



## DOUBLE-VOICING IN THE MOUTH OF INDONESIAN COMEDIAN

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Article History	Abstract
<p>Submitted date: 2022-11-05 Accepted date: 2022-12-25 Published date: 2023-02-01</p>	<p>In Indonesian context, particularly within the entertainment sphere: TV, YouTube, TikTok many produced utterances which can be interpreted from novel analysis and semiotic point of view. Speech here indexes to all artists ‘utterances’ which are relevant to this topic. The topic of this article is Indonesian comedy, more specifically, concerning political and sexual jokes—a kind of political and sexual sarcasm. Jokes and critiques are living together on the stage of comedy. The dialogues between the actors who were involved are usually producing double meaning and consequently it produces double understanding in audience’ mind. The data sources of this research were taken from two programs, namely TV show “<i>Lapor Komandan</i>” in Trans7 and <i>YouTube show</i> “in Deddy Corbusier’s YouTube Channel. These data are comedy shows. The writing applies the semiotic interactional of indexicality which was developed by Michael Silverstein and Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism through double voice that has been applied in the novel. The rationality is to get a better understanding on how a comedian plays creativity through the words in producing double voice—dialogical imagination. The term “double voicing” was developed by a Russian philosopher to index the speech phenomenon produced by speakers. Clearly, it stated that every speech is always linked to other speech through imagination. The speech has multi linguistic meaning that can represent the specific communities, organizations, and individuals. The result shows that there are three kinds of double voice or double meaning gained from the interactional conversation, those are, the sexual jokes, political and violation jokes.</p>
<p><b>Keywords:</b> double voicing, comedy; sexual and political sarcasm</p>	

### Introduction

The claim of this paper is that the double meaning of utterances always emerged in the comedy performance within the context of Indonesian entertainment sphere. More precisely, it usually appeared through sexual and political jokes. Language or in this article used specific terms, that is, utterances. Utterances and comedy are inseparable things. It becomes the main road to bring the jokes arriving in the audience’s mind. Here, utterance means vehicle, while comedy is the content. The work of comedy can be traced back to the work of great Shakespeare like in “As You Like It”. This term was contrasted to the word of tragedy. The focus here is not on comedy as general, but the language used in playing comedy—this is the duty of language—the function of language as a sign system: both sound image and mental aspect of comedy (Saussure 1966).

Let’s see nowadays, comedy as the activity of using language and body expression to entertain the audience has widely performed in various media platforms, such as TV, YouTube, and social media: Instagram, tiktok, facebook, etc. The comedy used in this

article is taken from a popular TV show known as *Lapor Pak* and a YouTube Channel named “*Somasi*”.

Many previous researchers have explored the language used in comedy within Indonesian Context. Some have focused on the language style, language role and function (Rullyanti; and Nurdianto 2019; Wijana 2016; Putri, Oktoma and Nursyamsu 2016). Others such as Subagio et.al, Mulyadi et.al, and Puri Dewangga have focused on the semantic aspect, the function of Satire, and the structure of humor in psycho stand-up Comedy (Subagio et.al 2021; Mulyadi et.al 2021; Puri Dewangga 2020). With these previous articles on Comedy—focusing on the language used by comedians we have come to know some aspects of it. The present article is more comprehensively focused on the double meaning of the utterances used by comedians. More specifically, is to answer the fundamental questions such as how a comedian produced the double meaning via utterances and what kinds of cues emerged which can be interpreted as double meaning. The answer to this question is the function of “double voice theory and semiotic interactional theory.

To analyze the data, I used two main tools of interpretation. The first tool is Bakhtin’s voice. The study of double meaning can be traced back to the work of Bakhtin called “voice”. This concept can be found in *Dialogic Imagination* (Bakhtin 1982). His larger point (as cited by Nakassis 2022) was that all speech (and thus language) is/stages a contact zone between voices, and all of language so accented. In short, simply, our utterances are usually connected to other utterances. The second tool of analysis is the semiotic interactional or semiotic indexicality developed by Michael Silverstein (1976) in *Shifters, linguistic categories, and cultural description*. The term indexicality comes from the idea of “index” which was proposed by Peirce (1940) in *philosophical writings of Peirce*. This idea talks about how a sign is connected to an object through the ground of representation. The relation of sign and its object can be seen from three levels, namely the level of icon—based on similarity, the level of index—based on causal relation, then the level of symbol—based on convention (Peirce 1940). The tool of indexicality has been applied in many various social aspects in Indonesia, especially in Eastern Indonesia for instance, it used by Sandarupa to analyze many ritual speeches in Torajan society such as, the poetic aspect in relation to power in the death ritual, in relation to argumentation played by Torajan Children, and in relation to heterogeneity in Torajan ritual speech (Sandarupa 2004; Sandarupa 2013; Sandarupa 2015; Sandarupa 2016).

The aim of the research is to give better understanding of the language used in comedy, especially the double meaning or in this article named “double voice” which contrasted to “single voiced”. The present study is in line with the recent work on double meaning in Tamil society politics (Eswaran and Nakassis 2022). In short, this article addresses the use of language through double meaning in gaining political and sexual jokes.

### **Methodology**

The following data are drawn from TV and YouTube. This article used a qualitative approach to elaborate the language use within the comedy activities by taking two main data sources, namely “*Lapor Komandan TV Show and Somasi Youtube Channel*. All the subject of analysis is focused on the double meaning utterance from those two data. To collect the data, I watch the *lapor komandan show* and *somasi program* several times to

identify the data, then write the utterances which show the double meaning aspect into the laptop, and finally, to analyze, and conclude the data based on the discussion.

## Finding and Discussion

Everyone knows the intention of the actors through the language they use, but we need an interpretation which has a scientific foundation. This research is like the allegory of the cave Plato, because all data within this article is from a TV show and YouTube Channel. To interpret, it needed cues to index the relevance actor's intention through the language they use.

I found six main pieces of analysis from two main sources. These two data sources were categorized into two types of language use, more precisely, those related to double meaning of utterances, in relation to sexual body—to woman then, in relation to political jokes. To limit the definition of the concept: sexual body refers to utterances which attract the mind's audience to focus on specific body of someone (guest in the show) and political jokes means the utterances that merely focus on relevance politician. For understanding purposes, I used the term "actor" in sequencing the script of conversation which symbolized A1 for actor one, A2 for actor two, A3 for actor three, and A4 for actor four.

### Data 1

There was one activity to be the main interpretation within this social situation, namely, the speech act used by A1 and A2 to index relevant things. To tell, there were five actors involved which have different roles and to interpret: four men and one woman. To know what was really happening in this show, we need some cues from speaker utterances. For better understanding, look at the text of conversation below.

- A1 Andika, mau nyedot boba gak? [A1 approaches to A2 while bringing white pipe]  
A2 Kemarin kan idul Adha...idul Adha kan banyak kambing, banyak boba  
Audience [all are laughing]



Figure 4. sexual jokes  
[Source: youtube trans 7: acara lapor pak tgl 15/07/22]

From the data above, it found one double meaning of a sentence in interrogative form, that is, the utterance of A1 stated "mau nyedot boba gak?" The focus of attention refers to two words: the verb "nyedot" and the noun "boba". The word "nyedot" parallels the word "to suck" in English which means to pull in liquid or air through your mouth without using your teeth. While "boba" refers to a modern beverage which is popular in Indonesia now. The problem arises when the speaker's utterances are connected to the real situation in the show—here we use the semiotic function of indexicality to interpret this.

To understand the A1's utterance, it must be linked to A2 Utterance [see second line of the text above] which said [while pointing the floor] "*Kemarin kan idul adha.idul adha kan banyak kambing, banyak boba.*" A2 pronounced this sentence to get audience's attention—one way of refocusing attention from A1 after saying "nyedot boba" Let see, how do we understand this conversation by analyzing two powerful words namely, "nyedot and boba [including its definition]. These two words can be understood from a semantic point of view. Semantically, the verb "nyedot" is clearly defined above. Whereas the noun "boba" can be interpreted metaphorically. Literally "boba" is a kind of modern beverage. Metaphorically, it can refer to goat dung and the breast of the woman who is sitting there. The Modern beverage and the goat dung were absent within this situation—no real boba. Therefore, one possible interpretation here is boba refers to the breast of the woman that would be sucked by A1—this is a language competence, especially the use of metaphor in creating the double meaning or voice in audience's mind and in creating joke—sexual joke without any objection from anyone who are watching the show. To sum up, to be a comedian means to be smart and creative in verbal playing.

## DATA 2

This scene focused on verbal monologue—a kind of verbal roasting performed by A1. A1 here became the center focus who are responsible for producing jokes. There were two verbal jokes which became the center of interpretation, that is, the adjective of "basah" and the verb of "to lick" [menjilat in bahasa]—those called as verbal deixis which function to index the relevant meaning. To be clear, consider the short monologue and figure 2 below.

**A1** Em.... soalnya gimana yah? Waktu itu saya roasting bapak di kandangnya beliau, di BUMN. Yang nonton anak buah beliau semua. Makanya setelah selesai acara, pak Erik Tohir tu gak kenapa-napa, Cuma basah doang karena waktu itu saya gak ngeroasting tapi saya ngejilat.

**Audience** wah.... wah.... wah [While laughing]



Figure 2. politic joke

[Source: Youtube Trans 7, Acara Lapor Pak tgl 20/April/22]

In playing the verbal deixis via verb "ngejilat" and adjective "basah", A1 plays an unrelated meaning of language. The word "basah" is not compatible with the verb "roasting" Generally, a person who is becoming an object of roasting would have several potential reactions, for instance, could be angry, laughing, and dejecting. Furthermore, the word "ngejilat" refers to the activity of the tongue in touching the body of others. In this show, it is impossible for A1 to lick her roasting's object. Therefore, the word "ngejilat"—as a political verb that indexes the Indonesian social situation, more precisely, to explain the functionaries who were doing anything to gain what they want or to get closer to a

certain party. This shows that comedians are good enough in playing verbal deixis to roast the object without any negative reaction.

### DATA 3

This data source is like data two above. The difference is on the object of talking. The I took another part in that show. Here the verbal center player is A1. To be clear, there were six actors involved: five men and one girl. The main analysis are the two deictic devices, that are, demonstrative to point the imaginative social situation in the actor's mind. Consider the data script below.

A1. Jadi maksud Anda ee.kalau kita mengkritik pemerintah, gak ditangkap gitu maksudnya?

A2. Ya Enggak, gak ditangkap sendiri, pasti rame-rame dong (while laughing)

A3. Minimal dimintai keterangan

A1. Disini gak kayak gitu, itu kan di Uganda. Disini aman

A4. Kan ini negara demokrasi. Buat yang demo dikerasi



Figure 3. politic jokes

[Source: Youtube Trans 7, Acara Lapor Pak tgl 15/09/21]

By looking at the data, A1 and A4 used two deictics of location—also known as demonstrative. Those appeared in the word “Uganda” and “Ini negara demokrasi”. They are used to refer to two regions relationally: actors’ region as “here” and “this/these” location, the others’ region as “there” and that/those location. What was meant by *Uganda* and *ini negara demokrasi*. By looking at the whole script, we understand that the actors were criticizing a social situation of a certain country which lacks the freedom to criticize without mentioning the specific country. Literally, *Uganda* refers to one country in east Africa—also known as the Republic of Uganda. Then the question arises: did the actor really understand the social situation of Uganda? Whereas the word “ini negara demokrasi, buat yang demo dikerasi” does have real object. The word of demonstrative “this” has multiple meanings or double meaning. It can refer to this TV show as an imaginative nation, also refers to Uganda. Another important thing is the use of poetic sound through the words “demokrasi and “demo dikerasi”. It shows the repetitive sound at last of the word to produce poetic effect. Finally, here we see, the actor plays a deictic device for obscuring the meaning of what those deictics refer to, although we understand those actors’ intentions through imagination.

#### DATA 4

This scene I found two kinds of sexual jokes in conversational interaction. This verbal playing of sexual jokes appeared in a question-and-answer construction that played by three actors, where the joke moves from one actor to another—it's like turn taking conversation event. The main analysis here are the sentences of A1 and A2. For understanding's sake, let us see the conversation below.

A1. Apakah Anda suka atau tidak, ketika anda mendapati suami anda ke tempat Karoke? Sesimpel itu.

A2. Aku boleh memegang kepala kamu gak?

A1. Aku sih gak masalah tapi gampang muncrat [all audience and actors are laughing]

A3. Pala ini [pause], buka pala yang lain.

A1. Berarti gak suka

A2. Ee... [while thinking] gimana yah? Biasa aja sih, biasa aja

A1. Biasa aja. Memang tidak menemani suami pada saat disana

A2. Gak, suami saya bebas mau kemana aja, saya gak pernah ngelarang

A1. Berarti tidak ada masalah dengan itu. Tuh gak ada masalah

A3. Kenapa bilang gak suka tulisannya disini

A2. Yang bilang emang siapa?

A3. Ini tulisannya

A2. Itukan tulisannya

A3. Berarti bohong ini yah

A2. Yah gak tau deh saya

A3. Kamu suka Karoke?

A2. Suka banget!

A3. Kenapa gak nemenin suami karaoke?

A2. Oh... [while thinking] karaoke apaan ini?

A3. Loh..loh [while audience and actors are laughing seriously]



Figure 5. Sexual joke  
[Source: youtube trans 7: acara lapor pak tgl 19/03/21]

In analyzing these data, I focus on the interaction between A1 and A2's utterances: how do they produce the verbal sexual jokes? The focus attention refers to the sentence A2 "Aku boleh memegang kepala kamu gak?" Then, A1 replied "Aku sih gak masalah tapi gampang muncrat [all audience and actors are laughing]. Look at the word "gampang muncrat", it is easy to understand by seeing the previous text, that is, the word "head" of A1 (without hair). It goes without saying "kepala gampang muncrat" refers to one thing that similar with an A1's bald head in imagination, that is, a penis that belongs to all male—not literally understanding but from iconicity point of view, a kind of semiotic level in Peircean tradition in relation to similarity sign with its object. The word "head" here plays double meaning—to a real head and to a penis' head. We see how comedians are creatively creating an ambiguous meaning in the audience's mind and become great jokes.

Let's consider another part in interactional conversation above. Here, the focus attention is on question proposed by A3 to A2 in line 16 "kamu suka karaoke" then, A2 said in line 17 "suka banget", and A3 refocusing the question by asking "kenapa gak nemenin suami", suddenly A2 respond "oh... [pause while thinking] karaoke apaan ni" this sentence is almost the same with the previous analysis which focused on the word "head". For this part, we can understand imaginatively that the word "karaoke" which characterized by the using of mic produce double meaning, namely the mic as literally used for singing and the mic as metaphorically expression used for male sexual activity. Here, A2 plays verbal sexual jokes by the words "mic and karaoke" in question construction structure.

#### DATA 5

This data is different from previous because it was taken from a different source. This is from a YouTube channel named *SOMASI*. Here, the focus is on the interactional conversation but on monologue performance utterances by a comedian. For better understanding's sake, let's consider the script of utterances written below.

[Monologue]. Branding somasi itu, penonton udah dibiasain sama materi-materi tepi jurang, yang akhirnya, mau kita selucu apapun kalau gak ada tepi jurang komen netizen sama: mana tepi jurangnya? Dipikir kita pendaki kali yah. Akhirnya komik-komi kaya gua ini yang gak punya materi politik tertekan om. Jujurni, selama ini gua tu bikin materi tentang relationship. Di otak gua Cuma perempuan. Gara-gara branding somasi yang harus tepi jurang, pas ditawarin disini yang tadinya di otak gua perempuan, peremnya ilang.



Figure 5. [political jokes]

[Source: youtube trans 7: acara lapor pak tgl 5/11/22]

The first analysis is focused on the word "tepi jurang". Literally, it refers to a deep and narrow valley, but in this show, it gets a new meaning—an extension meaning which refers to a topic of politic. Shortly, it means talking about political issue or criticizing the government. In *SOMASI*'s program, comedians are considered playing jokes if they put a political issue or government issue within their monologue. Now look at the center of analysis relating to political jokes, that is, when this comedian mentions a word "perempuan" in the last sentence above "*Gara-gara branding somasi yang harus tepi jurang, pas ditawarin disini yang tadinya di otak gua perempuan, peremnya ilang*". The word "perempuan" is interpreted as having double meaning or double references. First, it is generally referring to all females, and second refers to parliamentary leaders, that is, Puan—see the last sentence, this comedian said "peremnya ilang"—this is a high level of creativity in verbal playing as language competence to produce great jokes.

#### Data 6

This session of *SOMASI SHOW* gives a new thing in relation to the extension of word meaning. Here I found one interesting word, that is, "banting tulang". This would be the

center of analysis. To understand the pretext of this new utterance, let consider a short monologue below. The text is long, but I just take the relevant topic of the article.

...Tapi yang seharusnya diundang disini harusnya bukan saya om Ded, Ada tu ee seorang suami yang kemarin banting tulang. Woaahhhhhh [audience voice]. Harusnya ya, kan itu somasi banget kan. Banting tulang, tapi tulang istrinya...



Figure 5. [violation jokes]

[Source: youtube trans 7: acara lapor pak tgl 5/11/22]

To understand, we should see what is meant by “banting tulang” from a semantic point of view. Originally, this word is understood as a metaphorical expression which refers to the activity of hard working. But its denotational meaning means “to break the bone or to throw the bone”. From this we know that anyone who break or throw the bone of a living person means domestic violence. This old metaphor emerged after the domestic violence case done by an Indonesian celebrity to his wife. Furthermore, by referring to that social relevance situation, the word “banting tulang” gets a new meaning in relation to jokes sake.

### **Conclusion**

We have seen that comedy is a safe zone for verbal playing of jokes through interactional conversation and monologue utterances. From the data above we found three kinds of double meaning or voice in producing certain jokes, those are, the sexual jokes, political and violation jokes. To be a comedian is to be creative and to be smart in verbal playing, in making the audience to be interested in laughing—one of the ways is playing the double meaning to create an ambiguous meaning in the audience’s mind.

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