Incongruity and Disparagement Humor in Mr. Bean's Nonverbal Language

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive-qualitative research aimed to descriptively interpret Mr. Bean's nonverbal language cues which fulfilled incongruity and disparagement humor. The method of analyzing the data was content analysis with input-process-output of analytical construct. The results of analysis reveal that Mr. Bean's gestures bring about movements that direct to implicature. From 88 units of analysis, there are found 62 fragments violating and only 4 fragments adhering to conventional meanings. Meanwhile, dealing with cooperative principles, there are 20 fragments violating and only 2 adhere to the principles. On the other hand, the nonverbal language cues demonstrated by Mr. Bean comprises gesture (88 times), facial expression (83), eye behavior (83), touching (28), posture (26), privacy (21), territory (21), distance (21), chronemics (9), space (8), artefactual (7), and bodily attractiveness (2). This study suggests that making humor through nonverbal language cues can provide benefits in creating a vivid learning atmosphere.

Key words: disparagement, humor, incongruity, nonverbal language

INTRODUCTION

Language is defined as a systematic means used for communication, communicating ideas or feelings by use of conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures or marks (Webster 1979). This language definition suggests that language contains two systems, forms of language and functions of language. Brown (1987) states that functionally language serves various purposes such as greeting, flattering, interrupting, requesting, lying, criticizing, complaining, joking, commanding, etc. Formally, language comprises also two systems, namely the verbal and nonverbal system.

It is undeniable that in human communication, human beings do not communicate by words alone (linguistic means), but by both verbal (linguistic) and nonverbal (nonlinguistic) means to arrive at their intention. Both verbal and nonverbal components of communication interact in producing a successful piece of communication. When one of the components is missing, it results in an incongruous state of the message. The researcher found a communication that the form is nonverbal and the function is humorous in Mr. Bean's comedy performances.

Some TV channels in unscheduled time broadcast the films, suggesting that Mr. Bean's films are not dedicated to a certain gender, age, social class, etc. In every minute of the performance he creates a situation of laughter. He intentionally omits one of the communicative congruence components (i.e. words/sounds) in his communication. He only uses his nonverbal language in delivering his intention (the language function) to give amusement. This research constitutes a linguistic content analysis of nonverbal language cues that reflect the characteristics of incongruity and disparagement humor.

The nonverbal communication systems (Leathers 1986) used to analyze the data are limited to the visual communication, namely kinesics (facial expression, eye behaviors, gestures and posture), proxemics (space, distance, territory, and

privacy) and artefactual (facial attractiveness, bodily attractiveness, and artifacts) and to the invisible communication, i.e. tactile and chronemics.

Based on the description above, the objectives of this research are (1) to identify, describe and interpret the nonverbal language features used in the discourse of Mr. Bean's performances, and (2) to infer and formulate the causes of the audience's laughter at Mr. Bean's performances. Finally, there are some expected advantages that could be acquired from the study i.e.: (1) to the teachers of English, the result of this study will be of great importance in the class situation as s/he tries to call the students' interest to the teaching, (2) to the teaching process, in the teaching process, using humor efficiently and effectively will positively influence students' learning condition, and (3) to research development, this research will become a supporting idea to investigate the nonverbal language system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

When it comes to the teaching learning process, conducive atmosphere must be created verbally and nonverbally by the teacher's interaction. It is suggested that teachers should be equipped with knowledge of nonverbal communication appropriately. It is recommended that to put smiley faces, friendly tone while interacting along with welcoming body language to create a friendly atmosphere in the classroom or wherever it will be (Paranduk and Karisi 2020). Elements of humor can be integrated into materials for attention grabbing, recalling, and feedback. A diversity of humorous elements created a significant difference and improved behavioral engagement of course materials, discussions and assignments (Erdoğdu and Çakıroğlu 2021)

Choon and Coulson (2007) conclude that how iconic co-speech gestures modulate conceptualization enables listeners to better represent visuo-spatial aspects of the speaker's meaning. Moreover, Mr. Bean's expressive and photogenic face takes an important role of visualizing the emotional states that implications say, it implies similarity to the importance of Facial Expression Recognition (FER) that recognizing face expressions is one of the exciting and effective jobs in public interaction since facial expressions are important in nonverbal interaction (Prakash 2023)

Some research results implicate that space, distance and privacy (proxemics) are teachers' capability to communicate effectively with students. Current studies in teaching-learning field show that there is a positive correlation between distance and posture on teaching performance (Barmaki 2014). In addition, touching is one of the most powerful means for establishing and maintaining social contact between teachers and students. Research shows that teachers' efforts to maintain or increase students' learning behavior can be done by giving such rewards as touching i.e. patting on the shoulder (Febianti 2018)

Facial and bodily attractiveness are socially standardized that particular face and body are perceived attractive. Halias (2016) research proved that teachers' physical appearances give significant and positive influence on learning achievements. In her research report, Oktavianti (2020) states that clothes and cosmetics are able to create physical attractiveness and self-image as well as personality.

UNDERLYING THEORIES

Humor is defined as an affection arising from a strained expectation being suddenly reduced to nothing (Raskin 1985) and as a quality of action, speech or writing which excites amusement (Hornby 1986). Those definitions suggest that writing, speaking, and gestures are said to be humorous when they give amusement or to cause other persons to laugh. Raskin adds that six humor

components (participants, stimulus, experience, psychology, society and situation) will achieve effective successful humor when the participants exist. The speaker makes a stimulus whereas the hearer interprets the stimulus. Both the speaker and the hearer base on their experiences to do the role. Then the shared experience of the participants is important to refrain from misunderstanding. The hearer's psychology to be ready to receive/perceive the stimulus determines the degree of funniness. Finally, in doing their roles, they are under shared situation and society. Raskin also states that humor is deviated phenomena of the normal concept, being expressed economically in time and forms. Mr. Bean serves his nonverbal cues to be humorous.

Wardhaugh (1972) says that human beings do not communicate by words alone, but they communicate either verbally or nonverbally. Leathers (1986) illustrates the verbal and nonverbal communication interaction by describing that the interaction of verbal and nonverbal (visual, auditory and invisible) communication system is grounded in two central assumptions. First, nonverbal systems serve important functions but the verbal system simply does not occur. Second, nonverbal systems assume the dominant/central role while the verbal system necessarily the secondary role.

To help interpreting one's nonverbal communication, the hearer uses the speaker's nonverbal cues such as: facial expressions, eye behaviors, gestures and postures, proxemic behaviors, tactile/touching, personal appearance, artifacts, and chronemics. Adler and Rodman (1991) have identified eight basic emotions that facial expressions reflect, i.e.: happiness, sadness, anger, surprised, fear, disgust, contempt and interest. Leathers (1986) says that eye behaviors that comprise eye contact, face gaze, eye gaze, mutual gaze, mutual eye contact, gaze avoidance, gaze omission, gaze aversion, eye shifts, staring, blinking, and fluttering are windows of the soul. Meanwhile, proxemic behaviors–that consist of space, distance, territory, and privacy–are influenced not only by the beliefs and values that define a particular culture but also by demographic variables–such as gender, age, ethnicity race, status, personality, degree of acquaintance, and area of residence–and/or personal characteristics of the communicator that differentiate one person from another.
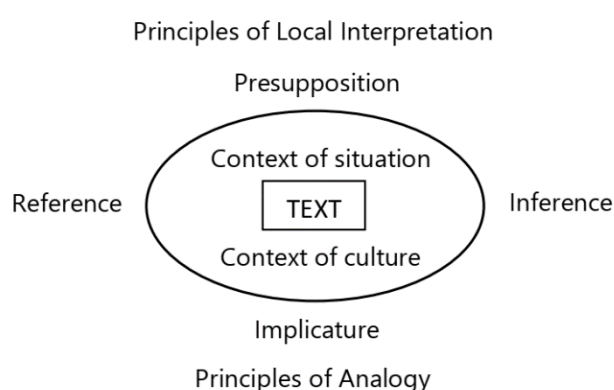

Figure 1: Pragmatic concept of analysis

Bernard (1989) states that discourse is a language which has been produced as the result of an act of communication. Brown and Yule (1983) adds that the analysis of a discourse takes a pragmatic approach–using such terms as reference, presupposition, implicature and inference to describe what the speaker and hearer are doing–and that the analyst has to take account of context in which

the discourse occurs. Clark and Clark (1977) formulates implicature into maxims of cooperative principles, namely maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation, and maxim of manner. Finally, Brown and Yule (1983) propose two principles of interpretation, namely: the principle of local interpretation and the principle of analogy.

The pragmatic analysis is operationalized in the following organogram i.e. says that a fragment is humorous if the nonverbal cues reflect the characteristics of incongruity or disparagement:
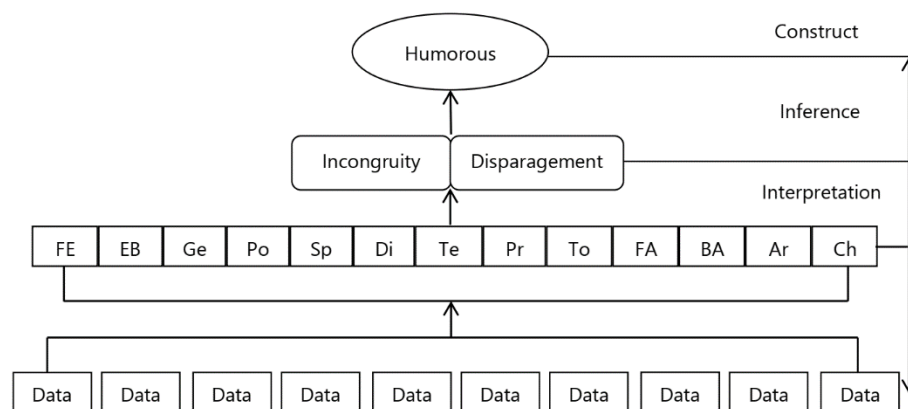

Figure 2: Organogram of the research analytical construct

Note:
FE (Facial Expression), EB (Eye Behaviors), Ge (Gesture), Po (Posture), Sp (Space), Di (Distance), Te (Territory), Pr (Privacy), To (Touching), FA (Facial Attractiveness), BA (Bodily Attractiveness), Ar (Artefactual), and Ch (Chronemics).

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed descriptive-qualitative approach that involves working with data, organizing the data, breaking the data into manageable units, synthesizing the data, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what to tell to others (Bogdan and Biklen 1982). The data of this research are Mr. Bean's nonverbal cues which reflect the characteristics of incongruity or disparagement humor. There are 11 episodes from a VCD entitled *The Best Bits of Mr. Bean*, as the source of research data as the units of analysis in the assumption that they are among Mr. Bean's comedy films that constitute his masterpieces.

The contents of the discourse were then reviewed and analyzed through content analysis technique. Krippendorff (2019) states that content analysis involves specialized procedures for processing scientific data including data making, data reduction, and inference finding. The first stage consisted of unitizing, sampling. In the second stage, the researcher separated the relevant data—incongruity and disparagement non-verbal cues—from the irrelevant data. In the last stage, the inferences made to constitute the answers of the research questions on why the audience laughs at the nonverbal language messages the actor has made.

Seliger and Shohamy (1989) suggest the steps for analyzing the data comprise: (1) transcribing the audio visual performance data, so that he could directly focus on the research questions, (2) using the organizing table units to describe the way of performing the non-verbal language cues, (3) counting the frequencies of what humor classification and of what nonverbal language cues

that dominate to cause the audience laugh, (4) formulating the answer of why the audience laughs according to the humor categories. Here, the researcher's interpretations constitute the answer, (5) formulating the results of the research of how to performs the non-verbal languages and why the audience laughs at the non-verbal cues, and (6) measuring reliability.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Implicature

This research data analysis technique (content analysis) is descriptive qualitative, by describing the data of how Mr. Bean performs nonverbal languages, (i.e. kinesics, proxemics, artifactual, tactile and chronemics cues) to fulfill incongruity and disparagement humor (data context).

The researcher has found 41 research topics and the 88 units of analysis – derived from the 11 episodes of the movies. Having identified and determined the topics, he then interpreted the intention of the fragments, reaching for the pragmatic aspects of meaning and identified the implicature.

Table 1: The Findings in Implicature Analysis

Implicature	Fragment	
	Adhering	Violating
Conventional meanings	4 (2%)	62 (73%)
Cooperative principles	2 (2%)	20 (23%)

Table 1 leads to a conclusion that Mr. Bean very frequently takes advantage of applying the conventional meaning violation (73%) than the cooperative principle violation (23%) to deliver the humorous messages. He might have considered that violating the conventional meaning and the cooperative principles constitute the effective way of creating humor. There were less number of fragments that adhered to the conventional meaning and cooperative principles (2% and 2%) being as effective as creating humor. Mr. Bean violates the conventional meaning and cooperative principles to achieve his communication goal to make his audience laugh. In the normal situation of discourse, these violations might be considered abnormal. However, Mr. Bean has taken such abnormality to create humor.

Having done the analysis of implicature, the next is categorizing the units of analysis fragments into incongruity humor and disparagement humor. The writer found 69 (78%) fragments of incongruity humor characteristics (inappropriateness, paradox, dissimilarity, and an affection arising from sudden transformation of a strained expectation to nothing) and 19 (22%) fragments of disparagement humor characteristics (a sudden situation arising from a conception of some eminency in a person, by comparison with the infirmity of others' or with himself formerly) into the disparagement humor.

Nonverbal Language

the answer of what nonverbal language cues deliver the humorous message is summarized in Table 3. The analysis was done by applying the recording sheet of nonverbal language cues.

Gestures dominates the nonverbal language cues used by Mr. Bean to create humor. He eighty-eight times skillfully moves his gestures/body movements (head, face, neck, trunk, shoulder-arm-waist, hand, hip-joint-leg-ankle and foot) singly and/or in combination and creates characters to convey the implications.

Analyzing Mr. Bean's facial expression by applying Loren Lewis Series of Facial Expression, the researcher found emotions from the most to the least are: disappointment, stupidity, anxiety, amusement, horror, apprehension, confusion,

attention, arrogance, distress, excitement, resolute, repugnance, annoyance, disdain, laughter, stubborn, aversion, flabbergasted and no expression (of sleeping facial expression). It has proven that Mr. Bean's elastic face has an expressive or photogenic one.

Table 3: The Frequency of Occurrence of Mr. Bean's
Nonverbal Language Cues

Nonverbal Language Cues	Frequency	Percentage
Gesture	88	22,2%
Facial expression	83	20.9%
Eye behavior	83	20,9%
Touching	28	7,1%
Posture	26	6,5%
Privacy	21	5,3%
Territory	21	5,3%
Distance	21	5,3%
Chronemics	9	2,3%
Space	8	2,0%
Artefactual	7	1,8%
Bodily attractiveness	2	0,5%
Facial attractiveness	0	0,0%

Interpreting Mr. Bean's eye behaviors mean interpreting his facial expression because eyes belong to the face organs. The writer classifies Mr. Bean's eye behaviors into two classes i.e. fragments of one participant and fragments of more than one participant. In the former, the eyes give emphasis on the emotions that Mr. Bean sends, whereas in the latter, the behaviors of the eyes are identified either physically or functionally.

The fourth most frequent Mr. Bean's nonverbal cue is touching. There are 28 fragments in which touching gives significant contribution (positive affect, playful and control affect) to convey the humorous implication. Mr. Bean's posture can create humor when his body movements halt for a second and that pause fulfills the characteristic of humor.

The analyses made to three interrelated nonverbal cues (distance, territory, and privacy) by communicating privacy to create humor show that Mr. Bean violates the rule of territory and/or distance. For example, in fragment 10, Mr. Bean's violation does not satisfy the female cop's privacy when he performs an appropriate act (zipping up the pants) in her territory. Her privacy is violated when Mr. Bean gets closer in distance and enters her territory by doing such an inappropriate act.

Mr. Bean applies chronemics (use of time) to support sending the humorous implication. Some fragments are revealed that the chronemics applied by Mr. Bean are the violations against the formal time or a kind of social awareness. Mr. Bean applies the space cue to support to create humor. He sends the space cue by violating the rule of personal/bodily space. A certain act implicates a space that bodily needs to fulfill. Mr. Bean's artifacts give a contribution to create humor in 7 fragments by creating the humor through the use of his clothes and any accessories he put on and violating his artifacts that the implicature suggests him to wear.

Mr. Bean's orthomorphic body (thin, fragile) constitutes the significant element of being a comic personality. His body is associated with the cerebrotonic

personality of being tense, fussy and critical. Moreover, his facial attractiveness (shape and of being flexible) gives a very significant contribution to the comic personality. His face is like plastic that can be shaped according to the characters. Therefore, Mr. Bean's bodily and facial attractiveness enable him to communicate with his body language skillfully. The researcher addresses these Mr. Bean's two nonverbal cues as 'inborn nonverbal cues.

CONCLUSION

This study yields some conclusions on how Mr. Bean performs his nonverbal language cues. First, Mr. Bean has skillfully visualized through his body languages such characters as being innocent/alien (being born yesterday), of childishness (a child masquerading an adult), uncivilized (not knowing the social convention) and of inappropriateness (doing something that normal people will have given up). Aside from that, he has a capability of creating comic actions of some idealized actions. Mr. Bean takes advantage of his great illusion by using his body movements to lead the audience to perceive the idealized scene and that his nonverbal humorous language cues are funny by behaving in an unexpected way and unexpected place/time. The analysis done to the data contextually (content analysis) suggests that the violation against the implicature constitutes Mr. Bean's effective way of creating humor.

This research implicates that violating the implicature (conventional implicature or cooperative principle maxims) will result in such communication phenomena as misinterpretation, getting communication partners' angry, etc. The humorous conditions (of congruity and disparagement) constitute among the phenomena caused by the implicature violation. The ability to put the concepts (implicature) into actions through the body language (gestures, face expression, eye behaviors, posture and touching) –combined with the chronemic, space, distance, territory, and privacy systems constitute the way Mr. Bean attains his communication goal that is to get audience's response of laughter.

Practical implementation to teaching is the central attention spot verbally and nonverbally for teachers. Teachers must perform nonverbal language cues that match the teaching situation. The context of situation and culture regulates teachers to interact with the students verbally. Considering face expressions, gestures, artifacts and other nonverbal cues in delivering the teaching materials will make teachers perfect and lovely. Teachers can adopt how Mr. Bean creates humour to call the students' interest to his teaching. When teachers apply the nonverbal humour efficiently and effectively to their teachings, they will positively influence the students' learning condition. Teachers can use humour to break the students' boredom, to build close relationships with the students, and to create a relaxed atmosphere in the class.

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