

Conference Paper

Doing Humor, Seriously!: Conflict Management of Mother and Child through the Humor in the Stories of *Lupus Kecil*

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Abstract

Anchored by the findings of previous studies regarding the benefits of humor in communication, interaction and relationships, especially in the family context, this study explores the types of humor used by the mother in the *Little Lupus* stories to manage conflicts with her children. This research uses five stories from the *Lupus Kecil (Little Lupus)* series published during 1990-2000s. Data is identified, classified, and interpreted in the framework of children's and humor studies. This study demonstrates how the mother used an affiliative, aggressive, and self-enhancing humor during conflicts with her children. Using these three styles of humor, facilitate better communication between mother and children during conflict management. This study has important implications in the context of the family relationship for a mother's developing and using a sense of humor when managing conflict with her children.

Keywords: affiliative humor, aggressive humor, self-enhancing humor, conflict management of mother and children

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1. Introduction

This study examines the use of humor to manage the conflict between mother and child in the stories of *Little Lupus*. Whilst some research has been carried out on the benefits of using humor in communication, there is very little scientific understanding the use of humor to manage the conflict between mother and child in the fiction. Besides, the humor studies of family relationships in Indonesia also has not been a serious field to discuss. Based on the gaps, the study conducted.

Humor identified with activity laugh. Laughter refers to as one of the impacts of humor. The habit of using particular humor could strengthen psychological well-being, influence, and establish a healthy, positive attitude (Cann & Collette, 2014; Papousek, 2018).

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Humor, initially a study in the fields of biology and medicine, given the terms of humor comes from the Latin *umor*, which means moisture (humid and containing a liquid). Humors associated with four base fluids in the human body, believed to be the ancient Greek and Roman physicians, serves to regulate the performance of the human body. The four bases are black bile, yellow bile, blood (blood), and mucus (phlegm) (Guinsler, 2008; Ambarwati, 2016). The composition of the four base fluid in the body determines the human mood. Excess one of them will bring in unhealthy condition. The fluids balance in the human body's primary human expression born in a state of good humor or adverse humor conditions (lousy humor).

Humor has a fundamental effect on humanity and help people pass the pressure in his life (Aranda, 2018; Jeder, 2015), therefore humor gives an advantage to release the tension faced by humanity. The previous study indicates humor facilitates the improvement of social relations (Yue, Liu & Hiranandani, 2014), create a pleasant experience (Jeder, 2015), and enhance the quality of life of a person, (Papousek, 2018). The essential ability for someone to be humorous not affected even though a person is in a threatened situation (Papousek, 2019), humor facilitating the better relation of parents and children (Forward, et al. 2008), and serving relational comfort of parents and children in the family context (Neuendorf et al. 2015). Most studies in humor only focused on how humor could enhance and improve the quality of human life. However, far too little attention has been paid to study of how humor contributes to manage the mother and children's conflict in the fiction. In fact, humor is not only found in the interaction and verbal communication of a society in a real life, but also in children's fiction, such as serial stories of the *Little Lupus*.

The *Little Lupus* is a story beamed once popular in Indonesia in the 1990s. The *Little Lupus* stories, written by Hilman Hariwijaya, be reading a bestseller and one of the principal readings in the period 1990 to the early 2000s (Ambarwati, 2016; Ambarwati, 2017; Noorman, 2011). The main character of the story named Lupus. Lupus was a humorous boy, 8 years old, second grader of elementary school. He has a younger sister named Lulu, who was six years old. Lupus' father was an office worker, and his mother was a housewife. Lupus had lived in Jakarta with a background of urban and middle-class families. Lupus, Lulu, father, and mother, described as being humorous, sociable, and jovial person.

Referring to the results of previous studies that humor has a positive impact on the improvement of the quality of one's life, especially in the context of family relationships, the researcher accomplished a study of conflict management between a mother and children through humor in the story of *Little Lupus*. The stories of *Little Lupus* offer

a humorous family profile, which resolves conflicts among members of the family by utilizing particular styles of humor. This study worked in order to examine the mother's humor styles and how mother used humor to manage the conflict with the children in the stories of *Little Lupus*.

2. Method

The research on conflict management between mother and child through humor in the stories of *Little Lupus* used qualitative approach. The qualitative approach employed since the data are literary texts of *Little Lupus stories*, which consisted of dialogues, monologues, proverbs, old poem, descriptive, as well as narrative discourse.

The researcher conducted a close reading to select and classify the data by following with the focus of research is the text contained and deal with the types of a mother's humor style in the stories of *Little Lupus*. The data analyzed, and interpret in the discourse analysis method since the types of mother's humor styles comprised textual and contextual messages. The theoretical framework of children's studies also employed to analyze and interpret the data, due to the data source of the research are five stories of *Little Lupus*, whose main characters are children. Five series of stories of *Little Lupus* is *Chit Chat on The Rainy Season* (1992), *My Teacher, The Sweet One* (1998), *Troubled... Troubled... Troubled!* (2000), *Cat Foster Named Mulan* (2003), and *Little Lupus Classic* (2013).

3. Result and Discussion

The study examines the use of mother's humor styles in the story series of *Little Lupus*. The findings of this study indicated that the type of mother's humor styles of *Little Lupus* contained affiliative humor, aggressive humor, and self enhancing humor.

Three types of humor's practiced in the story of *Little Lupus*, confirm an earlier study related to adaptive humor, including affiliative and self-enhancing humor (Martin, 2007; Yue, Liu & Hiranandani, 2014) and maladaptive humor that includes aggressive humor and self-defeating humor (Martin, 2007; Yue, Liu & Hiranandani, 2014; Aranda, 2018).

3.1. Affiliative Humor: Spontaneous Jokes, Humor Proverbs and Humor Old Poem

Affiliative humor of mother found in three patterns. The three patterns are: (a) giving jokes spontaneously, (b) stating humor proverb, and (c) stating humor old poems. The mother, as one of the prominent figures of *Little Lupus* uses affiliative humor with a joke spontaneously. Tell jokes spontaneously to make the atmosphere to be pleasant is the character of affiliative humor (Aranda, 2018; Yue, Liu & Hiranandani, 2014). Derail a guessing game with the initial letters of a word brought to the children and her husband, when they mingle together, delivered jokes spontaneously.

The mother asked what drawings could sing? the children doubt if there are any drawings (*gambar*) that could sing, and the mother replied that the drawing could sing are the drawing of bananas (A folk song from South Sulawesi, titled *Ampar-Ampar Pisang*: **gambar** and **ampar**). Mothers using similar sound of the word of *gambar* and *ampar* to be funny.

"Come on, drawing what could be sung?" "Mommy is how does? Drawing could not sing at all," protested father. "Really there, Mommy? drawing that can be sung?" Lulu so wants to know. "There," said Mommy, "The folk songs... ampar ampar pisang, pisangku belum masak..." Mommy sang a folk song titled Ampar-ampar Pisang (Little Lupus / LK 1/2000).

Affiliative humor generally expressed spontaneously to produce pleasure. This kind of humor tends to strengthen interparticipant of humor and more tolerant to practice (Martin et al. 2003; Yue, Liu & Hiranandani, 2014). Lupus, Lulu, father, and mother love doing humor, including having riddle of humor. They took turns to catapult puzzle and riddle of humor. Word of drawing (**gambar**) sound similar to (**ampar**). Mother used the sound similarity of **gambar** and **ampar** to bring humor to Lulu, who was six years old. The word twisted said, which could potentially bring humor, associated with affiliative humor.

According to Fox, et al. (2013), affiliative humor and aggressive humor are two of the earliest humor style mastered by children. They argue that as the children's cognitive mastery growing, aggressive humor, self-enhancing and self-defeating humor, will be mastered by children later. Affiliative humor also involves burlesque spontaneously to produce entertainment for themselves and others, to associate a humorous proverb mutually affirming pleasant conversation (Yue Liu & Hiranandani, 2014; James & Fox, 2016; Ambarwati, 2016).

In one occasion, the mother failed to make cake-like children. To entertain themselves because cakes made to fail, while her two children, Lupus and Lulu are already looking forward to the cake, mother said a proverb humor. Mother expresses a genuine proverb, but the mother adds a new maxim, which is still associated with the previous maxim, but in a new sentence describes the situation faced at the time, giving rise to humor. The maxim is:

There was no rattan, the root was so.

There is no French pastry, bought in the market was so! (Little Lupus / LK / 1/2013).

Mother created proverb humor to reduce interpersonal tension between a mother and the children, as a result of the failure of making a cake. The using of humorous proverbs confirm the results of previous studies which stated that sound plays in proverbs and imitation old saying to modify into a new proverb, according to the conditions experienced by, preferably children (Ambarwati, 2016).

For children age 6-8 years, such as Lulu and Lupus, proverbs humor is a word game that they have captured as the stage of development of humor and mastery of cognitive (Semrud-Clickeman & Glass, 2010). The mother's old poem of humor produced to please Lupus and Lulu.

One time, three of them chatting and exchanging old poem of humor. Four lines old poem comprised two couplets of the opening and two couplets of the content. The first and third line contains verses of the opening, second and fourth lines are the contents. The first and third lines of the old poem rhyming together. Second and fourth rows also have to rhyme together. Rhymes that raised by the mother is not poetry in general, because the third line does not have the same rhyme as the first line. The old poem is:

"Don't go to the Botanical Gardens, even to the Sunday Market; since, I do not have the money, hahahahaa (load of laughing). " (Little Lupus / LK2 / 2013).

The use of affiliative humor that demonstrated mother in a relationship with her children in the story of *Little Lupus* affirming and facilitating better interpersonal relationships, through proverbs and old poem humor. As a humorous family, a mother seeks to facilitate the children's favorite to have humor, through proverbs and old poem that potentially bring humor. Previous studies informed that children who grow up with good social competence, facilitated by parents and adults who have the good humor skill (James & Fox, 2016; Dowling, 2014)

3.2. Aggressive Humor: Rebuke-Reprimand and Criticism

Aggressive humor used mother in the story of *Little Lupus* can express in two substyles, namely reprimand and criticism. Aggressive humor refers to scoff and mock (Aranda, 2018), criticize and manipulate others (Yue, Liu & Hiranandani, 2014), and tease the mistakes of others (Fox, Hunter, Jones, 2015). One day, while going to school, Lulu looking for her socks. Her mother heard Lulu shouting to ask for help to find the socks. Mother was annoyed because she was mopping the floor. She rebuked Lulu to search for shoes by hand and not by her mouth (by shouting). The substyles of aggressive humor, named reprimand, showed below:

"Hi, guys and compatriots! Does anyone know my socks? " Shouted Lulu, looking at her missing socks anywhere. "Lulu, if you are looking for socks...," said Mommy while hassles lift the bucket from the kitchen, "Use your own hands in looking for socks, not your mouth (by shouting)!" (Little Lupus / LK1 / 1992).

The use of humor aggressively demonstrated mother classified as a substyle reprimand, because the mother wants Lulu more focus on looking for socks without shouting, so as not to disrupt the others activity. Using options contained sarcasm strikes, mother warned Lulu's mistakes that undisciplined putting socks in the right place. Findings of aggressive humor substyle rebuke or reprimand pitched sarcasm practiced by mother, disagree on Fox, Hunter, and Jones' opinion (2016). They found that aggressive humor, classified as maladaptive humor (Martin, 2007), managed by children, as young as Lulu, after they comprehend affiliative humor. Interestingly, Lulu mastering affiliative and aggressive humor at the same time. The finding ignored Martin's former opinion that the children acquired affiliative humor first.

The Lulu's acquisition of aggressive humor came along with the mastery of affiliative humor. On one day mother uses humor aggressively substyle criticism since Lulu bringing home stray cat without her consent and any other family members.

"Lululululululul...!" Mommy cried like rappers swallowed a microphone! "What happened, Mom?" Lulu out of the room with haste. "Try to answer the question emphatically, Mommy! Why do cats like so brought home? " Lulu does not directly help to answer, but took the cat being cornered in the living room and hold her tenderly. The white shirt of Lulu look dirty! "Lulululululul...! Alas, your clothes were dirty! OMG, Mommy can not stand it! Please, answer my question, why the cat like that brought home? " " Lulu

pity Mulan, he played alone on the roadside do not have a friend," said Lulu. "Mulan?" Mommy glared. "Who is it, Mulan?" "This cat's name, Mi," Lulu replied with a smile. "It means to find any on the road. It is good, is not it?" "Mulan sounds not appropriate to name! Smartness! Cingrok, to name!" Mommy said. "What is that?" Asked Lulu surprised. "Cats slob!" Mommy answered. "Aah, Mommy...", Lulu sulk. "Did you say he does not have a friend?" Mommy glanced at the dirty cat. "Yes, Mom," Lulu nodded. "Yes, teach him well how to make a friend! Take him a trip to the shopping mall, make him know the funky kids, as long as not brought here!" Mommy said firmly. (Little Lupus / LK1 / 2003).

Mother refused Lulu's action, firmly bringing home the street cat. Mother stating that the cat was more aptly named **Cingrok** (an abbreviation of cat slob) than **Mulan** (acronym find any on the road) because the cat looks dirty. The aggressive humor devoted mother to criticize Lulu's action does not weaken Lulu, since mother combined aggressive humor with a spontaneous jokes of affiliative humor, especially in a statement: "**Cingrok**" and "**Yes, him how to make a friend! Take him a trip to the shopping mall, make him know the funky kids, as long as not brought here!**". The two statements reduce the interpersonal tension between mother and Lulu. They have different opinions related to the existences of street cats. The aggressive humor strengthen themselves, as well as self-enhancing humor, although, mocking others (Fox, Hunter, Jones, 2016), the aggressive humor manipulated the errors and misfortunes of others, regardless of their feelings (James & Fox, 2016), and the aggressive humor underestimated others (Semrud-Clikeman & Glass, 2010).

The using composite of aggressive and affiliative humor is a significant result of the study. In the context of a relationship between mother and Lulu, the mother used a combination of the aggressive humor with the affiliative humor to produce substyle criticism in resolving their conflicts.

3.3. Self Enhancing Humor: Humor Entertainment for Other People

Mother used self-enhancing humor to entertain the others. Self-enhancing humor was perceived to have a high ranking and more desired by the community, and able to boost a positive opinion interparticipant of humor (Kuiper & Leite, 2010; Klein & Kuiper, 2006).

Once, the mother asked a question to Lupus how to eliminate ulcers. Lupus feels uncomfortable with the terrible ulcers. Mother said that the ulcers could lose, if the abscess is ripe, like fruit. Mother's response, of course, raises the potential of humor,

because Lupus get the undue answers. The mother's answers intend to entertain Lupus uncomfortable with the ulcers.

"Mommy, how to cure these ulcers?" Lupus asked that day. "Wait, let ulcers ripe first...," said Mommy. "Let it ripe how?" "Yes, if ripe already, you can pick it up like ripe fruits. " Mommy turns to tease again. (Little Lupus / LK1 / 1998)

Entertaining the others also performed when the mother heard Lupus complaining his role as a leading actor in the school drama. Mother asked why he agrees becoming the leading actor, Lupus replied: he thought that the lead role would be in charge of the food and beverage (F&B), then the mother comforted him by joking that managing of F&B is documentation section job, so Lupus smiling. Lupus and mother know that managing F&B called the F&B section.

"Yesterday, why you agree to be a prominent actor?" "Lupus think cast it to the F&B, Mom." "Hush, that is not the main character's duty, but the documentation section did " (Little Lupus / LK3 / 2013).

The mother utilizes self-enhancing humor to entertain the condition of Lupus that is in unpleasant condition. Studies of James & Fox (2013) hints that self-enhancing humor positively related to self-respect and the well-being of humor participants. Aranda (2018) mentions self-enhancing humor, which use to manage an optimistic perspective in the face of adversity, is considered as a type of humor that overcome severe conditions (coping). Children's preference of self-enhancing humor, according to James & Fox (2016), influenced by their understanding that the humor's style could create better feeling.

The mother's ability to practice self-enhancing humor facilitate and strengthen the children to obtain the better feeling. Humorous mother who able to manage conflict with her children through affiliative, aggressive, and self-enhancing humor style, is adorable. The humorous mother giving a significant contribution to children to gain positive perception on practicing different styles of humor. The mother's ability of employing humor and having exercise how to get a great sense of humor, play a significant role in shaping her children's preferences for humor's styles.

Lupus and Lulu, described as cheerful children and have many friends. Lupus is a popular and high profile boy in school and home environment, since he is a humorist and good at making others laugh. These findings confirm the results of previous studies that those who have good taste of humor also have good social competence (Masten, 1986; Semrud-Clikeman & Glass, 2010).

4. Conclusion

This study attempted to describe the type of mother's humor styles in managing the conflict with her children in the story of *Little Lupus*. The findings confirm the three types of mother's humor styles, namely (1) the affiliative humor style that consists of spontaneous jokes, humorous proverbs and humorous poetry; (2) The aggressive style of humor that contains a reprimand and criticism; (3) self-enhancing humor style that intend to entertain others. Humorous mother and having a good taste of humor play a positive role in communication and relationships with her children. The role of mother facilitating the use of three styles of humor in managing conflict affirmed the finesse humor of Lupus and Lulu. The results of this study suggest mothers and any family members to doing humor seriously and learning how to practice humor's style in managing the conflict with the children, in the context of family relationships.

Nevertheless, this study has limitations of the data sources used. The stories of *Little Lupus*, written in the 1990-2000s era, so readers and researchers must learn the characteristics and special vocabularies dealing with the humor of the era. The upcoming researchers could harness the findings presented in this study to explore and describe the new styles of humor that may use the mother figure in a children's story written in the present era.

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