

Phonological Exploitation in Constructing Humorous Utterances

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ABSTRACT

This research is conducted to reveal the strategy of humour construction dealing with phonological exploitation in Mind Your Language situation comedy. Mind Your Language is a British comedy television series that portrays a learning process by immigrants coming from various countries. Varieties of cultures and levels of English knowledge naturally influence humour creation by the characters. The data were taken from humorous utterances in season one of that situation comedy. Applying a descriptive qualitative approach, this research is in an attempt to find out the forms and the motives of those humorous utterances created to entertain audiences, especially those dealing with phonological aspects. The findings demonstrate that six forms of phonological aspects are employed to create humour. Sounds addition, omission, substitution, and minimal pairs are frequently exploited in humour creation rather than other strategies such as sound compatibility and metathesis. Based on the motives of humour construction, besides the interlocuter's influence, the phonological interference phenomenon also grounds the humour production in Mind Your Language situation comedy. The humorous utterances produced illustrate a contextual relation of the situation comedy as an English learning process by immigrants coming from various countries, languages, and cultures.

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INTRODUCTION

Spoken language is the primary source in linguistic studies while written language is the secondary one. The spoken language is represented by a combination of sounds to form a speech sound. Speech sounds are the sounds produced by human organs of speech that have a meaning when they are assembled. That is why not all sounds produced by a human's organ of speech can be classified as speech sounds, such as whistling or coughing. Those two sounds, in linguistic research, cannot be categorized as speech sounds because they do not contain any meaning. Even if the phonetic sound symbols produced by the organ of speech are combined but they still do not contain any meanings, and they cannot be classified as speech sounds as well. Therefore,

phonology studies sound combinations and structure of individual sounds systemically, or what in a phonological term is commonly known as segmental sounds.

Rowe and Levine (2016) and Gordon (2014) underline similar viewpoints on defining phonology as the study of the system and structure of sounds in a language (see also Katamba, 1989; Davenport and Hannahs, 2005; and Nathan, 2008). Besides, Rowe and Levine also argue that phonology also studies the sound system in all languages as well as the general system of sounds in a language. That implies each language typically has different structures of sounds system. Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2011) conceptualize phonology as the study of how a language sounds form patterns. Additionally, they argue that phonology can illustrate the speaker's language's original sounds and which sounds belong to the other languages.

A combined structure of a speech sound can be manipulated for a specific purpose, for humour creation for instance. Manipulating segmental sounds in producing speech sounds is probably the simplest strategy to create humour in daily talk. Speakers may deviate the form or arrangement of speech sounds to elicit verbal humour. Theoretically, verbal humour is closely related to the incongruity theory of humour, one of the most related theories in language study. This theory deals with the verbal and visual aspects of generating humour. As Wijana (2004) states that humour is a verbal and visual stimulus that is spontaneously intended to provoke smiles and laughter for the listener or the viewer. Berger (1976) presumes that humour can be expressed in various ways, such as producing a kind of incongruent relations, both in the form of syllables, words, phrases, and even meanings. Incongruity theory involves the discrepancy between what is expected to arise and what appears. Furthermore, Marmysz (2003) highlights that the concept of incongruity is characterized by contradictions, contrasts, and disparities. That incongruity sometimes portrays a kind of inconsistency of what most people have believed as truth.

Attardo (1994) opines that the incongruity theory according to which humour is based on the discovery of a reality or a thought that turns out to be inconsistent with what was expected. This theory of humour observes humour through linguistic aspects. The creation of humour as the basis of this theory requires intelligence in any linguistic aspects distorted to break the linguistic rules and contradict the common knowledge or conceptions. The inconsistency between what is expected and the reality in contextualized conversation potentially triggers humour. Wijana (1994) also provides his viewpoint that humour is essentially about the combination of two different meanings, perceptions, or conceptions causing unpredictability or oddity as a condition needed in humour creation. Those basic concepts of humour such as discrepancies, unexpected, and unpredictability are employed in *Mind Your Language* situation comedy to trigger humour.

Mind Your Language is a situation comedy produced by London Weekend Television in 1977. These comedy series written by Vince Powell were divided into 4 seasons with 42 episodes in total numbers. That situation comedy takes place in a language learning centre in London. The characters involved are elements that represent a language learning centre such as the Head of the Language Center, the canteen keeper, the caretaker, teachers, and students. This sitcom tells us about the process of learning English by immigrants from various countries with different basic knowledge and different cultures. The immigrants learning English as their second language come from Japan, Germany, China, India, Pakistan, Greece, Italy, Spain, and France. They also represent their national characteristics or race to stereotype. Humorous utterances create in that

comedy seem natural and look like a real language learner in the real world. As a second language learner, using appropriate vocabulary, mispronunciations, and serving irrelevance responses in conversation that lead them to potential misunderstanding portray their natural funniness. That was because of their limited English competence and performance.

Several humorous critical review studies that focus on phonological issues had been conducted by Adrjan and Muñoz-Basols (2003); Seewoester (2009); and Hermintoyo (2011). Sukardi, Sumarlam, and Marmanto (2017); Jaech, Koncel-Kedzioriski, and Ostendorf (2016); Adesoye (2018); and Suamba, Budiarsa, Suastra, and Dhanawaty (2020) also examine humour from a phonological perspective by involving various language expression data such as in memes, tourism talk, and comedy skits. Besides the sound substitution, insertion, sound absorption, and a combined process, Adesoye (2018) finds the other phonological strategies to construct humorous utterances are by manipulating sound deletion, liaison, monophthongization, coalescence, and vowel strengthening. Focusing on how sounds affect meaning, Sukardi et al (2017) also investigate sound alteration in the process of humour creation. They find that sound substitution, permutation, insertion, addition, release, giving pause, changing pause, deletion, elongation of sound, and defence of sound as the strategies to elicit humour.

This research on humorous utterances in *Mind Your Language* situation comedy also focuses on phonological aspects employed to elicit humour. Focusing on segmental sound, how that smallest unit of analysis in the linguistic study is exploited to evoke laughter. This research is also an attempt to provide theoretically how every single person potentially produces humour by utilizing the sounds of the language they speak in daily conversation. Humour is a significant entity in humans' daily life because it can omit tension, avoid potential conflict, create funniness, reduce stress, enjoy conversations, strengthen social relationships, indicate intimacy, and strengthen solidarity (Puri and Basakara; 2019 and Romadlani and Wijana; 2021). Therefore, presenting verbal humour can provide positive social and psychological effects.

METHODS

This research adopts a descriptive qualitative method that examines the qualitative data. The data were taken from *Mind Your Language* situation comedy dialogue. That sitcom entirely consists of 4 seasons and this research takes the first season that has 13 episodes as the data source. Restrictive to the first season, this research is in an attempt to examine representative data and avoid analyzing saturated data of humour creation in the rest of the seasons. Humorous utterances indicated by phonological exploitation and the emergence of canned laughter or recorded laughter at the same time are considered the research data. Those data are analyzed and classified based on the form of phonological aspect they distorted. Moreover, identifying the form of phonological aspect manipulated in humour creation, this research also describes the motives why that phonological aspect provokes laughter as the signal of the existence of humour. An additional argumentation is also elaborated to strengthen the description of the findings. Even though closely related to the phonological aspect of humour, this research does not deal with the suprasegmental sound in the process of analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Seewoester (2009) asserts that phonological jokes involve manipulations of words at the sound level. Constructing inappropriateness and ambiguity through the speech sound certainly affects the various responses from the hearers unexceptionally laughing and confusedness. Some strategies for humorous creation in Mind Your Language situation comedy utilize phonological aspects such as sound substitution, omission, addition, minimal pair, metathesis, and sound compatibility. Those strategies capture how humour is constructed by manipulating the smallest unit of language presented in the following enlightenment.

Sound Substitution

A structured speech sound based on the phonological system of a language exemplifies that the sequence of segmental sounds contains meaning. If one or more segmental sounds arrangement is replaced by another segmental sound, it will substitute the characteristic of that segmental sound in the sequences. This sound replacement can be called a sound substitution that can be exploited to elicit humour such as in the examples below.

Example 1

Su Lee : Mr Blown.
Mr Brown : Yes.
Su Lee : Prease folgive my rateness! I apologize but I rost my way.
Mr Brown : Not to worry! What is your name?
Su Lee : Chung Su Lee.
Mr Brown : Su Lee. Where are you from?
Su Lee : Democlastic Lepublic of China.

From example (1), it can be seen how Su Lee replaced the sound [l] with [r] and the sound [r] was replaced by the sound [l] consistently. Su Lee, a student from China, often changed [l] sound by [r] as in the word [pr'iz] for [pl'iz], [r'eitnəs] for [l'eitnəs], [r'ɔst] for [l'ɔst], and [d'ɪprəm,æt] for [d'ɪpləm,æt]. Likewise, Su Lee also often replaced the [r] sound with [l] as the word [fɜlg'ɪv] for [fɜrg'ɪv], [bl'aʊn] for [br'aʊn], [d,eməkl'ætɪk] for [d,eməkr'ætɪk], [lɪp'ʌblək] for [rɪp'ʌblək], and [s'eklət,eli] for [s'ekrət,eri]. That sound replacement triggers the emergence of canned laughter as a humorous signal. That sound substitution also confirms that a deviation of the English phonological system broke the rules of sound arrangement and it sounds strange and incongruent to the correct English pronunciation. That occurs because the Chinese language, Su Lee's first language, does not differ [l] and [r] sound as phonemic sound, while English treats them as two different phonemes.

Example 2

Anna : I have no time to write more! Always that Mrs Valker is keeping me busy, Anna do this, Anna do that! She is a slavedriver that Mrs Valker.
Mr Brown : Walker.
Anna : Vat?
Mr Brown : W is pronounced 'Weh'! Your employer's name is Walker.
Anna : Ya, Valker. Do you know how many shirts Mrs Valker make me iron last night?

Mr Brown : Walker.
Anna : Ya Valker. Twelve!

Example 3

Mr Brown : Anna, your turn.
Anna : Vestern World Welcomes Vind of Change.
Mr Brown : Vunderful! Very good.

A similar identification of phonological exploitation especially in sound substitution is also found in examples (2) and (3). Anna, a student from Germany, has a weakness in pronouncing /w/ sound. The student coming from Germany was not able to produce [w] properly. Anna always replaces the [w] sound followed by a vowel with the [v] sound. In example (2), it can be seen how Mr Brown struggles to correct the way Anna pronounced [w]. Even though Mr Brown tries to correct her pronunciation of the [w] sound over and over again, Anna still does not pronounce that sound correctly. Anna pronounces [v'əkʰɜː] for [w'əkʰɜː]. That difficulty that Anna faces is because her first language, German, influences the way she produced English sounds. Moulton (1962) classifies 20 consonant phonemes in German at which the phoneme /w/ is not found. Any words beginning with the letter W will be pronounced by [v]. Anna's phonological deviation in the example above is categorized as an interference phenomenon. Her first language interferes with her second language learning process. However, that phenomenon is a common situation faced by second language learners. The involvement of phonetic features in German affects the way Anna pronounces a speech sound in English.

Another resemble case is found in the dialogue in example (3). Anna consistently changes the [w] sound with the [v] sound. She pronounces [v'estɜːn], [v'ɜːld], [v'elkəmz], and [v'aɪnd] for [w'estɜːn], [w'ɜːld], [w'elkəmz], and [w'aɪnd]. Humorous utterances in Mind Your Language involving phonological deviations are not only conducted by English learners. Mr Brown, as a teacher, and an English native speaker has also committed a mistake by changing the [w] sound into the [v] sound accidentally. That is because Mr Brown is influenced by Anna's mispronunciation. It leads him unconsciously sounds [v'ʌndɜːfəl] for [w'ʌndɜːfəl]. Unexpected pronunciation illustrated by Mr Brown indicates that the native speaker's mispronunciation is deliberately employed to trigger humour by breaking the English pronunciation.

Example 4

Su Lee : I cannot mally Ari.
Mr Brown : You see, the point is... Pardon?
Su Lee : I cannot mally Ari.
Mr Brown : Why can't you mally Ari... marry Ali.

Breaking the rule of English pronunciation is frequently utilized by an English native speaker to evoke laughter. In example (4), Mr Brown deviates from a phonological aspect by substituting the [r] sound into [l], a different phoneme in English speech sounds. Mr Brown who had a serious discussion with Su Lee was affected by Su Lee's pronunciation in sounding [r]. Su Lee is not able to interchangeably pronounce [r] and [l] correctly. She always interchanges those two sounds in her utterances. Su Lee's characteristic in producing those two sounds affects Mr Brown's pronunciation, especially in sounding [r] and [l]. When Su Lee utters I cannot mally Ari, Mr

Brown spontaneously imitates the way Su Lee pronounced [l] and [r] by replacing [m'eli] with [m'eri] and [ari] for [ali]. This case explains a similar motive to the example (3) of how Anna's pronunciation influences Mr Brown's. That unexpected pronunciation from a native speaker potentially triggers laughter signalling humorous utterances.

Sound Addition

In a daily talk, it is common to add segmental sounds to a phonetic combination for a specific purpose. The process of adding a consonant sound or vowel sound is called epenthesis (Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams, 2011). O'Grady, Dobrovolsky, and Aronoff (1997) also conceptualize epenthesis as a process of adding segmental sounds to an existing sound sequence. Some rules of forming the plural, possession, or single third subject in English involve the epenthesis process. However, if the process of adding sound is carried out and the process also breaks the rule of the combination, that process potentially provokes laughter.

Example 5

Mr Brown : Taro! How are relations between Japan and China?
Taro : Depends on political viewpoint! Japan light wingo! China refto wingo.
Mr Brown : I see! Are you light wingo or reft wingo? Right or left?

Example 6

Mr Brown : Taro, 'I am'.
Taro : I amo very happy to be learningo English.

A speech sound uttered by the speaker is a series of segmental sounds that have a meaning. Apart from different segmental characteristics, several languages also have different characteristics in syllable characteristics. Some languages tend to have the characteristics of a closed syllable, opened syllable, or both. Taro, a student from Japan, demonstrates the form of Japanese syllable characteristics in examples (5) and (6). Based on the examples above, Taro typically struggles not to produce closed syllables as it did in English. Ohata (2004) asserts that Japanese words represent the characteristics of an open syllable. The structure of Japanese syllables in Japanese words is in the form of cv-cv-cv, a consonant always followed by a vowel. The structure of opened syllables always ends with a vowel sound. Subsequently, native Japanese speakers prefer to make some modifications to the closed syllables in the second language they learn. In addition, Nakamura (2016) highlights that Japanese does not have consonants cluster which means that the Japanese language provides a simple speech sound structure.

From the two examples above, Taro adds vowel sound to several closed syllables such as [vj'up,ɔɪnt], [w'ɪŋ], [l'eft], [æm], [l'ɜrnɪŋ], and [ɪŋɡlɪʃ]. He modifies those closed syllables of English words by adding vowel sounds to [vj'up,ɔɪntɔ], [w'ɪŋɔ], [r'eftɔ], [æmɔ], [l'ɜrnɪŋɔ], and [ɪŋɡɔɪʃ]. Moreover, Taro also interchanges [l] and [r] sounds. Adding a vowel to a closed syllable and interchanging [l] and [r] sound are the characteristics of the Japanese language that affects Taro's English speaking. Based on example (5), it can be seen the way Taro pronounces some words in English influenced the way Mr Brown pronounces the word left, right, and wing. Mr Brown's pronunciation of those words is contaminated by Taro's pronunciation that pronounces them [l'aɪt] for [r'aɪt], [r'eft] for [l'eft], and [w'ɪŋɔ] for [w'ɪŋ]. Another phonological substitution conducted by Taro is found in example (6). Yet again, Taro adds a vowel sound into some closed

syllables like ['æm], [l'ɜrnɪŋ], and ['ɪŋɡlɪ]. The involvement of the first language features in the second language features represents an interference phenomenon. It occurs when a native speaker of a language is using his or her second language. Humorous utterances involving sound addition in examples (5) and (6) demonstrate that influenced pronunciation by the interlocutor and the interference phenomenon initiates the humour-creation process.

Example 7

Mr Brown : No Max, the letter U.
Max : H'umbrella.
Mr Brown : Yes good but it's not h'umbrella, umbrella.
Max : H'okay.

Another example of the epenthesis process could be seen in example (7). When Mr Brown asks Max to give him an example of an English word starting with the letter U, Max does not provide an answer correctly. Max responds to that question by saying [h'ʌmbrelə] and then another response by saying [h'okɛɪ]. Max regularly adds an aspiration sound for [ʌmbrelə] and [okɛɪ]. That is caused by the speaker's dialect of his first language. Based on the case, a consistent deviation in pronouncing incorrect English words potentially evokes laughter. To present humorous utterances, Max consistently breaks the phonological rules of pronouncing ['ʌmbrelə] and ['okɛɪ]. Even though Mr Brown gives a correction to Max's mispronunciation, Max still keeps his mispronunciation by uttering [h'ʌmbrelə] for ['ʌmbrelə] and [h'okɛɪ] for ['okɛɪ].

Sound Omission

A special phonological process in using language demonstrates a variety of individual different speech styles. In addition to the epenthesis process or sound addition, deletion or omission of sounds is also commonly found in everyday conversation, especially when the speed of speaking is in a high pitch. An omission or deletion commonly occurs in a vowel that is in unstressed pronunciation. Rowe and Levine (2016) and O'Grady et al (1997) illustrate how the unrounded high and front vowel [ɪ] and the sound of schwa [ə] in English are often omitted. Apart from English, some French vocabularies that end with a consonant also tend to sound out. However, if the sound-induction process is carried out to the sounds that should not be smashed and frequently occur, it may potentially evoke laughter by generating incongruent perceptions such as in some examples below.

Example 8

Anna : Vell, ve set together on the bed and he vos stroking my 'end.
Mr Brown : Which end?
Anna : This 'end.
Mr Brown : Ah, your hand.

Example 9

Mr Brown : Well done! Giovanni, can you give me a word beginning with the letter O
Giovanni : 'Orrible.
Mr Brown : No.
Giovanni : 'Oliday.
Mr Brown : No.

Giovanni : 'Opeless.

Eliminating segmental sounds, especially a phoneme that should be pronounced clearly can trigger funniness because they will produce incongruity by providing different meanings such as in example (8). The sound-inducing process occurred when Anna was explaining her embarrassing experience with her ex-boyfriend. When Anna pronounces the word hand, its aspirated sound at the beginning of the speech sound becomes very faint and even tends to be neglected. It sounds as if she pronounces ['end]. Mr Brown who is hearing the story presumed that Anna's boyfriend is stroking the backside of her body. He then clarifies to Anna which part of the body and Anna utters the same sound while raising her right hand. Mr Brown at last understands what Anna meant is [h'ænd] not ['end]. That sound omission leads the hearer to perceive different meanings and perceptions, especially a vulgar meaning that can elicit humour caused by Anna's imperfect pronunciation of the word hand.

A similar phonological process is completed by Giovanni when Mr Brown asks him to give an example of an English word beginning with the letter O. Giovanni gives several examples of English words that do not answer Mr Brown's question correctly. Giovanni consecutively gives examples of inappropriate words such as ['ɔrəbəl], ['ɑləd,ei], and ['oʊpləs]. Giovanni consistently drops its aspirated sound at the beginning of those words such as [h'ɔrəbəl], [h'ɑləd,ei], and [h'oʊpləs]. Giovanni drops an aspirated sound of those words so the sound of those words seems to begin with the letter O. Giovanni just mispronounces those English words in fulfilling Mr Brown's question. Because of that consistency in producing mispronunciation of the omission process, his pronunciation portrays the concept of incongruity between what they should be and what appears. The consistency of avoiding correct pronunciation certainly constructs funny utterances.

Sound Compatibility

Sounds compatibility is a phonological process that characterized utterances with resembling or identical speech sounds to the previous one in terms of number, sequence, and the choice of the segmental sound itself. This sound characteristic is usually utilized in rhymes, poems, or other poetical words. As one of the humour-creation strategies, sound adjustments can also be manipulated to create humour as in the example below.

Example 10

Mr Brown : Well then, how can you be possibly thinking of marrying Su Lee tomorrow?
Ali : Why not?
Mr Brown : It's bigamy.
Ali : Oh no, it's big of me.

Concerning Ali's wedding plan, Mr Brown attempts to explain to Ali the marriage law in England. Mr Brown should tell to Ali because Ali already has a Pakistani wife. Mr Brown tells Ali that to have two wives in England is not legally permissible even though it is admitted by Ali's religion. Mr Brown explains to Ali what he was doing was bigamy, a term used to refer to people who are married or have two wives or husbands. Hearing the term bigamy used by Mr Brown, Ali then responds to Mr Brown by an identical speech sound choice with [bigamy]. Ali insists that it is not bigamy but it was big of me. Those identical speech sounds, phonologically, have the same

number of syllables and consist of identical segmental sound elements, ['bɪgəmi] and [b'ɪgʌvmi]. Semantically, those two linguistic expressions have no relevance to each other. An effort of making identical speech sounds containing unrelated meanings demonstrates a process of humour creation by Ali.

Minimal Pair

To determine which segmental sounds are phonemic or allophonic by testing their features in minimal pair. "A minimal pair is made up of two forms that contain the same number of sound segments, display only one phonetic difference that occurs at the same place in the form, and differ in meaning" (Rowe and Levine, 2016). If those segmental sounds functioned to distinguish meaning, it can be inferred that they are different phonemes. On the other hand, if the segmental sounds are not functioned to distinguish meaning, they are an allophone of the same phoneme. This is in line with what Davenport and Hannahs (2005) assert that the minimal pair is a pair of words that are only distinguished by one sound, and it distinguishes lexical meanings. Some humorous utterances also utilize this phonological aspect as the process of humour creation.

Example 11

Ali : My name is Ali. Ali Nadim. I am coming to be learning the English.
Miss Courtney : Yes, yes! You wish to join our new class. English as a Foreign Language.
Ali : Yes please. I am hopping to be unrolled.
Miss Courtney : Hopping to be unrolled?!

Example 12

Mis Courtney : Where is Mr Brown?
Su Lee : Mr Brown not alived.
Mis Courtney : This is too bad! He should be here.
Su Lee : You want I give Mr Brown a massage?
Mis Courtney : I presume you mean message.
Su Lee : Collect.

Exploiting minimal pairs in the phonological aspect indicates quite positive effectiveness in humour creation. That is because a segmental sound replacement in the same series of sounds changes the meaning of the utterance intended by the speaker such as in examples (11) and (12). When Ali arrived at the language learning centre for the first time, he was looking for an English as a second language classroom. He also hopes that his name has been registered as a class participant. He then meets Miss Courtney, a leader of the department. After starting a small conversation, Ali conveys that he wants to join an English class by uttering I am hoping to be unrolled. The use of the word unrolled in his complete utterance constructs a strange and, semantically, funny meaning because it serves a mismatched meaning with previous utterances. Ali should have used enrolled to complete his utterance correctly instead of using unrolled. The sound [e] in [enr'ould] is replaced by the sound [a] changed the meaning of the word. This inappropriate sound also represents the incongruity theory of humour by showing unpredictability, mismatch, and contradiction. Ali should clearly utter that he hopes to be enrolled as the correct utterance.

A distorted minimal pair is also found in Su Lee's utterances in example (12). It occurs when Miss Courtney finds Mr Brown is not in the classroom. She then asks a student sitting in the frontline seat where he is. Su Lee who sits at that desk responds to Miss Courtney's question by twisting the distinguished features of the speech sound of the word alive for arrived, massage for message, and collect for correct. The occurrence of that manipulated minimal pair, especially in the speech sound of [alive] and [massage] marked humourous utterances in the dialogue. The use of a different sound of those speech sounds combination provides a different meaning. The word message is different from the word massage and the word alive is also different from arrive. Based on the utterance construction, Su Lee wants to say that Mr Brown does not arrive and she also asks Miss Courtney whether she will give Mr Brown a message. Stating the word alive for arrive and massage for message exactly drives the hearer to a strange and incongruent response that elicits laughter. That also illustrates that Su Lee's utterances are irrelevant in response to Miss Courtney's utterances.

Example 13

Juan : Increase in London rats.
Mr Brown : London rats?!
Juan : Increase in London Rats.
Mr Brown : Rates.

Example 14

Ali : We are having a quiz?
Mr Brown : Yes.
Ali : Like Mister Mind.
Mr Brown : Master Mind.

The other examples of minimal pair exploitation can be seen in examples (13) and (14) above. When Mr Brown asks Juan to read the newspaper he is holding, Juan does not read it correctly. Intending to say the increase in London rates, Juan reads the newspaper by saying the increase in London rats indeed. The speech sounds of [r'eɪts] and [r'æts] have a similar number of segmental sounds and they also have one segmental sound as a differentiated sound at the same position. Changing the sound [eɪ] to [æ] affects the meaning of the utterance. Juan means to say that shipping costs in London increased. His reading turns into an increase of rats in London by substituting the word rates by rats. That phonemic replacement in pronouncing [rats] for [rates] presents a different meaning and intention of the utterances. A similar case is also found in Ali's utterance in the example (14). The speech sounds of the words [master] and [mister] provide a similar phonetic environment and they are distinguished by a segmental sound, phoneme /a/ and /i/. Because of his excitement to have a quiz, Ali unconsciously utters mister mind for the mastermind. That phonological exploitation caused a different meaning production is linguistically inappropriate to complete his utterance. The word mister is used especially by children or to address a man whose name they do not know, while the word master means a person who is skilled at something. Humorous utterances in examples (13) and (14) were constructed by manipulating meaning from identical speech sounds of English words.

Metathesis

The metathesis phenomenon as a part of the phonological process is related to the restructuring or rearrangement of sound sequences. O'Grady et al (1997) underline that metathesis is a process that reorders a sequence of segmental sounds. This phonological phenomenon usually occurs because of the tendency to ease the way the speaker produces speech sounds. In addition, metathesis is commonly found in toddlers or young child speech who cannot pronounce like adults yet. Some words that they imperfectly pronounce are like ['æks] for ['æsk], ['æmənəl] for ['ænəməl], and [pəsg'eti] for [spəg'eti]. Humorous discourse in Mind Your Language situation comedy also creates a joke dealing with the metathesis process.

Example 15

Mis Courtney : "To be or not to be"! Does anybody know?
Danielle : William Shakespeare.
Mis Courtney : Correct.
Ranjeet : Excuse please! Who is this William Spearshake?

Example 16

Juan : You wait here! No speak, no nothing! OK?
Boris : KO.
Juan : No KO, OK!
Boris : OK.

Miss Courtney is temporarily handling Mr Brown's class with some general knowledge regarding one of the British greatest writers, William Shakespeare. Ranjeet who is not familiar with Shakespeare asks who William Shakespeare is by uttering who is this William Spearshake. Ranjeet's utterance demonstrates the metathesis process in the phonological aspect by restructuring sequences of the sound of Shakespeare into Speareshake. Another case illustrating metathesis is also found in the example (16). Boris is Juan's friend who comes from Russia. They meet at the bar the previous day and then Juan takes him to the place where Juan is studying English. Because Juan has to go to the class, Juan asks Boris to wait for him in the canteen. He also asks Boris not to speak to anyone. To confirm Juan's request, Boris's response in the example above indicates that there was a metathesis process of sounding [k'ei'oʊ] for ['oʊk'ei]. Boris reorders the correct pronunciation of that speech sound so that sounds strange and funny. The metathesis process in examples (15) and (16) carried out by Ranjeet and Boris is utilized as a humour-creation strategy. They manipulate the metathesis process to construct humorous utterances to evoke laughter.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, humorous utterances in Mind Your Language situation comedy phonologically exploit sound substitution, sound addition, sound omission, sound compatibility, minimal pairs, and metathesis process. As the basic concept related to humour construction, the deviation of the phonological process produces ambiguity, confusedness, strangeness, and inappropriateness. Those phonological exploitation forms certainly break the rules of the English phonological aspect. Those kinds of deviation indirectly also represent how the concept of incongruity theory of humour is involved. Humour creation commonly contains incongruity

between what is expected and what appears. Several phonological rules exploited such as sound substitution, sound addition, sound deletion, and metathesis are commonly found as the other previous researchers did. In the case of minimal pairs, several previous studies classified this kind of deviation into a sound substitution. They treat minimal pairs as a sound substitution phenomenon. Contrarily, this research deliberately separates that phonological distortion between sound substitution and minimal pair because this research presumes that sound substitution is considered a segmental sound change that does not influence the meaning, whereas the use of minimal pairs illustrates a segmental sound change that influences the meaning.

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