271) claims that noticeably high percentage of humorous conversations is established with the violations of one or more of Grice's Maxims of Cooperative Principles. Humor is created through the discrepancy between bona fide and non bona fide. The discrepancy is explained through the violation of cooperative principles.

Bona fide communication is the serious, ordinary, everyday communication we use to tell each other important things (Beard, 2007:52). It is also ruled by CPs. Hereby, we are committed to say truthful and relevant in a communication. However, when one comes to produce humor, which mostly involves violation of maxims, s/he actually is in a non bona fide mode of communication

Humor which presents in media especially stand-up comedy is actually formed as verbal, then the comics deliver the jokes orally. A joke has to surprise and we cannot be surprised unless we are expecting something else. That is what a joke does. The audience surely expect something based on their knowledge and experience. Therefore, many comics try to make their jokes as close as possible with the society and their audience's knowledge. In addition, there will be different jokes when the comic performs in school and company for instance. One joke ideally has set-up and punch line. The set-up causes us to expect something, and then the punch line surprises us. In simple words, the set-up is the first part of a joke that set-up the laugh. This is the beginning of the joke in which you gain

the audience's trust. The punch line is the second part that makes you laugh. A punch line is the climactic conclusion of a story or joke that makes an audience laugh. It is a short line that delivers a humorous reveal. Punch lines are often funny because they are the opposite of what an audience is expecting.

2.2.4 Forms of Humor

Aristotle in Berger (1997:51) defines rhetoric as the study of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion. Leech (1991:15) adds that rhetoric is the art of using language skillfully for persuasion. Rhetoric focuses on a goal-oriented speech situation in which speaker uses language in order to produce a particular effect in the mind of hearer (Leech, 1991:15). In short, rhetoric is the study of using language persuasively.

Rhetorical devices in general are the devices that are designed to render language more convincing (Weaver, 2011:15). Therefore, there has been certain structure that create particular effects in rhetorical devices. Berger (1995:54) has come up with an inventory of 45 typical types of rhetorical devices that have been used to create laughter. He has divided them into four categories: humor involving language, humor involving logic, humor involving identity and humor involving sight or action, which he calls visual humor (Berger 1995:54). Berger claims that these devices have been used to create humor from the earliest comedies to the present day. The devices are presented in the following table.

Table 2.1 Types of Rhetorical Devices in Humor

Language	Logic	Identity	Visual
Allusion	Absurdity	Before/after	Chase
Bombast	Accident	Burlesque	Speed
Definition	Analogy	Caricature	Slapstick
Exaggeration	Catalogue	Eccentricity	
Facetiousness	Coincidence	Embarrassment	
Insult	Comparison	Exposure	
Infantilism	Dissappointment	Grotesque	
Irony	Ignorance	Imitation	
Misunderstanding	Mistakes	Impersonation	
Overliteralness	Repetition	Mimicry	
Pun/wordplay	Reversal	Parody	
Repartee	Rigidity	Scale	
Ridicule	Theme/variation	Stereotypes	
Sarcasm		Unmasking	
Satire			

(Berger, 1997:4)

This research focused on the humor involving language. Hence, the researcher will explain the types of rhetorical devices. There are fifteen types of rhetorical devices in humor: allusion, bombast, definition, exaggeration, facetiousness, insult, infantilism, irony, misunderstanding, over-literalness, pun/wordplay, repartee, ridicule, sarcasm, and satire.

a) Allusion

Allusion refers to some embarrassing well-known event (Berger, 1995: 57). In short, just the mention of a person's name is enough to provoke laughter (Berger, 1997: 21). Hylen adds that allusion is a device of a text, specific means of establishing relations with other texts (2005: 50). Thus, allusion is aimed to remind the hearer about well-known person or event in others text. After that, the speaker invites the hearer to see the current situation in this additional information. For example :

If you take his parking place, you can expect World War II all over again (Harris, 2013)

In the example, the utterance shows allusion because he relates the situation to another moment that had happen and well-known. The taker would probably get serious trouble by referring to the description that the trouble might be like World War II.

b) Bombast

Bombast is an inflated language (Rishel, 2002: 286). In addition, Adamson (2001: 43) defines bombast as a hyper-inflation of language and a mismatch between word and action. In short, the utterances are simple on meaning but expressed in massive words. For example :

Garage Owner : Diagnose it as an absence of flatulence of the perimeter caused by the penetration of a foreign object resulting in the dissipation of the compressed athmosperic contents and charge him accordingly (Berger, 1998:25).

In this case, a doctor is coming to that garage to complain about his flat tire to the owner. The owner then elaborates the reason why the tire can be flat by inflating the elaboration. After that, the owner uses medical language and make the utterances more complicated to provoke laughter. The owner uses bombast form of language since his utterances are simple on meaning but expressed in massive words.

c) Definition

According to Berger (1998:30) in his book *Anatomy of Humor*, the humorous definition is a kind of a joke on the hearer who, for a moment, finds something light when s/he expects something serious or heavy. An example of definition is shown below.

A bore is someone who talks when you want him to listen (Berger, 1998:30).

In that example, the actual meaning is not a bore, it has been manipulated to provoke a humor. As someone does not stop talking when he is expected to listen.

d) Exaggeration

Exaggeration is enhancing reality and blowing things up far beyond the reality of the situation (Berger, 1997: 20). Helitzer adds that exaggeration can work by either overstatement (hyperbole) or understatement (2005: 63). for example :

I used to have an open mind but my brains kept falling out (Morrison, 2012:124).

Overstatement is shown in the example above. Brains kept falling out reflects the enhancement of speaker's brain. The speaker is used to be smart, but now he is getting stupid.

e) Facetiousness

Facetiousness is making light of something serious (Berger, 1995: 57). It usually means the opposite of the language spoken. In addition, facetiousness is called joking or teasing. The hearer sometimes cannot determine whether speaker is serious or not (Edwards, 2013: 81). For example :

Man : When we get married we decided that we would divide up spheres of responsibility. I make the big decisions and my wife makes the little ones. I decide when we go to war, raise taxes, and how much to spend for foreign aid. My wife decides everything else (Berger, 1998: 35).

This about husband and wife. Those utterances are spoken by the husband. They have married for so long, people ask why the relationship between them is still very good. This serious problem is answered in opposite way by the husband.

f) Insult

Berger (1997: 26) states that a humorous insult is a direct use of verbal aggression to degrade a person or some other object for comic effect. For example :

Joyce : You are an over-excited little man, with a need for self expression far beyond the scope of your natural gifts. This is not discreditable. Neither does it make you an artist (Berger, 1997: 30).

It considers as insult because of the utterance over-excited little man. Here, Joyce changes the man's name to particular characters. Hence, the insult is directed at people.

g) Infantilism

Infantilism involves an adult character using the language of a baby, playing around with words, and uttering nonsense terms (Berger, 1997:28). For example :

Carr : It is the duty of the artist to beautify existence

Tzarra : (articulately) dada dada dada dada dada dada dada dada

Carr : (slight pause) Oh, what nonsense you talk!

Tzarra : It may be nonsense, but at least it's not clever nonsense. Cleverness has been exploded, along with so much else, by the war.

(Berger, 1997: 28)

In the example above, Tzarra employs infantilism by uttering infant sounds since he uses repetition and pattern "dada" which are similar to the language of infant.

h) Irony

Irony involves saying one thing but meaning the opposite (Berger, 1997: 30). Additionally, Leech points out that irony is being offensive in a friendly way (2002: 38). In short, irony is using language to imply the opposite meaning of the literal meaning. For example:

A : With friends like him, who needs enemies? (Leech, 1991: 142).

This utterance shows irony because he says in opposite way. The word friends is presented positive, whereas he actually does not like. At the end, the word friends actually means enemy.

i) Misunderstanding

Misunderstanding is an error in comprehending something that has been said or written (Berger, 1995: 58). Misunderstanding is usually used to create humor whenever speaker tries to convey the message but hearer fails to understand the literal meaning. For example :

Mother : Wow, you are not wearing that outfit, Honey, do you have anything to say to your daughter?

Father : Sorry? Oh yeah, that looks really cute sweetheart!

Her mother complains about her mini skirt, but her father misunderstand to her mother's intention. Her father actually should give advice to his daughter.

j) Over-literality

Over-literality involves hearer who takes everything literally. It is lack of imagination, or does not take circumstances into account (Berger, 1997: 32). for example :

Visitor : Have you anything in the shape of automobile tires?

Seller : Yep, life preserves, invalid cushions, funeral wreaths, doughnut.

(Clode, 2008)

The conversation above tells a visitor who will buy automobile tires and asked about the thing. The seller answers the question over literally by mentioning things that have the same shape as tires.

k) Pun/wordplay

According to Berger (1997:38), pun/wordplay involves the clever use of language to amuse and entertain. Pun/wordplay is a joke made from word play. It can be defined as words that sound the same but have dual meaning (Fandel,2005:46). In short, the speaker try to manipulate the meaning to create joke. For example :

A : Why don't Stevie Wonder and Ray Charles get on with each other?

B : Because they can't see eye to eye.

The utterances of eye to eye have dual meaning: to agree on something and to have the ability to see. The speaker used that utterances to create a joke.

l) Repartee

Repartee has been defined as saying something as quickly as flash (Safian, 2000: 13). Thus, repartee is a quick and witty retort in responding to slight or put down remark. For example :

Lady Astor : Mr, if you were my husband, I'd put poison in your tea.

Chruchill : Madam, if I were your husband, I'd drink it.

(Conserva, 1995:50)

The conversation above tells about Lady Astor and Chruchill. She puts down Chruchill by saying that she will give poison to him. However, Chruchill can retort her by saying that he would drink the poison if he were her husband. Chruchill employs repartee because he responds to Lady Astor's caustic remark in a witty way.

m)Ridicule

Ridicule is making fun at someone or something (Berger,1997:42). For example :

You should use hat each time you go out from your house.

The utterances above show ridicule. The utterances are intended to make fun of someone's physical appearance. She should use hat because her hair is really frizzy.

n) Sarcasm

Sarcasm refers to the language that is bitter and cutting (Berger: 1997: 43). Cutting (2002:38) also adds that sarcasm is a form of irony that is intended to hurt. For example:

You must be an experiment in Artificial Stupidity (Dyner, 2009).

The speaker blatantly uses that utterances to hurt the hearer. He intends to hurt the hearer by saying that the hearer is an experiment in Artificial Stupidity. An experiment is a sarcastic comment of 'victim'. Meanwhile, Artificial Stupidity is an offensive way to say "stupid".

o) Satire

Satire can also be defined as mocking stupidity of certain society (Berger, 1997: 44). Satire involves the beliefs which is held by the culture and presents them for criticism. The criticism provides social commentary and questions toward current cultural traditions (Rybacki: 319-320). For example:

Jack : You don't think there is any chance of Gwendolen becoming like her mother in about a hundred and fifty years, do you?
 Algernon : All women become like their mothers. That is their tragedy no man does. That is his.

(Berger, 1997: 46)

The example above is taken from a popular play *The Importance of Being Ernest* by Oscar Wilde. The setting takes place in Victorian era. She generally criticizes Victorian society. She says that many women will become like their mothers. In Victorian era, when women look for men, they tend to consider wealthy class as the first criteria. The class matter has been derived from their mothers. Thus, Algernon's utterances are to satirize the convention of Victorian women.

Those are fifteen types of rhetorical devices used in humor which can be used to analyze and classify the types of humor in any text whether in the form of a play, a cartoon, or situation comedy (Berger, 1995:55).

From theoretical background, humor can be analyzed from two points of view: construction and rhetoric. Structurally, humor is seen from violating of Cooperative Principle. Rhetorically, humor is assumed to use Rhetorical Devices to create humorous effect. Thus, the viewpoints can be combined to analyze certain text in order to see how humor is constructed and delivering. The conducted study will analyze humorous text which is delivered by George Carlin in the script of "*It's Bad for ya!*" Stand-up Comedy Show.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Type of Research

Since this research is focused on the jokes delivered by Carlin, this research is conducted by using qualitative approach to describe the data. Vanderstoep and Johnston (2008: 167) states that the purpose of qualitative research is more descriptive rather than predictive. The goal is to know how death as a something taboo can be constructed and accepted by people and makes them laugh.

Hence, qualitative research elaborates the data by using description rather than numbers because meanings are more essential. Moleong (2001: 4-8) states that qualitative research is conducted according to natural background. Therefore, the research is according to natural settings. The researcher does not influence or interfere the data but the researcher has a role as tools that describe or interpret the data. The phenomenon which is being described is the construction of the humor and the rhetoric of the humor.

3.2 Research Strategy

This research strategy used in this research is case study as this research investigates the phenomenon of using language related to the theme of death in Carlin's stand-up comedy show. As stated by Descombe (2007:35), case study focuses on one certain phenomenon in order to provide an in-dept account of events, relationship, experiences, or processes occurring in a particular setting. This research strategy helps the researcher to get the closest analysis of how Carlin constructed the humor as well as how he delivered.

3.3 Data Collection

Bungin (2007: 28) mentions that qualitative data are in the forms of sentences, utterances, or even short stories. In addition, the data in this research are collected from written documents. Denscombe (2007: 219), documents, as a form of data, can be obtained via the Internet. In this research, the data are collected from the stand-up's script, obtained from an online site. The data are the

humorous utterances by George Carlin which talks about death in the script of “*It’s Bad For Ya!*”. The data was taken from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5m2fmLdyDo>. It is the video which was uploaded at 5 of July 2008, 4 months after the show. The video which has 9 minutes and 57 seconds has got much attention from people. It has been viewed by 5 million people on youtube.

3.4 Data Processing

The data are processed by classifying the utterances that contain violation based on the types of the maxim violated. All of the data are full of talking about death, these are 24 jokes. In addition, the data will also be classified and described based on 15 rhetorical devices of humor.

3.5. Data Analysis

The data are analyzed based on theory of Grice’s Cooperative Principles (1975), Berger’s Rhetorical Devices of humor (1997). Some steps to do the data analysis :

1. Finding out the setup and punchline from the utterances that violate cooperative principles.
2. Classifying punchline that violates cooperative principles into 4 maxims and describing the humor’s construction based on the types of the maxim violated.
3. Finding out the form of humor in delivering because of the violation of cooperative principles and describing based on Berger’s rhetorical devices of humor.
4. Drawing the conclusion through all the analyses conducted.

The following example can help in understanding the data analysis

Data 05

Now speaking on dead people, there are things we say when someone dies. Most of us say, a lot of us do, things we say that no one ever questions. They just kinda go unexamined. Giving a couple of examples. After someone dies, the following conversation is bound to take place, probably more than once. Two guys meet on the street.

Hey, did you hear? Phil Davis died.

Phil Davis, I just saw him yesterday (audience laughing).

Yeah. Didn't help (audience laughing). He died anyway (audience laughing).

This joke is set of conversation that commonly happens when there is someone dies. When one is passing information about the death of someone, the opposite usually gives sympathy to the person they refer to, that is the bona fide scenario in the society. However, Carlin's reply at the punch line "*Yeah. Didn't help. He died anyway*". It is a non bona fide answer. Someone should show sympathy in this condition. However, Carlin was violating the maxim of relation. He should have said something more sympathetic, for instance "*really? that is so bad*", but his answer was irrelevant by saying the fact that he saw him did not make any difference. It was different with what was expected by audience, so that could create laughter within the audience. That violating relation was intentionally used to arise laughter among audience.

The rhetorical strategies that was used to deliver this joke was sarcasm. Sarcasm referers to the language that is bitter and cutting (Berger: 1997:43). Answering "*Yeah. Didn't help. He died anyway*" means that it was a mockery. Carlin laughed at someone who was sympathetic. He thought that sympathy could not help someone who already died. That sympathy could not make the condition better and Davis would not be alive after he gave that answer. That sympathy was stupid thing for him. He indirectly said that sympathy was a stupid

thing and this made people realise of what they usually do and they are leaving at their own stupidity. Therefore, that could rise laughter among audience.



CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

This last chapter contains the overall conclusion of the data analysis which have been done in the previous chapters. This research is the exploration of the construction and the way the jokes are delivered by George Carlin in his stand-up comedy show related to the theme of death. It is analyzed using Grice's cooperative principles (1975) to know the construction and Berger's rhetorical devices of humor (1997) to see his style in delivering the jokes. This research can be concluded as follows.

There are four subtopics that the researcher found in this research. They are things related to death, people's sympathy on death, people's emotional thought on death, and people's belief on death. From those subtopics, the researcher found the construction of the jokes and their deliveries. Carlin dominantly violated maxim of relation when discussing about things related to death. Those happened because the jokes contained some irrelevant statement to the set-up which he had built. The jokes which talked about people's sympathy and emotional thought on death were dominantly constructed by violating the maxim of quality because his statements were lack of evidence. In some parts, he was too personal that it looked like he forced his version of truth about the way he saw death. The last subtopic which talked about people's belief on death were constructed dominantly used maxim violation of manner. He was being obscure and not being brief in telling the jokes.

The second research question is exploring the ways he delivered this taboo theme so that they could be laughed by people. The ways he delivered his jokes only took 4 forms of 15 Berger's rhetorical devices of humor. Those were sarcasm, exaggeration, facetiousness, and irony. Carlin tended to use facetiousness as the form of his jokes delivering in the first subtopic. He could make the fearful thought about death seems casual. Then, when Calin told about people's sympathy on death, he dominantly used exaggeration. He used exaggeration to blow the situation up far beyond the reality. The third and the fourth subtopic which discussed about people's emotional thought and people's

belief on death were delivering in sarcastic way. He mocked people's emotional thought and belief on death as he thought that all the things related to these subtopics were not logic, thus, those were foolish thing.



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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. George Carlin's Stand-up Comedy Show Entitled "It's Bad for Ya!" Script in Death-themed Part.

(1) So, you know what I have been doing going through my address book and **crossing out the dead people** (audience laughing). (2) You do that, that's a lot of fun, isn't? it gives you a good feeling kind of gives you a feeling of power a superiority **to have outlasted another old friend** (audience laughing). (3) But you can't do it too soon. You know, can't do it soon. You can't come running home from the funeral **and get the book out you be looking for the car** (audience laughing). (4) I have a rule of thumb six weeks. If you're friend of mine and you're in my book and you die, I leave you alone for an extra six weeks, six extra weeks in the book on the house, **it's on me** (audience laughing). (5) Now speaking on dead people, there are things we say when someone dies. Most of us say, a lot of us do, things we say that no one ever questions. They just kinda go unexamined. Giving a couple of examples. After someone dies, the following conversation is bound to take place, probably more than once. Two guys meet on the street. "Hey, did you hear? Phil Davis died". "Phil Davis, I just saw him yesterday" (audience laughing). **"Yeah. Didn't help (audience laughing). He died anyway" (audience laughing)**. (6) Apparently, the simple act of your seeing him **did not slow his cancer down** (audience laughing). (7) In fact, it may have made it more aggressive, you know you could be responsible for Phil's death (audience laughing). **How do you live with yourself?** (audience laughing). (8) Here's another thing they say after a death. This is usually said to the surviving spouse. Listen! If there is anything I can do anything at all, please don't hesitate to ask, what are you gonna do? **a resurrection?** (audience laughing). (9) Here's another thing we say to the surviving spouse. I'm keeping him in my thought. Where? Where exactly in your thoughts? **Does he fit in between my ass, hurts in this chair and let's fuck the waitress** (audience laughing). (10) What are your priorities? We use a lot of euphemisms when we talk about death you know, people say things like you know I lost my father , **ah he'll turn up** (audience laughing). (11) There is something else that is said after a death but this one

involves belief which is **where I begin to have big problems** (audience laughing). (12) This one happens after the funeral, after the burial back at the house where the family and friends and the loved ones of the deceased are having some food and drink and enjoying some warm reminiscences of the person who passed away. Sooner or later someone is bound to say the following especially after a few drinks, you know I think he's up there now smiling down at us and I think he's pleased. **Now, first of all, there is no up there. For people to be smiling down from.** (13) It's poetic, it's quaint and I guess for superstitious people, it provides a little comfort but it doesn't exist, but if it did, if it did and if someone did somehow survive death in a non-physical form. I personally think he'd be far too busy with other celestial activities than to be standing around paradise, **smiling down** (audience laughing). (14) On live people, what kind of a fucking eternity is that? and why is it no one ever says **I think he's down there now, smiling up at us** (audience laughing). (15) Apparently, it never occurs to people that their loved ones might be in hell, your parents could be in hell right now, your parents and your father **for sure** (audience laughing). (16) Oh shit, hell is full of dads, full of dads, even the ones who took you to the ball game just for beating the shit out of you once too often and fucking the neighbour lady and fucking the neighbour dog and **who knows maybe even fucking the ups man** (audience laughing). (17) Parents in heaven, parents in hell, excuse me. Kind of gives me a nice feeling you know. Grandparents in hell. Picture that your grandmother in hell, **baking pies without an oven** (audience laughing). (18) and if someone were in hell, I doubt very seriously he'd be smiling. **I think he's down there now screaming up at us and I think he's in severe pain.** (19) Now speaking of dead people in heaven. There are some people who don't only believe that their dead parents in heaven can see them. They honestly believe that their dead parent can help them. You're heard these people I'm sure. They honestly somehow believe that their dead parents in heaven can intercede with God on their behalf to gain favors for the living. I come from a Catholic home. **I heard this shit** (audience laughing). (20) They sit there in the chair with the fucking rosary and then look at you like this you know nice. You know my dad was looking out for me, he was looking out i

don't know how he got me out of that gym but he got me, oh my mom was in the surgery with me, she was in **i could feel her presence in the yeah yeah yeah....** (audience laughing). (21) **Like the people who died have nothing better to do than to run the heavenly branch of the make-a-wish foundation** (audience laughing). (22) Now, if people want to believe this kind of stuff, it's fine with me, let him believe it, I don't. I don't want to disabuse anyone of their despair beliefs, but I have a question about this, **a question that involves logic** (audience laughing). (23) Let's suppose it's true, let's allow the proposition that somehow dead parents in heaven can help their living children, fine. So, we got a family living on earth, father and mother and four kids family is six, good family, nice family doing all the right things, having a good time, making all the right moves and if the parents go away on a weekend trip and get killed in an accidents and the children of course survive. So, now according to this theory, these two people go to heaven and they start helping their four living children, helping them with everything they need, helping them with their science projects with their SAT scores, helping them get a good school and get a nice job and get promotion and raising someone to marry and they all grow up. These four kids now grow up and have children of their own and let's say that all four of these now grown children also die at the same time just four the sake of argument (audience laughing). Let's say there's an explosion at thanksgiving dinner and these four died but their children survived because they were seated at the children's table (audience laughing). So, now according to the theory these four go to heaven and they start helping their living children but what happens to the original two, what happens to the grandparents? Do they just go off duty now? What do they do other subject? Is there a retirement program up there now? **There's some activities for those people shuffleboard, pinball, online poker** (audience laughing). (24) There must be something they can do or do they have to remain on duty indefinitely. Do they they have to keep on, helping their living descendants forever and ever is that what heaven is all about helping the living **when do you get to just lie back on a cloud and take a fucking harp lesson you know what i mean** (audience laughing).