

# Causal Relationship as an Expression of Happiness and Joyfulness

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**Abstract** — *The topic of this research is about emotion and state of mind. Happiness and joyfulness (gembira and senang in Bahasa Indonesia) can be classified as types of positive emotion which is associated with causal relationship. Causal meaning reflects cause-effect relation. Causal relationship which is represented by words, clauses and sentences does not refer directly to emotions; it implies the complex phenomena of the emotions and states of mind (Santangelo 2002). The elements in the causal relationships can generate humorous sense resulting in smiles and laughter. Smiles and laughter reflect happiness and joyfulness. Happiness and joyfulness are the results of cause element in a particular context which is manifested through physical activities such as laughter. It is possible that a causal relationship reflects a negative mood such as cynicism, hatred, resentment, and so on. This study uses two types of theories namely theory of emotions and states of mind, and semiotic theory of iconicity in language in the form of a causal relationship. The method used is the incorporation of semiotic theory of diagrammatic icons from C.S.Peirce with the emotional theory of P.Santangelo. Emotional expert P.Santangelo based his theory on emotion in the field of psychology with the specificity of examining emotive elements in text with cultural influence. The data used is in the form of jokes in written texts. Jokes are culturally-laden linguistics expressions. Someone who is immersed in one culture can understand a joke, then smile or laugh after reading it. Therefore, the Santangelo's theory was chosen to examine the text in the form of a joke. Semiotics experts, C.S.Peirce proposes that one type of signs in semiotics is a diagrammatic icon. Diagrammatic icon is used to examine intersentential relationships in a discourse, including consecutive word order, action-purpose, cause-effect, and so on. This study aims to find and describe the joint flow of thought and the emotions of the Indonesians who, due to stimulation of certain sentences, conduct physical movements, such as laughter or smiles. Laughter and smiles are non-lingual elements related to emotion and states of mind. Laughter and smiles are not considered as emotion; it is rather a physical movement which expresses joy or happiness.*

**Keywords**— *emotion and states of mind, causal relationship, happy and joy, smiles and laughter, jokes*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Why do we smile or laugh after hearing or reading humor? What do the smiles and laughters express? Normally, we spontaneously smile or laugh whenever we hear or read something funny. In addition, smiling and laughing usually shows our emotion and state of mind, which is happiness. However, that is not always the case. There are times when one laughs to please a friend or as a friendly gesture. There are also times when an individual smile or laugh not because they are feeling happy, but to sneer or disparage others. There are many emotions which can be expressed through smiles and laughter.

The smiles and laughter being observed in this paper are those which reveal a happy and joyful emotion. Those with other functions will not be considered in here. The cause of the happy and joyful emotion is the humorous element of the humor or jokes. The humor is evident from the smiles and laughters of the listeners or readers. What is being laughed at or what is considered funny? In a comedic scene, the comedian's movements, words and sentences can be considered funny. Endahwarni in her book 'Kosakata dan Ungkapan Humor Srimulat' (1994) speaks of the vocabulary and phrase used by the comedic group of Srimulat in Java.

This paper does not discuss the humorous elements which originate from a combination of gestures and sentences spoken by comedians; It is solely focused on the content of the humor. The source of the data are humor or jokes which can be obtained in cyberspace. The authors of the humorous stories are unknown and unwritten. Humor or jokes are told or written just for amusement. The data is in the form of dialogues.

Sometimes, one cannot explain why he or she laughs after reading a humorous story. Often the answers are "it's just funny". When examined, the sentence "it's just funny" refers to the ideas embodied in the text. The problem, then, is to know the language units used, and in what way the combination of these language units elicits the smile and the laughter of the person who reads it. Another problem is finding out the way to map the order of events to the emergence of smiles and laughter.

The topic of this paper is smile and laughter as an expression of a joyful and happy state of mind. Psychologists have been doing research on the various causes of happiness as the expression of emotion. Experts on emotion and state of mind, such as Paolo Santangelo, in 1995, began his research project in the field of emotion in Ming and Qing dynasty literature from China. In this paper, Santangelo's theory became the theoretical foundation for analyzing the research data, which is in the form of humor.

Humors are closely related to the culture of a nation. One thing which is considered funny in one culture, might not necessarily be funny in other cultures. In this paper, Indonesian culture serves as a background for the humor which becomes the data. The results of this study on humor will enrich the research field of emotion and state of mind in Indonesia, especially research on the texts which has started to gain increased popularity in Indonesia.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *Humor and Culture*

Funny stories, or also known as humor, can be seemingly ridiculous stories which cause smile and laughter. Humor and smiles or laughter are two different things. In the above statement, we get two different elements, namely (1) funny stories, or humor, and; (2) smile and laughter. Mireault and Vasudevi (2016:4) state that the difference between humor and funny stories, and smiles and laughter is:

“Laughter is the physical response to the perception of humor, which refers more broadly to amusement. Humor is more complex than laughter, although it too does not require advanced cognitive capacities [...]”

As stated above, laughter is the physical response to the perception of humor. In this context, humor serves as a form of entertainment for the audience. It was further stated by the two scholars that experts agree that humor can contain senseless things such as discrepancies or irregularities, such as a big man and his soft voice. In this case, Mireault and Vasudevi's (2016) opinion is different from Raskin (1985: 236) which says that humor is related to a truth:

“Humor as a phenomenon, its philosophical, psychological and physiological nature, its aesthetic value, its relation to truth, ethical standards, customs and norms, its use in literature, its dependency on the society and culture have occupied the minds of a great number of thinkers for centuries”

However, Raskin (1985) and Mireault and Vasudevi (2016: 55-58) agree that humor relates to culture. The Dutch often degrade Flemish-speaking Belgian through their humorous tales. Englishmen always speak ill of the Scots by saying that they are very thrifty. How about the people of Indonesia with its many tribes and cultures? We will also find jokes containing satire about the customs of certain tribes in Indonesia which is considered a deficiency or negative value of the tribe. The relation between value and tribe is inseparable from its culture.

Therefore, humor is a cultural reflection of its creator. It can be said that there is a relationship between culture and the people who practice it. Cultural influence can be seen from the way of thinking, feeling and behaving of the people. Lazarus (1991) argues that it is not easy to separate people from culture because culture is only seen through people's mindset, behavior, and state of mind. This means that there is a connection between a culture with a group of people or a society. What is culturally indispensable is inseparable from its human element. So, culture and people are two elements of a circle, as Lazarus says (1991: 357):

“This involves a degree of circular reasoning, in that we define culture by shared personality characteristics of its people and personality by reference to internalized cultural values”

From the above, it appears that culture is visible through the characteristic shown by the people within the group, while the characteristics represented by the people of the group also reflect the culture. This is what Lazarus means when he said that human-culture is a circle. This is similar to the age-old inquiries about the originality of egg and chicken. Culture can be seen from the people, and the people reflect the culture attached to them.

However, it should be added that people and their groups are a collection of social beings. Culture deals not only with people reflecting their culture but within a wider scope, that is, the role of social elements. In Javanese culture, for example, the existence of Javanese kromo inggil (polite language, used when speaking with people of higher position, or older people) and Javanese ngoko (low or neutral language, spoken between peers) is a reflection of Javanese society which consists of priyayi (high-class people) and common people. When discussing Javanese culture, a discussion of the social structure of the Javanese society which gave birth to Javanese culture such as *unggah-ungguh* (a principle which deals with politeness and impoliteness, or propriety and impropriety), is necessary. It can be said that social and cultural elements are two inseparable elements.

The role of socio-culture is very important in researches in the field of emotion or state of mind. Santangelo (1995:101-103) argues that the human element plays an active role in accepting and selecting external stimuli. Emotive expressions are the result of human interaction in behaving, and they are not always the same if viewed in the time scale of the evolution of human life. In this context, the so-called "social role" must be taken into account in the field of emotional research.

Mireault and Vasudevi (2016: 57) argue that "humor, like culture, is related to the context of the time of its use". However, Mireault and Vasudevi are not as explicit as Lazarus who says that culture and people are the two elements which shape the circle. Mireault and Vasudevi argue that a humor has the possibility of shifting from a positive value at one time into a negative value at other times within a culture.

From the above discussion, I believe that humor is an expression of people behaviour in a certain culture; meanwhile culture is a part of a social institution. Thus, social institution, people and culture are the three elements involved when we try to understand the meaning of humor as a form of amusement. In this research, I refer to Southeast Asian society, especially Indonesian society with its culture (not a certain ethnic culture, such as Javanese, Ambonese, Sundanese culture), and people.

## *B. Theory of Emotion*

Santangelo began his research project in the field of emotion against the literary texts of the Ming and Qing dynasties (China). By basing his research from the psychological theory of emotion, he provides a definition of what is meant by emotion and state of mind (1995: 104):

"Temporary states of agitation of the mind or body that accompany the perception of a sense of desirability or aversion of tension or relaxation, in which the flow of consciousness is organised and motivated in the light of the modules of communication of a given culture."

The temporary states of agitation of the mind and body expressed above is observable from the unusual behavior performed by the individual concerned, such as the existence of cold sweat, abnormal head scratching, awkwardness, spontaneous smiling, and so forth. At that time, the tense and relaxed feeling occur alternately because there are stimuli to the nerves. All these circumstances depend on the culture of a society. One example of happiness state of mind is visible during the celebration of an individual's 17th birthday. These days, in urban Indonesian society, the 17th birthday of a daughter from a wealthy family will be celebrated with a party, or at least, it will be celebrated differently from the previous birthday. This is because the age 17 marks the transition from childhood into an adulthood. In Chinese culture, age 17 is not different from other age, so there is no celebration. Ages 60/61, 70/71, 80/81, 90/91, however, will be celebrated because if a person can reach the age of 60/61, he is considered to have received the blessing of old age. The 60th/61st birthday celebration must be filled with a happy, joyful and cheerful state of mind. In addition, the 80th/81st and 90th/91st birthdays are the peak of excitement because people rarely reach that age. In relation to birthday celebrations, Chinese culture is different from Indonesian culture. The festive celebration of the 17th birthday in Indonesia actually originates from Western culture. At the time of the celebration, people who celebrate his/her birthday, obviously, will be happy, especially when blowing birthday candles. At that time, the stimulation of demand accompanied by the sound of laughter and bustle of people who celebrate the birthday triggers the nerves in the brain which lead to the action of blowing the birthday candles. This stimulation triggers an emotion in the form of happiness and joy.

Santangelo (2002c: 3) examines such state of mind and emotion in the texts. He provides an additional definition of the emotion of the text in the form of literary works:

"Emotion or the state of mind in the meaning of affective long-lasting experience to be communicated through symbolic means, above all through language [...]"

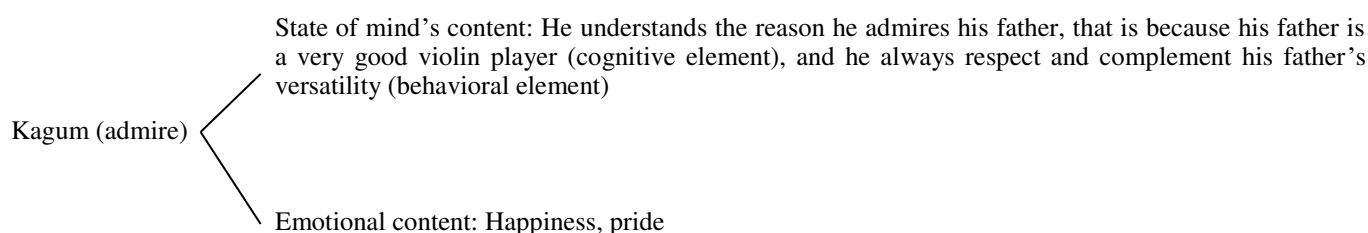
From the statement above, it can be seen that the emotion and state of mind that he is referring to in the text is the result of pent-up long-lasting affective experiences. The emotion and state of mind which become the basic concept of Santangelo theory can be interpreted as follows:

'Temporary states of agitation of the mind or body that accompany the perception of a sense of desirability or aversion of tension or relaxation as a result of pent-up long-lasting affective experiences to be communicated through language'

In constructing his theory, Santangelo has shown a cognitive element in the state of mind, which is a long-lasting experience. However, the emotion itself is temporary and arises because there is stimulation from the outside world. The presence of the temporary states of agitation of the mind or body has become an experience for the person who experiences it. That experience is an affective experience. Since it is an experience, it can be presented or re-emerged through storytelling in the form of literary works, humor, or other forms of language.

Given the experience-involving elements of cognition, the presence of emotion is inseparable from the elements of cognition. Santangelo named the element of cognition as a state of mind. Therefore, it can be said that emotions contain states of mind. For example, the word 'kagum' (admire) in the sentence 'dia mengagumi kepandaian ayahnya bermain biola' (he admires his father's versatility in playing the violin) is a state of mind sentence which contains elements of feeling and cognition. In the word 'kagum', there is an emotion of happiness and pride, along with the thought of acknowledging his father's ability in playing the violin. This is the reason why Santangelo names emotions and states of mind.

According to Santangelo, the state of mind is inseparable from emotion. Emotion is a pure radiance of a feeling of non-cognition or mental feeling, whereas state of mind is not necessarily the radiance of feelings. The state of mind is more of a psychological attitude that is also close to emotion, but it includes elements of cognition and behavior. The state of mind shows the existence of a (state) and a (mind). I tried to map the element of the word 'kagum' in the sentence 'dia mengagumi kepandaian ayahnya bermain biola' by showing the content of emotion and state of mind (Sutami 2006).



From the mapping, it appears that the content of the state of mind in the word 'kagum' is greater than its emotional content. When he admires his father, he was in a state he understood consciously. The state of admiring can be acknowledged because it takes place in a long span of time, for example, for decades. For decades he has honored his father as a violinist through his praise, appreciation to others or to his own father. Praise and appreciation is a result of someone's fondness of another person, and therefore, create a state of mind of happiness. In this case, the happiness state of mind arises because there is an element of cognition. In this paper, the word "emotion" already includes the meaning of "state of mind".

### *C. Cause-Effect in Pierce's Diagramatic Icon*

In C.S.Peirce's diagrammatic icon (theory of semiotics), cause-effect is a kind of logical relationship. This relational characteristic can be detected from both elements; a cause will be followed by an effect. Jokes in the form of text have humorous values which can make people smile or laugh. According to Peirce, causal relationship is considered as a sign of a causal element (jokes) and an effect element (smiles, laughter) which represents types of emotion (happiness, joyfulness). The emotion of happiness and joyfulness can be understood by relating causal relationship to activities like smiles and laughter.

## **III. METHOD**

The method used is a combination of causal relation and emotion. The aim of this research is to conduct an analysis to explain the elements which create the humorous value in the text containing humor which elicits laughter and smiles from the reader. It is also aimed at finding out the language units (words, phrases, clauses, sentences) which trigger the humorous effects of the humorous text. It is possible that socio-cultural element plays an important role in creating the humorous effects in the humor which make people laugh.

Furthermore, this paper will also expose the relationship between smiles and laughter with the emotion of happiness and joyfulness. Happiness and joyfulness which are related to emotions and states of mind in the community, is called feeling. To prove that joyfulness and happiness are related to feelings, a theoretical foundation is required. The theory referred to as the theory of emotions and states of mind was initiated by P.Santangelo from the University of Naples, Italy (1995).

The data used in this research are humor or jokes in the form of text. The text becomes a written media which mediates the existence of smiles and laughter on the reader. Smiles and laughter are the expression of happiness and joyfulness which arise after reading the jokes. The sequence of events creating emotion can be illustrated as follows:

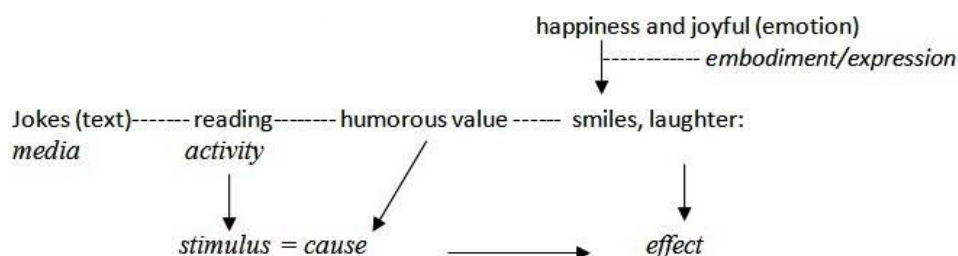


Fig. 1. The flow of thought between causal relationship and emotion.

The flow chart in Fig.1 shows that the activity of reading a text becomes the stimulus to another activity, that is to smile or laugh. This stimulus is considered as a causal element to another activity which becomes the effect of the causal element. Reading a joke produces smiles and laughter; smile and laughter express happiness and joyfulness. We can say that cause-effect relation induces emotion.

## IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In Fig. 1 of section 3 of this paper, the flow of thought about the existence of happiness as an emotion and states of mind which reflects the emotion was expressed through physical elements (in facial expression) in the form of smiles or laughter. The presence of a smile or laughter is the result of an action, that is the reading of the humorous text. The humorous texts have humorous value. A sequential cause and effect relationship is described as follows:

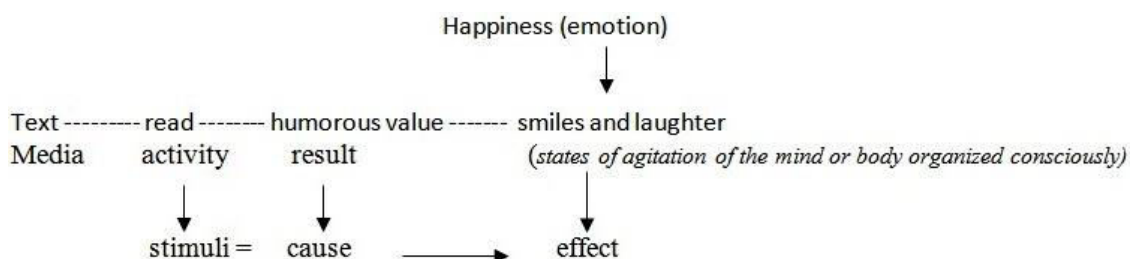


Fig. 2. The mapping of cause and effect relationship in the existence of happiness

The humor or jokes which will be discussed below are all reflections of a happiness and joyful emotion which is an effect of a cause. The cause is derived from a humorous value as a result of a text reading activity. When reading certain parts, the nerves are aroused to a state of happiness. That state of happiness is reflected through laughing and smiling. In other words, the humorous value cause the reaction of the face in the form of a smile or laughter. The reaction is a reflection of the emotion of happiness.

A. “Ada ayam?” (*Do you have any chicken in this place*)

The dialogue in this humor is between a customer and the food seller. The customer gets into a warteg (a small, roadside eatery), and inside it, they have this dialogue. The customer addresses the seller by “mbak” (common colloquial word for younger woman).

Pembeli: Ada ayam mbak?

Penjual : Ada Mas, mau pesen berapa?

Pembeli: **Usir** mbak, **saya** mau makan.

↓                      ↓

kalimat penyebab 1      kalimat penyebab 2

Customer : Do you have any chicken in this place?  
 Seller: Sure : How many do you want?  
 Customer : **Take it outside, I am trying to eat here.**

causal sentence 1      causal sentence 2

The readers of the above humor will smile because the storymaker use the word ‘chicken’ with two different contexts in one situation. The context of the first and second sentences is very clear, namely in *warteg*. If someone comes to *warteg* and asks: “ada ayam?” (Do you have any chicken in this place), naturally, the seller thinks that he wants to eat chicken because *warteg* is an eatery. Subsequently, there was a sudden change of context from *warteg* to a house in the village in which the inhabitants still keep chicken, and they let them roam freely in that place. In this context, there is a possibility that the chicken will annoy the people who are eating. The humorous effect is spurred by the word “usir” (take it outside) because the chicken in the *warteg* is definitely not live chickens, so there is no reason for it to be taken outside. Obviously, chicken which have been fried will not be able to walk again. The customer then quickly switches the context back to the *warteg*, i.e. “saya mau makan” (I am trying to eat here). This humor is ridiculous for the readers; therefore it causes laughter. The happiness which is reflected through laughter, in this example, can be mapped as follows:

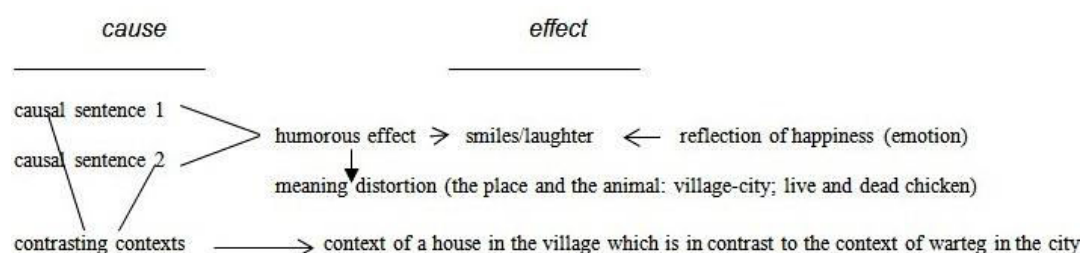


Fig. 3. The mapping of the humor “Ada ayam?”

Fig. 3. can be explained by the causal sentence 1 (the customer sentence “take it out”) and the 2nd causal sentence (the customer sentence “I am trying to eat here”). They show contrasting contexts, that is the context of a house in the village brought into the context of the city, especially in a *warteg*. Contrasting this contexts creates a humorous effect of an eatery crowded with chicken. Chicken in village houses are usually not caged, so they roam freely, while chicken in warteg do not wander again because they are dead. However, the cognition of chickens wandering in the village is brought to the cognition of chicken in a *warteg*, therefore creating an image that there are chicken wandering around in said *warteg*. This humorous effect creates a smile or a laughter which indicates an emotion of happiness.

B. “*Lagi apa Jon?*” (What are you doing, Jon?)

This is a humor containing a dialogue between a mother and her pre-school son.

Ibu : Lagi apa Jon?

Joni : Nulis surat buat Cila, Bu....

Ibu : Lho, kamu kan **belum bisa nulis**? → kalimat penyebab 1

Joni : **Gpp** bu, Cila juga **belum bisa baca** → kalimat penyebab 2

Mom: What are you doing, Jon?

Joni : I am writing a letter for Cila, mom

Mom: How is that possible? **You haven't learned to write yet.** → causal sentence 1

Joni : **That's ok. Cila haven't yet learned to read too.** → causal sentence 2



The smile which radiates after reading the above story is due to Joni's way of thinking that there is something parallel based on the reading and writing analogy. If someone can write something, others will be able to read whatever is written. So, since he (Joni) cannot write, then Cila also cannot read. In this example, the inequality of ideas between Joni with his mother causes a humorous effect. For Joni who hasn't studied in school yet, the act of reading or writing is not related to letters, but it is just an activity that is called writing and reading letters. So, for him, not being able to write letters is okay (gpp = gapapa = it's ok), because Cila also cannot read. Both activities are parallel and united; if you can not do X (write the letter) then you cannot do Y (read the letter). Joni thinks that it's okay for them not being able to write or read letters; what is important for him is the activity. The causality mapping is illustrated as follows:

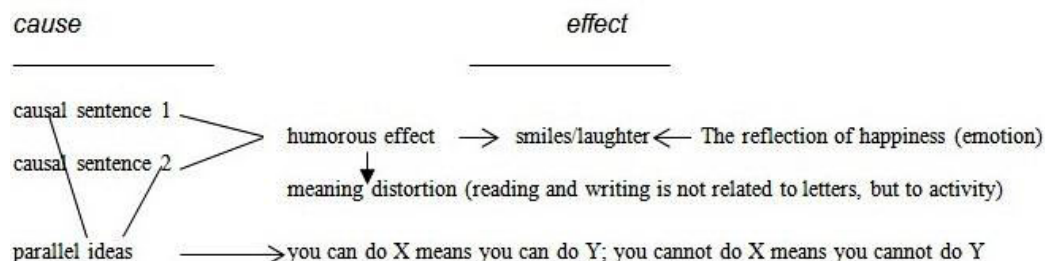


Fig. 4. The mapping of the humor "Lagi apa, Jon?"

The humorous effect of the different understanding of letter writing and reading shows Joni distorting the meaning of reading and writing using letters with the casual meaningless act of reading and writing.

#### C. "Ditilang Polisi" (Stopped by a cop)

A biker was stopped by a cop. Reading their dialogue will put a smile on our face.

Polisi : Mana surat-suratmu...??

Pengendara : Maaf pak, saya sekarang **udah gak pake surat**, → kalimat penyebab 1  
**saya pake email.....** → kalimat penyebab 2

Polisi : .....???

Cop : Where are are your papers? (license and registrations) → causal sentence 1

Biker : Oh, I don't use **paper anymore. I am using email for everything now.** → causal sentence 2

Cop : .....???

The biker's answer of "pake email" (I am using email now) is a ploy to outwit the police when asked for a driver's license. In answering, he shows himself adapting to the development of technology. As we all know, even an airplane ticket does not need to be printed on paper anymore these days. Causal sentence 2 shows the parallel analogy, which is, if there is an electronic airplane ticket, then a driver's license also exist in the form of electronic. The contrast of today's digital technology with an old-school element of still using paper creates the humorous effect. The mapping of the above dialogue can be seen below.

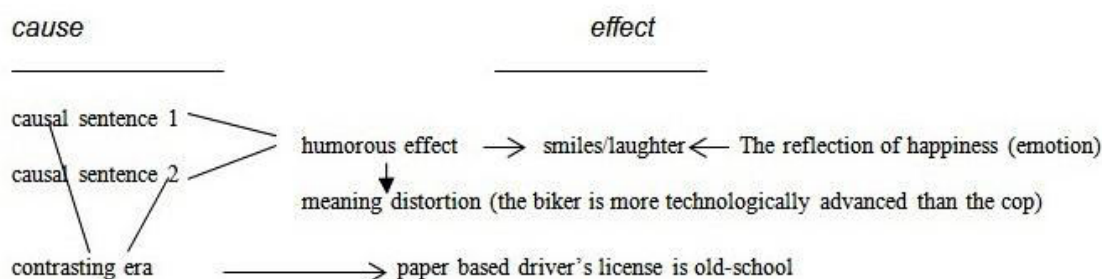


Fig. 5. The mapping of the humor "Ditilang Polisi"

#### D. "Nasi goreng" (Fried rice)

The following is a dialogue between the fried rice seller and a girl who is buying fried rice. This girl is called “neng” (also a common colloquial word for younger woman).

Neng : Bang....., nasi goreng **sepiring berapa?** → kalimat penyebab 1  
 Abang : Waduh neng....., **gak pernah saya itung tuh nasinya...** → kalimat penyebab 2  
 Neng : .....???

Neng : Excuse me, **how much is a plate of fried rice?** → causal sentence 1  
 Abang : **How should I know, I never count the rice inside it.** → causal sentence 2  
 Neng : .....???

Both the seller and the buyer (neng) are in the contexts of counting, but each is oriented toward a different idea. Neng is in the context of calculating the price, while the seller is in the context of counting the number of objects. The seller way of thinking is odd or weird because as a seller, he should have been dealing with price, not counting the amount of rice in the dish. The seller's reply shows the humor of this text. The mapping is illustrated below.

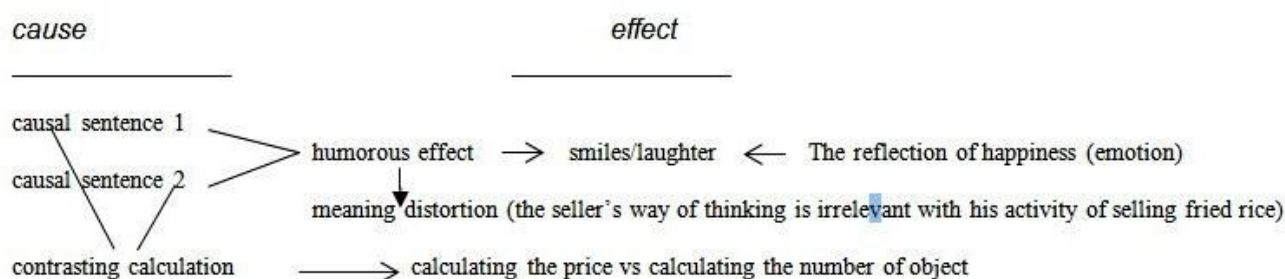


Fig. 6. The mapping of the humor “Nasi goreng”

#### E. “Menagih Janji” (To confirm the promise)

To understand the humorous effects of the following dialogue, we need to compare the use of the word "abang" in this example with one in example D above. The word "abang" (D) is used to address the male seller, while the "abang" in (E) is used by a woman to address her boyfriend. However, the word "abang" is also used as the name of the area in Jakarta, namely Tanah Abang area which is located from the corner of the Slipi area to the HI (Hotel Indonesia) roundabout in Central Jakarta. Below is a dialogue of a man who was addressed as "abang" by his girlfriend.

Pacar : Bang....., kapan abang **melamar aku?** → kalimat penyebab 1  
 Abang : **Sabar dik, tunggu tanah terjual....** → kalimat penyebab 2  
 Pacar : Memang abang punya tanah?  
 Abang: Abang tidak sombong dik. ....**Dari ujung Slipi sampai bunderan**  
**HI...., itu tanah abang** → kalimat penyebab 3

Girlfriend : Bang....., **when are you going to propose to me?** → causal sentence 1  
 Abang : Have patient, dear, **wait until my land is sold.** → causal sentence 2  
 Girlfriend : You have a land?  
 Abang : Abang doesn't like to brag, but....**from the corner of Slipi to HI**  
**roundabout is actually my land, \*Tanah Abang** → causal sentence 3



\*Note: Tanah means land; So, Tanah Abang basically means Tanah which belongs to Abang

There are three causal sentences in this example, the second causal sentence answer the first casual sentence with the theme 'asking to be proposed to'. With only those two sentences, the humorous effects have not been expressed yet. It is expressed when there exists a transfer of context from 'proposal' to 'area coverage' by playing with the word "abang" since the word "abang" is a homonym. The word "abang" who has different meanings is used as a diversion. "Abang" means (1) brother (2) red.

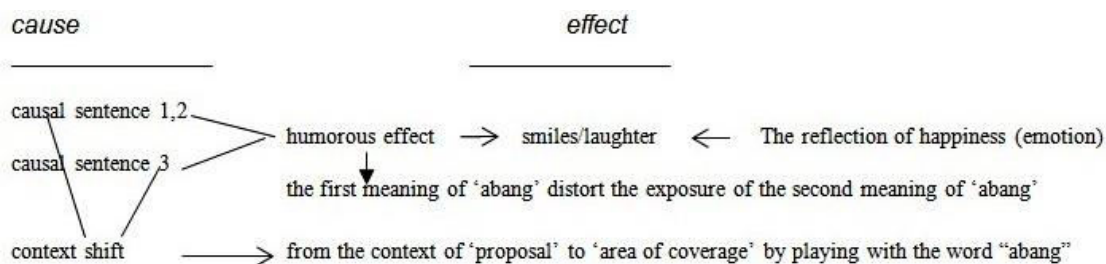


Fig. 7. The mapping of the humor "Menagih janji"

## V. CONCLUSION

Emotions and state of mind can be realized indirectly through words, phrases or sentences known as causative terms. In humor, causative terms are words, phrases or sentences that could stimulate emotions and state of mind. The nature of the cause can vary; they can be the facial expression (smile, frown, laughter, cry) or actions (hugging, punching, kissing, pinching). The presence of emotion inside the humor is indirect.

In the context of humor, the indirectness is presented in the form of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. There is not a word in the sentence "Abang tidak sombong dik. ....Dari ujung Slipi sampai bunderan HI...., itu tanah abang" (Abang doesn't like to brag, but....from the corner of Slipi to HI roundabout is actually my land, Tanah Abang) contains a happy emotion; there are no emotionally charged words in the sentence. However, only after reading the whole sentence, a smile will be present, and a smile is a reflection of happiness state of mind. That the sentence is interpreted as humorous by Indonesian readers, it is based on social situation in Indonesia, in this case, the social condition in the field of education.

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