

# **An Analysis of Lexical Creativity and Humor in English Web-based Gag Cartoons**

**Parnkamon Singsatit**

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Khon Kaen University

Email: parnkamonsingsatit@kkumail.ac.th

**Wareesiri Singhasiri**

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Khon Kaen University

Email: wareesi@kku.ac.th

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## **Abstract**

Language play is an essential tool to carry out humor in gag cartoons, especially lexical creativity (Blake, 2007). This study aimed to find types of lexical creativity and techniques of humor used in English web-based gag cartoons. Ninety English web-based gag cartoons were used in the study. The frameworks of Berger (1993), Kenny (2001), and Zabir and Haroon (2021) were employed to analyze the results and implications for the relationship between lexical creativity and techniques of humor. The findings showed that blending and creative orthography were used the most as lexical creativity. As for techniques of humor, definition and literalness were most commonly employed. There were relationships between lexical creativity and techniques of humor. They imply that the writer's intention to convey humor is an important factor in occasional relationships between lexical creativity and techniques of humor. Furthermore, lexical creativity and techniques of humor in gag cartoons can be beneficial for language learning and teaching. Thus, pedagogical implications for EFL learners and instructors are also discussed.

**Keywords:** creative lexical process, lexical creativity, techniques of humor, web-based gag cartoons

Reading is an essential lifelong skill for every person. As a fundamental skill in daily life, reading helps people gain information and knowledge and understand the world, society, and people's interactions through texts. People can also obtain pleasure and enjoyment from reading (Clark & Rumbold, 2017). Reading for pleasure, also known as leisure reading, is a wide-ranging and more

flexible reading in which readers read for different purposes and read different types of materials apart from academic texts such as social media, magazines, online sources, newspapers, books, and more (Leisure Reading Board Task Force, 2014). There are various genres to be read for pleasure. Among these, humor is one genre that readers are going to encounter. Humor appears in different types of texts in daily reading, thus, there can be various forms of humor in different reading materials.

Cartoons are a form of visual-verbal humor (Hempelmann & Samson, 2008) which combines language and images, in contrast to verbal humor in written texts which depends solely on language. Cartoons have been a feature of our daily reading for a long time. They are considered a convenient method to communicate or convey messages and opinions to other people (Tsakona, 2009). Cartoons with humor are widespread and perform an essential role in both popular and academic culture. Cartoons with written text can be divided into several forms; cartoons, gag cartoons, comics, manga, webcomics, and more. Cartoons are used for study as a type of reading that people are able to see in their daily lives. The previous studies of Robingah (2020) and Hasanah and Hidayat (2020), have emphasized visual literacy and semiotics but not included the language aspects. However, cartoons are made of both text and images (Cohn, 2013) and how cartoons work can be complex according to multi-layered contents with propositional content, visual representation, and language used as narration. All the components can be separate, simultaneous, or collaborative to convey humor (Fägersten, 2020). Therefore, language play in humor can be analyzed further as an essential source of humor which influences readers' understanding apart from images.

According to Nwokah, Hernandez, Miller, and Garza (2019), language play is used as an intentional linguistic strategy for specific purposes in communication and performs a significant role in manifesting humor and other fictional stories. Language play does not only include linguistic forms to deliver humor, but also includes creativity to show humor in cartoons. Creativity in language refers to language coming from native speakers, which does not follow regular rules and instead is used in unpredictable forms (Lyons, 1997; Bauer, 1983, as cited in Zawada, 2005). Language play is a multi-dimensional aspect of linguistic ability and involves every language domain; semantics, styles, lexis, grammar, text and discourse (Zawada, 2005). To understand any jokes that use language play means that the reader, apart from having background knowledge and context for the jokes, also needs to understand its linguistic patterns to appreciate the humor (Nwokah et al., 2019). Among the possible linguistic creativities within humor, lexical creativity is an interesting domain that can be found often in cartoons since they need witty expressions to convey humor (Blake, 2007).

Lexical creativity is manifested by exploiting ordinary grammatical rules in unexpectedly creative ways while sometimes involving phonology as well (Munat, 2007). Thus, it is difficult to identify certain formations of lexical creativity in each context. Therefore, many previous studies have investigated the formations of lexical creativity in various types of texts. Magazines, dictionaries and handbooks, short stories and novels, political speech, social media, and children's literature all have been used as materials for the study of lexical creativity (Bennui & Hashim, 2013; Konieczna, 2012; Llamas & Rodriguez, 2005; Moehkardi, 2016; Ofoegbu & Usar, 2018; Zabir & Haroon, 2021). All the results are various because of the different contexts of the studies.

The previous studies of lexical creativity rarely focused on lexical creativity in humor. There are some studies such as Llamas and Rodríguez (2005) and Ofoegbu and Usar (2018) who conducted studies of the lexical creativity in magazines and political speech. Even humor is a genre for which lexical creativity is suitable to be employed since it can be used to make humor funnier and draw more attention (Fägersten, 2020). Furthermore, the previous studies of Al-Momani, Badarneh, and Migdadi (2017), Hajjaj (2018), Hasanah and Hidayat (2020), Tyumbu (2018), and Robingah (2020) emphasized the semiotic analysis and visual literacy due to cartoons' modes of communication. In fact, language in cartoons can appear in various forms as it is used to convey humor and its images. Therefore, instead of focusing on how images convey meaning and humor, the present study investigates inventive language that occurs in cartoons to deliver humor.

There are few studies conducted upon lexical creativity and how humor is conveyed through cartoons as a type of reading. Thus, the present research objectives aim to find what types of lexical creativity are used in web-based gag cartoons and identify the techniques of humor used in web-based gag cartoons. The reason for using web-based cartoons is due to the popularity of the Internet and digital technology in the modern era. The coming of the Internet affects reading and turns it into online reading. It offers new ways for readers to access many different kinds of texts in various languages anywhere and at any time. Thus, online reading can provide readers with several benefits (Allington & Pihlaja, 2016; Loan, 2011).

## **Literature Review**

### ***Verbal Humor***

Hidayati (2019) states that verbal humor is associated with language. Thus, any types of humor which relate to language and linguistic features can be counted as verbal humor. For example, puns are verbal humor which play with word sounds and meanings. A joke is verbal humor which delivers humor through funny storytelling, and even riddles can be counted as verbal humor if

the aim is humor. Verbal humor is designed and constructed intentionally; it cannot be conveyed without plans to produce a humorous effect. Ermida (2008) explained how language is used in humor as an intentional strategy that the user has to carefully plan and design before use in order to make it effective in conveying meaning. Verbal humor can be created for various purposes such as expressing absurdities or making fun of its targets (Senchantichai & Kadsantier, 2019). Besides being used in communication, verbal humor also attains literary qualities by using a variety of linguistic devices and domains such as metaphor, analogy, ambiguity, and more to build a poetic aesthetic (López & Vaid, 2017). Whether it is spoken or written, verbal humor mostly relies on ambiguity to succeed in its humorous intention (Ageli, 2014; Bell, 2016). In terms of linguistic elements, the incongruity is important. Incongruity is often used in verbal humor to break the expectations and surprise readers (Ermida, 2008). It can be from both the context of humor and from the language play used in humor, especially from the ambiguity between two meanings being understood in the context (Blake, 2007; Ross, 1998). All these incongruities are used in verbal humor to manifest unexpected things in contrast to reality and break the expectations of the receivers (Bell, 2016). Verbal humor is interesting from a linguistic perspective because it can be delivered by using various linguistic components which have been modified for humorous ideas. (Nasr, 2015). To be able to understand verbal humor better, Shade (1996) suggests that the audience needs to understand the incongruity that occurs in any kinds of verbal humor.

Verbal humor is widely used for both spoken and written language since it relies on the language. Therefore, there are more verbal humor types than non-verbal humor. According to Bucaria (2017) verbal humor is mostly employed in motion pictures as it can be adopted into spoken language, the way it is expressed normally is using wordplay or linguistic mechanisms. On the other hand, verbal humor in written language is also widespread. Readers can find humor through reading different sources of texts, for example, newspapers, magazines, advertisements, websites, and more. Humor is normally applied in various reading materials primarily for pleasure and entertainment (Mitchell, 2007). When it is featured in reading materials, it can help those materials become more interesting and attract the reader's attention (Mitchell, 2007). Additionally, Behrens (1977 as cited in Hempelmann & Samson, 2008) also stated that cartoons could possibly be considered as a type of verbal humor because images alone cannot convey humor (p. 609). Yet, it cannot be denied that both language and images of cartoons are still necessary (Tsakona, 2009) since each of them works together in various ways to present humor (Saraceni, 2003). Cartoons as verbal humor can be various types. For example, a comic is a funny story with strings of drawing panels (Saraceni, 2003), and a webcomic is a kind of comic which is read on websites (Campbell, 2006 as cited in Bramlett,

2018, p. 77). However, the form of cartoon which the present study refers to is the single-panel humorous cartoons.

### ***The Techniques of Humor***

The techniques of humor are proposed by Berger (1993). The techniques are often cited in later works by Berger (1997; 2020) as a framework that can be employed to help analyze how humor is conveyed according to its categories. In fact, there are 45 techniques of humor categorized into four basic categories: language, logic, identity, and action. According to Berger (1993), these four categories explain how humor is produced. The language category refers to any techniques that convey humor through verbal communication. The logic category refers to techniques which are ideational. The ideas used for this kind of humor are based on incongruous reasons and logic, which are mostly concrete. The identity category refers to humor manifested by the speakers' identities (Abida & Darma, 2021). Finally, the action category consists of any techniques which build humor by using non-verbal communication or physical interactions. However, these techniques do not need to appear separate from each other in order to create humor. The techniques can be employed and combined together because the use of a single technique of humor may not be as effective by itself (Berger, 1993). This framework aims to help explain the mechanisms of humor and the adaptation these techniques into people's own communication. Also, this framework is said to be involved in all forms of humor, such as comics, cartoons, situation comedies, and more (Berger, 2020). According to Rochmawati (2017), techniques of humor can be referred to as rhetorical mechanisms in humor. The rhetorical mechanism in humor refers to the way humor is conveyed. It is believed that understanding these mechanisms can help readers understand the goals of humor or the writer's intention in conveying humor.

**Table 1**

*Techniques of Humor (Berger, 1993)*

The techniques of humor	Description and Examples
<b>1. Allusion</b>	Refers to a common humor people acknowledge as it is presented in daily life. Making fun by pointing out the stupidity which has been done and is mostly referenced by well-known characters or events readers know
<b>2. Bombast</b>	The differences between what is said and the way it is said
<b>3. Definition</b>	The actual definition of a certain word which is defeated from the expectation in order to convey humor
<b>4. Exaggeration</b>	The boast-out thing that is beyond the reality.

The techniques of humor	Description and Examples
<b>5. Facetiousness</b>	Refers to humor from non-serious language or attitudes of certain characters.
<b>6. Infantilism</b>	Refers to adult characters using infantile words or sounds to imitate and mock someone or something.
<b>7. Insult</b>	Verbal aggression which aims to directly degrade someone or something for humorous intention
<b>8. Irony</b>	Refers to humor in which the real meaning of a speaker's intention is different from what the speaker says.
<b>9. Literalness</b>	A moron joke involving characters who act out senseless things literally.
<b>10. Misunderstanding</b>	Humor which comes from the misunderstanding in communication between characters. It is mostly referred to in linguistics
<b>11. Pun and wordplay</b>	A wordplay for a pair of words which have the same sound but different meanings
<b>12. Repartee</b>	The verbal reactions between characters by using insults but in witty manners.
<b>13. Ridicule</b>	Humor that aims to deride someone or something
<b>14. Sarcasm</b>	Irony for the purposes of mockery or to show contempt
<b>15. Satire</b>	Humor that refers to the stupidity of a person, an institution, or an idea, often meant to criticize their faults or weaknesses

### ***Web-based Gag Cartoons***

Recently, reading online has become widespread because of the development of the Internet and digital technology. The coming of the Internet turns traditional reading into online reading and offers readers new ways to interact with text online. (Allington & Pihlaja, 2016). Thus, web-based gag cartoons are online reading that can be done via websites. The benefits of web-based cartoons are related to online reading as they let the readers read and choose their own reading styles freely. Reading online can be carried out anywhere and anytime. Importantly, it can be used to learn the language since the reading material can be found in many different languages; it can present readers essential lexical, grammatical and cultural knowledge unconsciously too (Fidler, 2004; Loan, 2011).

According to Attardo (2014), cartoons as single-panel images for reading come in two major types, political cartoons and gag cartoons. Political or editorial cartoons are mainly aimed at criticizing social matters or alluding to political issues. In contrast, gag cartoons are not related to other social matters or serious circumstances, the purpose is to deliver humor for readers only. Gag cartoons can be fully understood through the use of captions (Harvey, 2009; Pedrazzini & Scheuer, 2018). Additionally, they are funny and often published in entertainment sources like magazines, newspapers, websites, etc. (Attardo, 2014). How verbal captions work with gag cartoons in order to convey meanings

and humorous intentions can be categorized into three major types: single-speaker captioned cartoons, multi-speaker captioned cartoons, and wordplay captioned cartoons. To be more specific, the cartoons used in this present study are referred as ‘gag cartoons’. Harvey (2009) states that gag cartoons mainly aim for humorous and funny meanings to be conveyed through single-panel images accompanied with verbal captions.

### ***Language in Cartoons***

Normally, cartoons consist of both language and images (Cohn, 2013). Language and images shown in humor cartoons can be combined or separated to create humor (Fägersten, 2020). Humorous cartoons, especially ones with captions like gag cartoons, do not depend solely on images to convey humor, but language also plays a big part. Saraceni (2003) mentions that the relationship between language and images in cartoons is different from the relationship between words and pictures in children’s literature. Words and pictures in children’s literature mirror each other’s meaning. In contrast, language in cartoons works together with the images to promote understanding. However, language used in humorous cartoons is not plain language like people use to communicate in daily life. Gag cartoons often use a form of creative language called ‘language play’ which is a linguistic strategy that modifies the linguistic domains in order to make the language in humor become more playful, unpredictable, and interesting (Bauer, 1983; Lyons, 1997, as cited in Zawada, 2005; Nwokah et al., 2019).

In other words, language play can be formed from all linguistic fields; lexical, phonological, syntactic, pragmatic, and morphological features of a text and also applied by various methods (Zawada, 2005). In humor, Blake (2007) and Ermida (2008) state that the intentional misinterpretation and misspelling through the uses of uncommon grammatical rules are commonly used for language play, including neologisms (a new creative word created for specific and temporary uses). They are generally employed to break the expectation of readers by proposing a new meaning or implying literal and latent meanings (Pedrazzini & Scheuer, 2018). Thus, to appreciate any gag cartoons, the reader should be able to understand how the linguistic creativity is used in the cartoon (Fägersten, 2020) because language play solely does not have any humorous intentions, but it needs to cooperate with the context of gag cartoons to deliver humor (Nwokah et al., 2019).

Overall, language in cartoons works along with images to convey humor. When language plays an important role, the role of picture will be lessened (El-Masry, 2021; Harvey, 2009). The language within humorous cartoons is not just simple language. Its linguistic domains can be modified to create creative language in order to deliver laughter. Among the possible linguistic creativities within humor, lexical creativity is an interesting domain that can be found often

since humor needs witty expressions to help convey the humor through new words or through modifying existing words (Blake, 2007).

### ***Lexical Creativity***

Lexical creativity refers to a creative word that has been modified from an original word with an unexpected formation to be employed for special contexts, not for ordinary uses in communication (Munat, 2016). There are no exact rules proposed for word formations in lexical creativity since lexical creativity is formed from unpredicted expectations to build surprise according to the context or writer's specific goals. However, the formation of lexical creativity is different from normal productive word formations in which people can predict the results. Lexical creativity with a very creative formation rarely appears in normal communication (Ladányi, 2000). Thus, it sometimes can be referred as 'hapax legomena' according to Kenny (2001), which means the words that occur only once in one work. Therefore, lexical creativity is mostly created and designed for a specific audience or a specific context, not for general communication (Ermida, 2008; Munat, 2016).

Kenny (2001) states that "lexical creativity is seen here as residing either in the creation of new words, or in the novel collocation of existing words." (p. 73). Moreover, lexical creativity can enhance the imagination of readers (Zabir & Haroon, 2021). Another use of lexical creativity is to draw the reader's attention as most lexical creativity is catchy and playful (Konieczna, 2012). In humor, lexical creativity is applied like other language play that have been used as a strategy to deliver laughter and humor to readers through linguistic domains, especially the lexical domain which is employed for building the conventional language for derivation words based on the context of its humor (Nwokah et al., 2019).

### ***Creative Lexical Processes***

The creative lexical processes (Kenny, 2001; Zabir & Haroon, 2021) are used as the main method to analyze the lexical creativity processes in the present study. Originally, the creative lexical process was proposed by Kenny (2001). The original study used the corpus study to investigate language complexity for word translation between German and English. The study emphasized lexis and used a morphological analysis to determine the relationship between lexemes and creativity in linguistic domains. It was believed that lexemes do not work separately from other domains, especially in semantics and collocations in translation. It was found that creative lexical processes occurred through lexical creativities in text for benefits in translation. The creative lexical formations found in this study were divided into four processes: creative derivation, creative orthography, complex verbal noun, and compounds. The findings of this study were supposed to help other studies examine strategies of word formation and



give guidelines for solving translation problems (Kim, 2010, p. 285). Later, Zabir and Haroon (2021) conducted a related study which expanded upon Kenny's framework by adding two more types of creative lexical processes: blending and acronyms. Therefore, the present study includes both frameworks to analyze all the information gathered from the data in detail.

**Table 2**

*Types of Creative Lexical Processes (Kenny, 2001; Zabir & Haroon, 2021)*

<b>Creative Lexical Process</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>1. Creative orthography</b>	The use of existing words to be derived in new forms in order to serve new meanings that accompanied with contexts writers intend to.	Riddikulus	The technique uses a non-standard spelling to change the original spelling from 'ridiculous' into 'Riddikulus' and used as a magical spell.
<b>2. Creative derivations</b>	The use of prefixes and suffixes in creative ways to make new words for certain contexts and purposes.	unDursleyish	Dursley is a character from Harry Potter. Then it is added with prefix 'un' and suffix 'ish' in order to use as an adjective to describe others.
<b>3. Complex verbal noun</b>	The combination of verbal nouns with many other complements to create new orthographic words.	having your ears boxed	The complements in the sentence are used to combine with the heading word in order to convey meaning.
<b>4. Compounds</b>	Two or more words are joined together in order to make new words	Starfur	It combines two words together (star + fur) in order to create a new word based on their meanings
<b>5. Blending</b>	Two words are blended together in order to make new words. Some blending results in puns.	Remembrall	The sounds of the words 'remembrance' and 'ball' are blended
<b>6. Acronyms</b>	The abbreviation of words for new meanings	VIR	There is no change in its appearance but the concealed meaning has been derived (Very Important Rodent)

## Research Methodology

### Materials

The materials used in the present study were 90 English web-based gag cartoons which contained lexical creativities according to Pedrazzini & Scheuer

(2018). Furthermore, the source of materials must be accessible for any readers (Allington & Pihlaja, 2016) and widely known as native English for readers to represent how the language is used generally (Bennui & Hashim, 2013). Thus, the gag cartoons were from Gocomics, a popular website which has been providing up-to-date cartoons from various writers since 2005 up until now. All gag cartoons selected for the study have been provided from 2018 to 2022 to cover all three categories of cartoons. There are three categories of gag cartoons used in the study; wordplay captioned cartoons, single-speaker captioned cartoons, and multiple-speaker captioned cartoons (Attardo & Chabanne, 1992; Harvey, 2009).

**1) Single-speaker captioned cartoons:** single-speaker captioned cartoons refer to a cartoon in which only one of the characters speaks to help convey humor. According to Harvey (2009), it was once believed that gag cartoons would be funnier if the image and caption were joined together to enhance the hilarity by making only one character speak (Attardo & Chabanne, 1992).

**2) Multiple-speaker captioned cartoons:** multiple-speaker captioned cartoons refer to a cartoon in which multiple characters speak or talk to convey humor. They mostly appear as short conversations between two characters (Attardo & Chabanne, 1992; Harvey, 2009).

**3) Wordplay captioned cartoons:** This type is according to Attardo and Chabanne (1992) who found the shortest caption in verbal jokes in only five words. Hence, they concluded that humor in cartoons can be conveyed with a very low number of words if it can deliver a humorous intention well.

### ***Research Procedure***

The process was carried out according to the textual analysis method following the study of Bennui and Hashim (2013). Two frameworks were applied to identify the processes which form lexical creativity and the techniques for conveying humor in gag cartoons. The first framework is called the creative lexical process by Kenny (2001) and elaborated by Zabir and Haroon (2021). The second framework is the techniques of humor by Berger (1993) to analyze how humor is conveyed. Additionally, the triangulation method was employed to check the reliability of analysis by an interrater from the faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. According to Bennui and Hashim (2014), the procedure of textual analysis is as follows.

**1) Text Selection:** gag cartoons were checked for viability by sorting out gag cartoons with lexical creativity from gag cartoons without lexical creativity. In fact, all gag cartoons can employ fancy language, and even though the techniques of humor can possibly point out the word that creates humor in gag cartoons, it does not mean all of them are lexical creativities. Some gag cartoons employ common language to convey humor without changing any forms or

deriving new meanings. Some gag cartoons convey humor by only images or play with common words.

**2) Text coding and categorizing:** the two main frameworks were employed in this process in order to analyze and find types of lexical creativity processes and techniques of humor in each humorous cartoon used.

**3) Text analysis and interpretation:** the data were analyzed according to the frameworks. The analysis and interpretation are presented in tables. Also, it is followed by a descriptive explanation of each result before being summarized in the conclusion. The images involved in the gag cartoons are also explained in the analysis as supporting detail which help make the humor clearer. However, the image explanation will not be discussed in detail since the present study's main objective is to emphasize the language aspect in delivering the lexical creativity and humor. The results gained from the quantitative data present the frequency and percentage of the use of creative lexical processes and techniques of humor in the three types of gag cartoons (single-speaker captioned cartoons, multiple-speaker captioned cartoons, and wordplay captioned cartoons).

## Results

### *Types of Lexical Creativity Used in English Web-based Gag Cartoons*

The English web-based gag cartoons were categorized into three types: wordplay captioned, single-speaker captioned, and multiple-speaker captioned cartoons. Each category contains 30 gag cartoons. In regard to wordplay captioned cartoons, there were 22 pieces of blending, 4 pieces of creative orthography, 3 pieces of compounds, and only one piece of creative derivation. As for single-speaker captioned cartoons, there were 15 pieces of blending, 10 pieces of creative orthography, 2 pieces of compounds, 2 pieces of creative derivation and only one piece of acronyms. In the last category, multiple-speaker captioned cartoons, there were 16 pieces of blending, 5 pieces of creative orthography, 5 pieces of creative derivation, 2 pieces of compounds and only one piece for each acronyms and blending/creative orthography.

**Table 3***Creative Lexical Process used in English Web-based Gag Cartoons (Overall)*

<b>Overall creative Lexical Processes used in English web-based gag cartoons (occurrences)</b>						
<b>Types of gag cartoons</b>	<b>Lexical creativity</b>	<b>Blending</b>	<b>Creative Orthography</b>	<b>Creative Derivation</b>	<b>Compounds</b>	<b>Acronyms</b>
Wordplay captioned cartoons		22	4	1	3	-
Single-speaker captioned cartoons		15	10	2	2	1
Multiple-speaker captioned cartoons		16	5	5	2	1
<b>Total (occurrences)</b>		53	19	8	7	2
<b>Total (%)</b>		58.89	21.11	8.89	7.78	2.22
<b>Total</b>		90 (100)				

According to Table 3, blending is the technique employed the most as it accounts for 58.89% of the techniques used in the gag cartoons. On the other hand, the additional 41.11% can be divided into 21.11% for creative orthography, 8.89% for creative derivation, 7.78% for compounds, and 2.22% for acronyms. Only once (1.11%) was blending and creative orthography used in a single gag cartoon.

## Figures 1 – 2

### *Examples of English Web-based Gag Cartoons with Blending and Creative Orthography*



In Figure 1, 'Guitarzan' uses **blending** to merge 'guitar' and 'Tarzan' (a famous character who lived in the jungle). These two words can be linked with 'tar' sounds and create lexical creativity. Also, the song 'Welcome to the Jungle' in the gag cartoon refers to the real rock song of Gun and Roses to help readers realize the meaning easier.



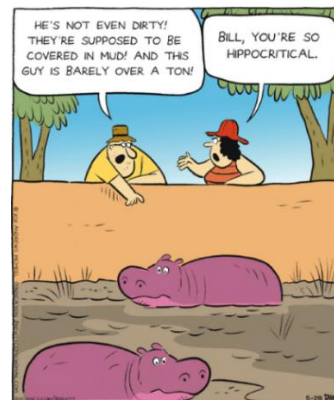
In Figure 2, **creative orthography** is applied in this humor. The spellings of Illinois, Tennessee, and Massachusetts have intentionally been changed with different spellings related to the humor context by making a joke about their sounds.

### Figures 3 – 4

#### *Examples of English Web-based Gag Cartoons with Creative Derivation and Compounds*



‘Straycation’ is created by using a reference from ‘staycation’ (a vacation spent in your home). The gag cartoon uses **creative derivation** to combine ‘stray’ and a suffix ‘-cation’ together to make the verb ‘stray’ become a noun and help readers realize its meaning, which relates to ‘staycation’ easier. The cartoon shows two stray cats talking together to make the meaning clearer.



**Compounds** are used by binding between ‘Hippo’ and ‘critical’ in Figure 4 to imitate ‘Hypocritical’. The writer played with the word ‘Hippo’ so that the original meaning of ‘hypocritical’ is changed to relate with the lexical creativity. The ‘hippocritical’ meaning becomes ‘critic the hippos ironically’ to deliver humor.

## Figures 5 – 6

### *Examples of English Web-based Gag cartoons with Acronyms and Blending/Creative Orthography*



Figure 5 employs **acronyms**. The writer used the ambiguity of both 'LGBT' (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) and LG.BLT (a type of sandwich). It is written quite similar but different in meaning and presented with burger figures to show the meaning used in the gag cartoon.



Figure 6 cannot be seen as a combination since the two processes are not combined to manifest a single lexical creativity. Otherwise, there are two separated lexical creativities occurred in a single gag cartoon. Therefore, it can be summed up that there is no a '**double processes**' for a lexical creativity.

### *Techniques of Humor Used in English Web-based Gag Cartoons*

According to the study results, there were a total of 11 main techniques of humor employed in the gag cartoons; definition, literalness, puns/wordplay, misunderstanding, allusion, facetiousness, repartee, irony, insult, sarcasm, and the double techniques. In wordplay captioned cartoons, there were 9 pieces of definition, 10 pieces of literalness, 8 pieces of double techniques, 2 pieces of puns/wordplay, and only one piece of allusion. As for single-speaker captioned cartoons, there were 9 pieces of definition, 8 pieces of literalness, 2 pieces of double techniques, 6 pieces of puns/wordplay, 2 pieces of misunderstanding, and one piece each of facetiousness, irony, and insults. Finally, for multiple-speaker captioned cartoons, there were 12 pieces of definition, 4 pieces of literalness, 4 pieces of double techniques, 2 pieces of repartee, 4 pieces of misunderstanding, and one piece each of puns/wordplay, allusion, facetiousness, and sarcasm.

**Table 4***Overall Techniques of Humor Used in English Web-based Gag Cartoons*

Overall frequency of techniques of humor used in English web-based gag cartoons (occurrences)											
Types of gag cartoons \ Techniques of humor	Definition	Literalness	*double techniques	Puns/Wordplay	Misunderstanding	Allusion	Facetiousness	Repartee	Irony	Insults	Sarcasm
Wordplay captioned cartoons	9	10	8	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Single-speaker captioned cartoons	9	8	2	6	2	-	1	-	1	1	-
Multiple-speaker captioned cartoons	12	4	4	1	4	1	1	2	-	-	1
<b>Total (occurrences)</b>	30	22	14	9	6	2	2	2	1	1	1
<b>Total (%)</b>	33.33	24.44	15.56	10	6.67	2.22	2.22	2.22	1.11	1.11	1.11
<b>Total</b>	90 (100)										

The results are presented in two tables. Table 4 shows the frequency of different techniques of humor used in the web-based gag cartoons. Table 5 shows the frequency of different combinations of double techniques used in the web-based cartoons. Table 4 shows the number and overall percentage of techniques of humor used in the web-based gag cartoons. Definition, literalness, and double techniques were the techniques that were employed the most frequently. Definition was used the most and accounted for 33.33% of the total techniques, while the following two techniques, literalness and double techniques, accounted for 24.44% and 15.56% of techniques used, respectively. The other six techniques were used less frequently; 10% for puns/wordplay, 6.67% for misunderstanding, 2.22% for irony, 2.22% for allusion, 2.22% for facetiousness, 2.22% for repartee, and only 1.11% for insults.

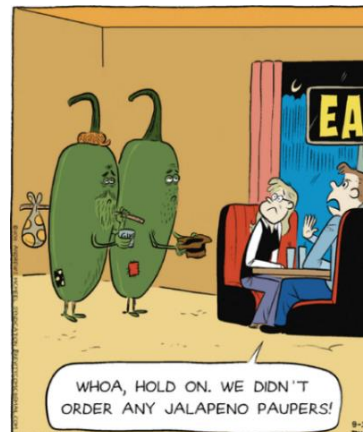


## Figures 7 - 8

### *Examples of English Web-based Gag Cartoons Using the Definition and the Literalness*



**Definition** is used in Figure 7. “Doppelganger” originally refers to a monster whose appearances are the same as us. Thus, readers expect to see what refers to the meaning. The writer defeated our expectation by changing the original meaning and playing with the word ‘gangsta’ (a gang member) instead.



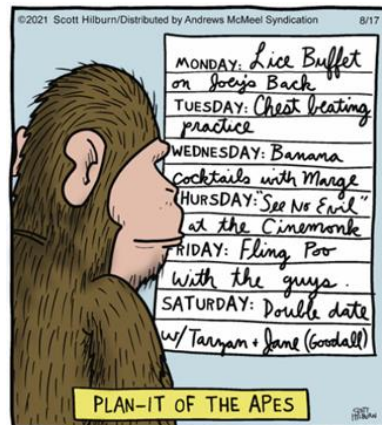
**Literalness** is employed in Figure 8. The original meaning of ‘Jalapeno Poppers’ has been altered by changing the entire context and the characters in the cartoon also perform according to what the word means literally to create humor. The characters are presented as being poor with the appearance of ‘Jalapeno’ (a kind of chilli).

## Figures 9 – 10

### Examples of English Web-based Gag Cartoons Using Misunderstanding and Puns/Wordplay



The humor in Figure 9 is delivered by **misunderstanding**. The misunderstanding of the characters' communication occurs from the confusion between two similar sounds of 'dung beetle' and 'dunkbeetle' and create humor to readers. The mention dung beetle is presented together with the poo to make the gag cartoons clearer.



**Puns/wordplay** helps point out a lexical creativity in Figure 10 as the pronunciation of 'Planet of Apes' is adapted into 'Plan-it of Apes' in order to make a pun. The writer intended to pun word sounds to fuse the word meanings together and created a new word.

## Figures 11 – 12

*Examples of English web-based gag cartoons using the facetiousness and the insults*

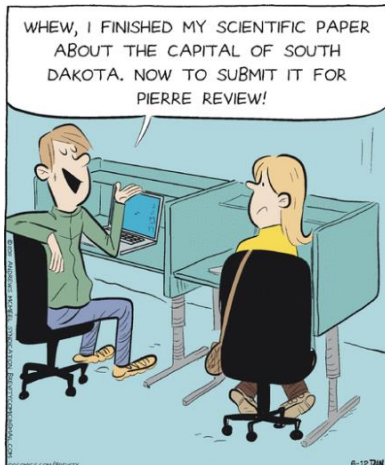


Figure 11 employs **facetiousness** to deliver humor. According to the gag, the main character is proud of himself for his work about South Dakota and is going to do a peer review (but written as 'Pierre review' in order to fuse words).

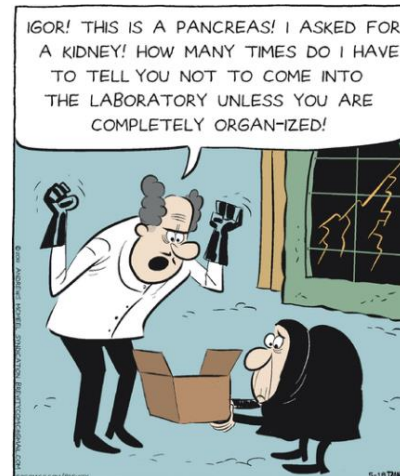
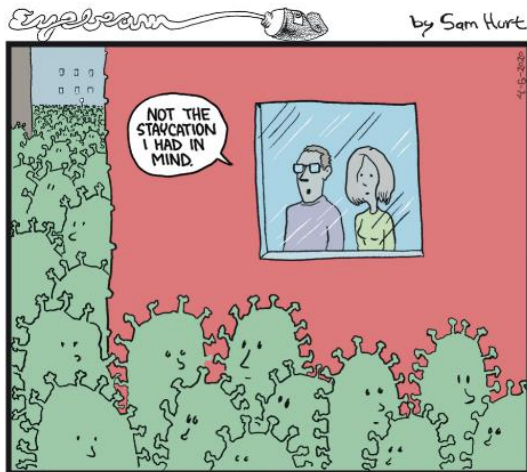


Figure 12 uses **insults**. The lexical creativity and the context provide readers a new meaning. According to the cartoon, the mistake which the scientist's servant did made his boss angry and ended up degrading him by using an insult with a lexical creativity.

## Figures 13 – 14

### *Examples of English Web-based Gag Cartoons Using the Irony and the Allusion*



The technique of humor used in Figure 13 is **irony**. As the man does not expect his staycation (a vacation spent in your home) to be caused by the virus and it is not what he wished for. The gag cartoon portrays the monsters (as a creation of virus) surrounding the man's house to present the image of 'being not able to go anywhere' clearly.



**Allusion** is used in Figure 14. The writer intended to use Nicki Minaj's outstanding identity (a Trinidad rapper) to refer to her in order to imitate the sound of the phenomenon called 'Mirage' and delivered humor. The situation takes place in the desert to relate the context with Mirage.

## Figures 15 – 16

### Examples of English Web-based Gag Cartoons Using Repartee and Sarcasm



The technique of humor is the **repartee** technique. Figure 15 shows the situation that two men are arguing and the other rejects for his action by using the lexical creativity, which is introduced as pasta things as the context of the cartoon has suggested.



**Sarcasm** has been employed in Figure 16 to draw humor. The way how the woman compliments her husband is not sincere as it seems and tries to give a pain according to how her husband is enjoy reading something silly and feels fun with.

**Table 5**

### Double Techniques of Humor Used in the Web-based Gag Cartoons

Overall frequency of double techniques of humor used in web-based gag cartoons (occurrences)						
Types of gag cartoons \ Techniques of humor	Allusion & Literalness	Allusion & Sarcasm	Allusion & Puns/wordplay	Literalness & Puns/wordplay	Definition & Literalness	*Definition & Puns/wordplay
Wordplay captioned cartoons	2	-	-	6	-	-
Single-speaker captioned cartoons	-	-	-	1	1	-
Multiple-speaker captioned cartoons	1	1	1	-	-	1
<b>Total (occurrences)</b>	3	1	1	7	1	1
<b>Total (%)</b>	3.33	1.11	1.11	7.78	1.11	1.11
<b>Total</b>	14 (15.56%)					

Table 5 presents detailed information of the double techniques of humor used in the gag cartoons. The double technique is the use of two techniques together to convey humor. Overall, the double techniques were used 14 times (15.56%) in the web-based gag cartoons used in this study. Allusion, literalness, and puns/wordplay were often combined with other techniques to create humor. Literalness and puns/wordplay were used together the most among these double techniques, being used 7 times (7.78%). This was followed by the combination of allusion and literalness used 3 times (3.33%). The other three-technique combinations occurred only once (1.11%).

### Figures 17 – 18

*Examples of Double Techniques of Humor Used in English Web-based Gag Cartoons Using Definition/ Literalness and the Allusion/ Sarcasm*



In Figure 17, **definition** and **literalness** were employed. For example, the original meaning of 'flash mob' has been altered by playing with the word 'splash'. Also, the characters in the cartoon were acting according to the lexical creativity literally.

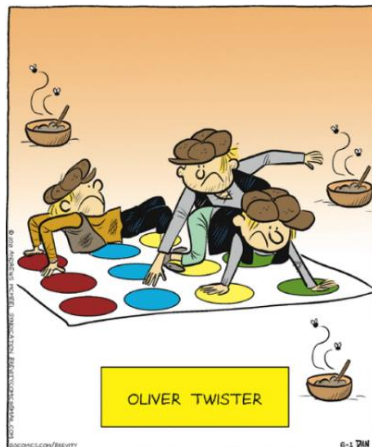


**Allusion** and **sarcasm** were employed in Figure 18. The cartoon was based on The Wizard of Oz, a famous story, to help readers understand the situation. The sarcasm technique helped convey humor through lexical creativity.

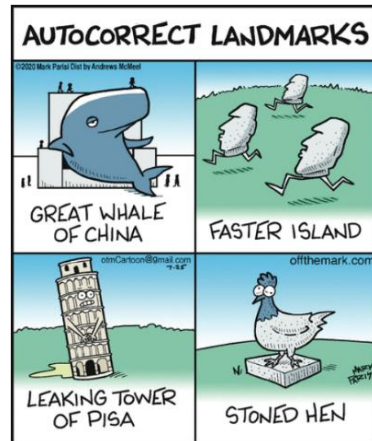


## Figures 19 – 20

*Examples of Double Techniques of Humor Used in English Web-based Gag Cartoons Using Allusion/ Literalness and Literalness and Puns/Wordplay*



**Allusion** and **literalness** have been applied as it portrays poor orphans playing twister literally according to the lexical creativity. Moreover, Oliver Twist is well-known for portraying the image of poor orphans. Therefore, Figure 19 shown here can be easy to understand by using the allusion technique referenced from Oliver Twist along with the Twister game.



**Literalness** and **puns/wordplay** have been applied to create new definitions according to the puns the writer created. All of the lexical creativities presented here are adapted from the famous landmarks. However, the writer intentionally punned words and changed their definitions completely so that the meanings are conveyed literally according to the image to help readers understand easier.

## Figure 21

*Example of Double Techniques of Humor used in English Web-based Gag Cartoons Using Allusion and Puns/Wordplay*



The **allusion** and **puns/wordplay** techniques are used in Figure 21. Pun plays an important role to present readers the connection between Coca-cola (a brand of famous soft drink) and the symbolic animal of Australia like koalas while the allusion helps readers to recognize Coca-Cola and makes reader laugh easier.

### ***The Relationship between Lexical Creativity and Techniques of Humor Used in English Web-based Gag Cartoons***

Table 6 presents the relationship between lexical creativity and techniques of humor. It was found that almost every type of web-based gag cartoon conveyed humor by using the definition or the literalness techniques of humor, together with blending or creative orthography of lexical creativity. Other techniques of humor and lexical creativity occurred less. Even though there are other techniques, the occurrences between definition, literalness, blending, and creative orthography are more frequent. Definition (techniques of humor) along with blending (lexical creativity) have been found as the most frequent occurring pairs.

Additionally, acronyms were the type of lexical creativity which were found the least in the present study with only two occurrences and misunderstanding was employed in both occurrences. This is because acronyms are modified based on the analogical formation (Zabir & Haroon, 2021). Therefore, to employ acronyms to convey humor, writers need to form other meanings that can accompany the acronyms and cover the context of gag cartoons to mislead the readers for its humor. However, wordplay captioned cartoons provide too few captions for acronyms to create humor so there are no occurrences of acronyms in wordplay captioned cartoons.

Another finding is that blending and creative orthography occurred together once in a single gag cartoon (a multiple-speaker captioned cartoon shown in Figure 6). This occurrence cannot be considered a combination since two separate lexical creativities occurred in a single gag cartoon. Therefore, it can be summed up that there was no ‘double creative lexical processes’ for a lexical creativity. Munat (2016) explained that true creative words should be ‘simplex’, which cannot be separated into single morphemes. Hence, the occurrence of the techniques of humor in this gag cartoon would be considered an exception and excluded from the analysis. It was not included in the analysis because the occurrence of ‘double creative lexical processes’ in the gag cartoon was not considered as a type of lexical creativity in the present study. It was only a situation in which two types of lexical creativity occurred together, but separately formed their own lexical creativity.



**Figure 22**

*An Example of an English Web-based Gag Cartoon Using Blending and Definition*



In Figure 22, the writer used **blending** to create a lexical creativity by combining the sounds of 'trash' and 'Ted Talks' (a famous conference talk) to convey humor. The humor in the gag cartoon is delivered by using **definition** as the lexical creativity to create a new word. Humor was created by changing the word 'Ted' to 'trash'.

**Figure 23**

*An Example of a 'Double Creative Lexical Processes' in which Two Processes Occur Together in a Single Gag Cartoon*

There are two separate processes. '**Purranomal**' and '**sphynxorcist**' are clearly modified by using the blending. 'Purranormal' is originally from 'paranormal' (non-scientific events) and 'purr' (low sounds which a cat makes) while 'sphynxorcist' is blended from 'sphynx' (a kind of a cat which is hairless) and 'exorcist' (a person who expels evil spirits). On the other hand, 'pussessed' in the example is considered as 'creative orthography' due to its intentionally changing the spelling to relate to the cat context.



**Table 6**

*The Relationship between Creative Lexical Processes and Techniques of Humor Used in English Web-based Gag Cartoons*

The relationship between creative lexical processes and techniques of humor used in English web-based gag cartoons																
Gag cartoon types	Wordplay captioned gag cartoons (%)					Single-speaker captioned gag cartoons (%)					Multi-speaker captioned gag cartoons (%)					
Creative lexical processes (90) Techniques of humor	Blending (22)	Creative Orthography (4)	Creative derivation (1)	Compound (3)	Acronym (-)	Blending(15)	Creative Orthography (10)	Creative derivation (2)	Compound (2)	Acronym (1)	Blending(16)	Creative Orthography (5)	Creative derivation (5)	Compound (2)	Acronym (1)	*Blending/creative orthography (1)
Definition (30)	6.67	1.11		2.22	-	4.44	4.44		1.11		8.89	2.22	2.22			
Literalness (22)	7.78	2.22		1.11	-	5.56	2.22		1.11		1.11	2.22	1.11			
Pun/Wordplay (9)	2.22				-	3.33	3.33						1.11			
Misunderstanding (6)					-	1.11				1.11	3.33				1.11	
Allusion (2)	1.11				-						1.11					
Facetiousness (2)					-	1.11							1.11			
Repartee (2)					-						1.11			1.11		
Irony (1)					-			1.11								
Insult (1)					-		1.11									
Sarcasm (1)					-									1.11		
Allusion/Literalness (3)	2.22				-							1.11				
Allusion/Pun (1)					-						1.11					
Allusion/Sarcasm (1)					-						1.11					
Definition/Literalness (1)					-	1.11										
Literalness/Pun (7)	4.44	1.11	1.11		-			1.11								
*Definition/Pun (1)					-											1.11
Total (%)	24.44	4.44	1.11	3.33	-	16.66	11.1	2.22	2.22	1.11	17.77	5.55	5.55	2.22	1.11	1.11
Total (%)	100															

## Discussion and Conclusion

### *Lexical Creativity Used in English Web-based Gag Cartoons*

Lexical creativities in English web-based gag cartoons are used to present witty expressions and create catchy words to attract readers' attention (Blake, 2007; Munat, 2016). According to the present study, blending and creative orthography were used significantly in the English web-based gags accounting for almost 70% of the English web-based gag cartoons examined in this study. How lexical creativity is formed derives from the original words they aim to make fun of but with unpredictable and ungrammatical forms. To illustrate, "Mass-Achoo-Ssetts" is based on the original word "Massachusetts", but it intentionally blends a sound which is close to "Achoo" and creates a new lexical creativity ungrammatically by changing how the original word is spelt. Also, the reason why blending and creative orthography were the types of lexical creativity which were used the most is supported by Blake (2007) and Ermida (2008). They believed that the deliberate misinterpretations of morphological functions and structures are common to create ambiguity in

language and bring up the incongruity from the context to create humor. Since language itself does not contain humor, hence it uses the incongruity in language elements to deliver humor (Bell, 2016), especially for blending which takes the major portion of the results. Blending has been recognized as a popular method to create new creative words for decades (Blake, 2007) and also used as a tool to help readers realize the original words that the blending has been modified from upon the given context (Lehrer, 2007). This conclusion also supports the findings of the present study.

On the other hand, even though the characteristics of creative derivation and compounds types are seemingly unusual, the way they are formed is based on grammatical rules more than blending and creative orthography. The form of original words still remains, but the result of their formation is beyond the reader's expectations. This finding is supported by Munat (2016) who found that lexical creativity is not necessarily void of grammatical rules, but needs to be unpredictable. For example, "floorist" is a combination of the word 'floor' and the suffix '-ist' to create the meaning of "a person who cleans the floor". How the word is formed follows grammatical rules, however, the outcome is unpredictable.

Acronyms are the least used type of lexical creativity in the gag cartoons (2.22%), the acronyms have not majorly changed the form to manifest the lexical creativity. Hence, what was changed by the acronym process was the hidden meaning in the acronyms. Apparently, there were no major changes in linguistic features to form acronyms. In contrast, acronyms rely on the context and information in the gag cartoons. This is a big difference when compared to the other techniques. The finding that acronyms are used for lexical creativity without changing forms but by changing its concealed meaning in gag cartoons corresponds with Pedrazzini and Scheuer (2018) who mention that cartoonists play with the absurdity in cartoons to create the humor by delivering latent meanings. Another finding about acronyms is that they were not found in the wordplay in captioned cartoons. According to Zabir and Haroon (2021), the acronyms are delivered by using the analogical formation. Thus, writers need to form a new meaning that can be understood together with the context of gag cartoons to mislead readers for humor. However, the wordplay captioned cartoons examined in this study convey humor using only a picture and a short caption. Therefore, it is found that it is difficult for acronyms to be created in this type of cartoon.

To sum up, the analysis of the present study found that the important characteristics of the lexical creativity used in English web-based gag cartoons are unexpected, playful, and normally formed by extending or going beyond normal grammatical rules to create an incongruity and break the expectations of readers to deliver humor. This finding is similar to Munat (2016) who found that lexical creativity is unique and formed ungrammatically for specific purposes.

Moreover, the results showed that the lexical creativities found in the present study are never repeated. This confirms the perspective of Kenny (2001) who referred to lexical creativity as ‘hapax legomena’ (a word that occurs only once in a piece of work) which is occasionally employed in order to deliver a writer’s particular message, not in ordinary uses. Hence, all of these findings are similar to Zawada (2005) who mentions two significant characteristics of lexical creativity. First, lexical creativity does not usually employ existing morphological rules to create words, even if it is used, the outcomes are unpredictable. The second one is that lexical creativity is created for specific purposes, not for ordinary uses.

### ***Techniques of Humor Used in English Web-based Gag Cartoons***

It was found that only three techniques of humor were used in a majority of the web-based gag cartoons (almost 73.33%). These three techniques were definition, literalness and double techniques. Their frequency of occurrence was 33.33% for the definition, 24.44% for the literalness and 15.56% for the double techniques, respectively. In contrast, the other six techniques were only used in a minority (about 26.67%) of the web-based gag cartoons.

It was discovered that English web-based gag cartoons deliver humorous intention based on the inconsistencies in the context of humor, especially through the language use or the two possible meanings within the context (Blake, 2007; Ross, 1998; Senchantichai & Kadsantier, 2019). The results of the study found that the meaning of lexical creativities played an important role in delivering humor. Playing with meaning included both proposing a new meaning and creating neologisms (a new creative word created for specific and temporary uses) according to the context of gag cartoons. This finding is similar to Ermida (2008) and Pedrazzini and Scheuer (2018) who also pointed out that neologisms and playing with both literal and latent meaning, are the aspects used in manifesting humor through language play. Hence, in order to carry out this process, it requires a technique to express humor. Therefore, definition and literalness are employed in order to express the new meaning in the context of English web-based gag cartoons since these two techniques can present the meaning clearer than others. However, according to the results, definition seems to be more popular than literalness. This is possibly because definition only aims to change the entire meaning with no need to express the meaning literally like literalness does. Hence, definition is the most popular technique for creating humor (Berger, 1993).

The third most popular technique following definition and literalness is the double techniques. It refers to two techniques of humor combined in a single gag cartoon in order to convey humor through lexical creativity. It may be implied that the double techniques that occurred in the present study were used enhance the humor since one technique may not give rise to what the writer

wants to convey. This finding corresponds with Berger (1993) who found that two techniques of humor can complement each other and that a single technique of humor may not be funny by itself. Therefore, in order to generate laughter, the techniques need to be combined. It should be noted that allusion often forms as a part of the double techniques. According to the study, allusion is employed with other techniques to help readers realize that the gag cartoons create humor through lexical creativity with the specific context. This implication is supported by Munat (2016) and Ross (1998) who state that allusion is used as a strategy to make use of the readers' background knowledge and let readers be able to find the additional meaning from the juxtaposition of the lexical creativity upon the gag cartoons context. Thus, allusion often occurs with other techniques.

Other techniques of humor: pun/wordplay, misunderstanding, allusion, facetiousness, repartee, irony, insult, and sarcasm, only occurred a few times and how they were employed in the gag cartoons was seemingly different from definition and literalness for which both techniques emphasized expressing meaning and using neologisms. These other techniques of humor aim to create humor by the absurdities or the stupidities of particular characters in the context more than playing with the meaning of words. This finding is according to Senchantichai and Kadsantier (2019). Even though definition and literalness are used in more than 70% of the English web-based gag cartoons, humor can still be created from other purposes such as expressing absurdities or having a character to make fun with according to the given context.

To sum up, techniques of humor used in English web-based gag cartoons were various and they were employed differently to create humor. The most popular humor techniques were definition and literalness because English web-based gag cartoons mostly aimed to break readers' expectations by manifesting new lexical creativities. Hence, they required techniques to convey their new fancy meanings clearly. Other techniques are used for different purposes apart from playing with meanings (Bell, 2016) so they were employed less. Furthermore, it is said that understanding how the humor is conveyed can help understand what the writer's intention is (Rochmawati, 2017). Therefore, how the techniques of humor are used can be viewed as a kind of intention to express humor.

### ***The Relationship between Lexical Creativity and Techniques of Humor Used in English Web-based Gag Cartoons***

There are relationships between how lexical creativity is delivered and how techniques of humor are used in English web-based gag cartoons. The analysis of the study revealed that the lexical creativity and the techniques of humor in English web-based gag cartoons can be occasionally used together. They are used to present humor according to how the writers intentionally plan

to let readers fully appreciate their cartoons. English web-based gag cartoons contain both images and verbal captions. However, if there are many captions or the captions play important roles in delivering humor themselves, the images will be less necessary and become elements to provide a setting for the gag cartoons only (El-Masry, 2021; Harvey, 2009). Thus, gag cartoons can be considered as a form of verbal humor because of how importantly language affects them (Hempelmann & Samson, 2008). Considering these reasons, language (as a caption or conversations) is needed for humor to succeed in gag cartoons to present the humor and deliver or express messages with humorous intentions. Additionally, the techniques of humor, as the techniques to help convey humor through language, can be considered as a rhetorical mechanism of humor according to Rochmawati (2017). Rhetorical mechanism in humor plays an important role as it refers to the way humor is conveyed. Rochmawati mentions that if the rhetorical mechanism is understood, readers will be able to understand what writers want to convey.

The present study revealed that humor in English web-based gag cartoons is conveyed according to the incongruity manifested in the humor. The incongruity mentioned in this context refers to both humor that comes from the inconsistencies in the context of gag cartoons and humor that occurs from inconsistencies in the language used or the confusion from two word meanings occurring in the given context (Blake, 2007; Ross, 1998; Senchantichai & Kadsantier, 2019). Since gag cartoons are usually presented in a single panel, humor delivered through language in gag cartoons is often manifested by exploiting language elements to create incongruity upon the context. Thus, this process gives rise to lexical creativity (Munat, 2016) and results in various types of lexical creativity used in gag cartoons. However, delivering humor through lexical creativity is not as simple as in normal written language. It is considered a strategy and a purposeful language which needs to consider how it will be delivered to readers to understand and appreciate (Blake, 2007; Ermida, 2008; Munat, 2016). As a result, for gag cartoons to present humor through lexical creativity clearly, it requires the techniques of humor to create the incongruity with the lexical creativity to convey humor in a single panel.

It was found that definition and literalness were employed the most in almost all types of lexical creativity (except acronyms) as long as the fancy meaning delivered the humor upon the lexical creativity to break readers' expectations. Blending and creative orthography were the types of lexical creativity which were used together with definition and literalness the most. For the blending and the creative orthography, the way they manifest lexical creativity is presenting completely new words since the way a lexical creativity is written has been mostly changed even though it is still based on the original word (Blake, 2007; Ermida, 2008; Lehrer, 2007). Hence, to help readers realize the new meaning in a lexical creativity according to the gag cartoon context,

humor techniques such as definition and literalness are required to express meaning (Berger, 1993). This is when blending and creative orthography as lexical creativities, and definition and literalness as techniques of humor, are related to each other as mentioned above. However, it does not mean that these relationships will always occur. How the humor and lexical creativity will be told still depends on the intentions and goals of the English gag cartoons (Ermida, 2008; Munat, 2016).

On the other hand, other types of lexical creativity in English web-based gag cartoons were employed with various techniques of humor differently from each other. Even though most of them still used the definition and literal techniques the most, other humor techniques still occurred. It is not necessary to present new meanings to create humor for gag cartoons, it can be done for different purposes. For example, puns/wordplay and misunderstanding techniques were used together to create humor based on the two word sounds. The misunderstanding did not propose new meanings but delivered humor from the confusion between the word sounds.

Moreover, gag cartoons with lexical creativities can also be created from the absurdities or the stupidities of particular characters in the context. Thus, the aims of playing with lexical creativity in gag cartoons are important for the techniques of humor to be used (Ross, 1998; Senchantichai & Kadsantier, 2019). Writers of English web-based gag cartoons do not realize when using these techniques, but these mechanisms are concealed within the cartoons to succeed in their objective to convey humor and they will be revealed only when analyzed through the framework (Berger, 1993).

### ***Pedagogical Implications for EFL Teachers and Students***

Normally, the general benefits of gag cartoons are to communicate humor by all the elements they contain, especially language and images, in order to deliver their message and entertain readers with amusement. Therefore when the general study is equipped with gag cartoons, the very first benefits it offers is to ease the atmosphere in learning to become more comfortable for learners. Involving humor in general classes is perceived as a way to improve learners' retention and learning enjoyment because it is more relaxed than the stressful classroom (Gardner, 2006; Matthew, 2011, as cited in Zabidin, 2015, p. 105). Additionally, English gag cartoons actually contain humorous intention and various fancy words with short texts and pictures to learn, thus, it makes them different from what EFL learners normally learn in classrooms so that it can draw learning attention from learners and maintain their motivation during class (Rochmawati, 2017; Schmitz, 2002).

Furthermore, lexical creativity and the techniques of humor in gag cartoons can be beneficial toward the language study, especially for the class of non-native learners, since they are mostly unfamiliar with the use of language in

a creative way like native speakers can comprehend. Firstly, humorous texts and materials can help learners to comprehend new words and retain them efficiently according to the study of Zabidin (2015). The language presented in humor can be used to help understand various language domains. As can be seen in the present study, lexical creativities used in gag cartoon are in many forms; puns, wordplays, fancy forms, and others. Thus, these varieties of words presented in English gag cartoons can be used as good materials in learning. Apart from the use of overall humorous materials, being able to understand the forms of lexical creativity and how it is told by the techniques of humor as a rhetorical mechanism can aid the learning of non-native learners. Since the language of gag cartoons is fancy and unique from the actual words, the uniqueness can sensitize EFL learners and help them to distinguish the lexical creativity from norms (Rochmawati, 2017). When the patterns of using words become clear, learners will be able to learn both original words and how to adapt the way they are formed later in their own work. Moreover, learners can study the way gag cartoon writers create the captions through the techniques of humor to deliver humor and adopt the way they use into the writing to convey certain messages.

Apart from the language domains, EFL teachers can incorporate English gag cartoons into EFL teaching in order to enhance the intercultural understanding of EFL students since they can reflect on the cultural elements which come from context gag cartoons taken to produce humor or from the writers themselves (Rochmawati, 2017; Wagner & Urios-Aparisi, 2011, as cited in Zabidin, 2015, p. 105). Furthermore, English web-based cartoons are fashionable and also up-to-date teaching materials for study, considering the era in which technology is accessible. It can be accessed anywhere and anytime and also selected or adapted into the classrooms for the teaching method.

To sum up, the lexical creativity and the techniques of humor in English web-based gag cartoons were occasionally used together. They were used to carry out humor so that readers will be able to appreciate and perceive the message that the writer wants to convey. Even though the findings showed that the relationships between blending and creative orthography as lexical creativities and definition and literalness as humor techniques were the most used, it does not mean that these relationships are fixed in English web-based gag cartoons. How lexical creativity is formed and how it is conveyed with humor techniques depends on the creators' intentions and purposes (Munat, 2016; Rochmawati, 2017). Incidentally, English web-based gag cartoons usually deliver humor by proposing new fancy meanings. Therefore, these relationships between lexical creativity and techniques of humor have resulted in occasional uses.



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