JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 3 (2026), pp. 1149-1170
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i3.1149-1170
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

Mirth and Evaluation of English Wordplays: Readers' Perception of Bilingual Puns in Indonesia

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DOI: 10.18326/jopr.v8i3.1149-1170

Submission Track:
Received: 11-05-2026
Final Revision: 15-10-2026
Available Online: 28-10-2026

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Abstract

English has been mixed with other languages to create bilingual puns. Many studies on puns include a second-order (language-observer) assessment, leading to amusement evaluations. This article combines first-order (language user) and second-order understandings, which leads to the discussion of successful and failed humour. Some studies also relate humour to gender; this study narrows the discussion to the factors that trigger failed humour across genders. It also scrutinizes the roles of English and its metalinguistic aspects in creating the fun of English wordplays, involving Bahasa Indonesia (BI) and the Javanese language (JL). This study collected thirteen bilingual puns and eliminated three of them. The puns were collected through field and virtual observation. Other data were readers' perceptions of the puns, collected using questionnaires. The readers' perceptions were analyzed using descriptive quantitative statistics combined with metalinguistic facts of the bilingual puns. This study finds that English gives double surprises to create amusement through the incongruity of detection and resolution. It can also attract readers' initial interest because of its 'high' status. However, sensitive topics and evaluation of impoliteness can be factors of failed humour inside and across gender. The findings can affect the general definition of puns, which stereotypically relate double

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meanings to create amusement. However, the effects of ambiguous meaning are contested among readers, spanning from successful to failed humour. Furthermore, the perceived effects of humour are affected by local metalinguistic factors.
Keywords: bilingual puns, humour evaluation, failed humour, impoliteness

INTRODUCTION

This paper is the second report of a study on bilingual puns in Indonesia. The first report (Norwanto & Bahroni, 2023) discussed the forms, which involved phonetic and syntactic adaptation processes. This report focuses on the discursive evaluation of bilingual puns, leading to successful and failed humour.

Puns are wordplay (Attardo, 2018; Bobchynets, 2022, p. 23), exploiting the ambiguous meaning of words, groups of words, clauses, or even discourses to create laughter (Coulson & Severens, 2007; Kana & Wadsworth, 2012). An example is the "heterographic" pun (Diao et al., 2020) of "game of the week/weak" (Kopple 1995: 50), which exploits the sound ambiguity of 'week' and 'weak'. Furthermore, punning can involve two languages; bilingual wordplay occurs when interlingual similarity causes ambiguity of meaning (Delabastita, 2001, p. 49; Härmävaara & Frick, 2016, p. 114; Stefanowitsch, 2002, p. 67).

Bilingual puns in Indonesia can be classified based on how to approach the meaning. First, the puns consist of English and Bahasa Indonesia (BI) words, which are arranged in English syntactical forms, for example, " Don't worry Indonesia, I have to leave but one day I'll *Bebek Goreng*" (Craig, 2019), which exploits *bebek goreng* (BI) 'fried duck', in which *bebek* /bƐbƐk/ 'duck' has a similar sound to 'be back' /bi bæk/. *Bebek goreng* is a popular food in Indonesia; the punster wants to eat another fried duck, or he or she will return to Indonesia.

Second, bilingual puns comprise a series of English words in Indonesian grammar.

(1) a. Don't mother think **(English)**
b. *Ojo (si)mbok pikir* **(JL)**
c. *Ojo mbok pikir* **(JL)**

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Gloss: Don't (you) think about it

(2) a. *"New fear the me is 3" **(English)**
/nju: fɪr ðə mi ɪz θri: /
b. Nyopir demi istri **(BI)**
/njəʊpi:r dəmi isθri/
Driving for wife
Gloss: Being a driver for the wife (Norwanto & Bahroni, 2023)

The bilingual puns (1) and (2) are anomalous in the English sentence semantically. The pun (1) involves a syntactic adaptation process to decode the ambiguous meaning. To get the fun out of it, a reader must translate each English word into the Javanese language (JL) and understand it in JL grammar instead of English. 'Mother' semantically means *(si)mbok* (1.b) in JL, but *mbok* means 'you' in *ojo mbok pikir* (1.c). The semantic shifting of *mbok from* 'mother' to *mbok* 'you' can surprise the reader. Meanwhile, the pun (2) has a phonetic adaptation process. The two words 'New fear' /nju: fɪr/ have a similar pronunciation to an Indonesian word '*Nyopir*' /njəʊpi:r/. Then, the meaning of 'New fear' is not one's psychological condition but *nyopir* 'driving'. The pattern can also be applied to 'the me' /ðə mi/ and 'is 3' /ɪz θri:/, which are adequate to *demi* /dəmi/ and *istri* /isθri/ respectively. Finally, the reader must comprehend it in Indonesian syntax.

Furthermore, bilingual puns can be in the form of conversational or visual puns. While the first refers to jokes delivered orally, visual puns take the form of drawings, images, pictures, or objects (Klein, 2014, p. 204). In general, bilingual conversational puns have been extensively used in verbal humour globally, such as among bilingual speakers of asymmetric languages (Härmävaara & Frick, 2016), among bilingual couples (Chiaro, 2009) and in a bilingual school setting (Kersten, 2009). Härmävaara and Frick (2016) found that punning can be a way to learn new words and to solve misunderstandings among speakers of asymmetric languages. Kersten (2009) showed that humour could be helpful for young language learners to cope with the linguistic inadequacies of their interlanguage. Moreover, bilingual visual puns can be found in commercial ads (Knospe, 2015, 2016b; Stefanowitsch,

2002) and even to criticize government policy in Hong Kong (Luk, 2013). However, few studies have focused on visual bilingual puns, related to gender and im/politeness. This paper fills the gap by examining how (1) English contributes to successful bilingual puns and (2) what factors affect the failed humour of visual bilingual puns across gender.

What Makes Puns Fun?

The two aspects commonly used to create "mirth" (Attardo, 2018, p. 91; Martin, 2007, p. 8) of puns are ambiguous meaning and sound game. The first feature is a rhetorical technique that intentionally associates at least two meanings with a single word or phrase (Coulson & Severens, 2007, p. 174; Koleva et al., 2019, p. 164; Kopple, 1995, p. 50). In the second type of puns, readers need to interpret a sequence of sounds with reference to a second sequence (Attardo, 2018, p. 91).
The two aspects (i.e., ambiguous meaning and sound game) are reflected in Attardo (2018, pp. 91-92). Attardo (2018, pp. 91-92) finds various groups of puns, namely, word-based, two-sense puns ("pie + rates"), and those with syntactic ambiguity, such as "[s]quad helps dog bite victim" (Attardo, 2018, p. 92; Bucaria, 2004, p. 292). It also contains morphological ambiguity, for example, "Iraqi head seeks arms" (Attardo, 2018, p. 92; Bucaria, 2004, p. 288). The other puns are a repetition of a given phoneme or group of phonemes, such as "You remember Sunset Strip – where the unneat meet to bleat!" (Attardo, 1994, p. 35). Puns can be formed using polysemy or homonymy and "pseudo-words or pseudonyms, based on the creation of new words by analogy in terms of word-formation" (Bobchynets, 2022). Other types of wordplay are paronymy, indicating two words which have a slight difference, e.g., *tohū* (Hebrew) 'formlessness' and *bohū* (Hebrew) 'emptiness ', as well as the naming or the use of a name to entertain and strengthen interest (Vries & Verheij, 2014, pp. 76-84)

Toury (2014, p. 272) described spoonerism as an instance of language play; it is a slip of the tongue, "a manipulative use of language", for instance, "aminal – animal" (Lederer & Morice, 1996 [1938]). Even though the slip of the tongue may

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be natural, intention can differentiate it from language play (Toury, 2014, p. 273). What makes spoonerism fun is the "phonetic transpositions" (Toury, 2014, p. 274) or "exchange of phonemes between two separate words" (Mattson & Baars, 1992, p. 152; Toury, 2014, p. 274).

Ritchie (2010, pp. 42-45) classified puns into self-contained and puns in context. The first refers to a text that constitutes "the set up" information against "the punch line". It includes a "syntagmatic" pun (Attardo, 1994) where the readers can find the wordplay within the text (Ritchie, 2010, p. 43) and puns using idioms, e.g., "I wouldn't put out a dog on a night like this" to describe unfriendly weather (Ritchie, 2010, p. 44). Meanwhile, the second type of puns is created within the instantaneous situation and made for the moment (Ritchie, 2010, p. 45).

Bilingual Puns

English has been mixed with other languages for different purposes. "The global spread of English has resulted in an increasingly ubiquitous phenomenon whereby English is juxtaposed with, or embedded in, other languages as part of the 'linguistic landscape '" (Luk, 2013, p. 239). Stefanowitsch (2002, p. 2) collected approximately 100 English-German puns that are in print advertisements, on the internet, and in journalistic writing from 1997 to 2001. Luk (2013, p. 240) found English-Chinese visual puns in Hong Kong. Furthermore, Li (2000) found bilingual puns in columns and articles in Hong Kong newspapers and magazines, and in Hong Kong advertisements.

Even though some studies define bilingual puns differently, they agree that bilingual puns involve two languages. Vargha et al. (2013: 22) describe bilingual puns as puns mixing words from two languages, e.g., they are phonetically similar. Knospe (2015: 163) defines bilingual puns as "bilingual play … with material that can be synchronically attributed to two different languages in contact with each other". Knospe (2015: 164-165) argues that bilingual puns blend codes of two languages, which converge in form and "phonetic adaptation processes", for example, "Cool-tur" which blends *Kultur* [kʊlˈtʊɐ] 'culture' (German) and cool [ku:l]

(English) (Knospe 2015: 163). It means culture is not dull but "cool" or interesting for young people. Stefanowitsch (2002) gives some data on bilingual puns, which are German-English code-mixing, for instance, *Fit for fahr'n,* which is similar to 'fit for fun' but *fahr'n* [fa:n] means 'to drive'.

Bilingual puns were previously considered as "bilingual mistakes" (Nilsen, 1981, p. 134) "when non-native English users produced English utterances showing phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic interferences from their first language" (Luk, 2013, p. 238). However, punning can be helpful among speakers with asymmetric language skills, in which they can share each other's words, and in which problems of understanding are expressed (Härmävaara & Frick, 2016). Furthermore, Bhatia and Ritchie (2008) argue that language mixing can be an "optimizing" strategy to create a wider variety of new meanings (Luk, 2013, pp. 238-239)

Humour, Gender, And Im/Politeness Evaluation

Humour is often related to funny feelings of amusement, which vary from one person to another (Kopple, 1995, p. 53; Martin, 2007, p. 1). Attardo (2018, p. 91) stated that "puns may be perceived as humorous only by a member of the audience without [the speaker's intention]". Martin (2007, p. 1) showed some possible responds of humour, such as smile, chuckle, or laugh out loud. Different responses to humour can relate to how amusing the listener perceives the stimulus given by someone telling a joke (Martin, 2007, p. 1).

While many studies discussed the positive evaluation filled with the amusement of puns, Kopple (1995, p. 53) showed some listeners who fail to analyze puns and those that feel "groans of pure pains". Therefore, readers/hearers are likely to have a wide range of responses from positive to negative evaluations, such as hilarious – funny – colloquial language – not funny – not very funny. Bell (2015) shows five triggers of failed humour. The first is "problems with the channel of communication", followed by a lack of competence in the grammar of the language being used. Problems with grammar include phonological, morphosyntactic, and

semantic issues. The third is ambiguity and misinterpretation. The next is that humour is interpreted implicitly or literally instead of explicitly, and the last is message forms.

The perlocutionary goals of puns or other wordplays are the subject of speaker-hearer evaluation; the effects of humour are contestable among punsters, readers or hearers. McAlpine (2018: 488-489) calls the punters “smart people with bad taste” and further classifies puns as 'bad' and 'good', indicating a contestation of meaning in evaluating puns by listeners or readers. Smith, Hoogland, and Brown (2020) stated that humour affects perception, influenced by social effects and punster characteristics. Some of the contributing factors of puns are that they are funnier in casual situations when used to interrupt a conversation, and puns made by children are preferred over those made by adults.

Some linguists' works indicate discursive evaluations. For example, Lakoff (1973) analyses jokes, irony, exaggeration, and ambiguity as “conversational ploys.” Norrick (2010) stated that "humour builds camaraderie." Omar and Jan (2013) reported that "humour primarily acts as a channel of solidarity" among Malaysian academic management meetings. Meanwhile, Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 124) classified jokes as positive politeness because they minimize social distance and reduce the face threat of pleading and imposing. Conversely, Kotthoff (1996) stated that teasing is a strong relationship that does not depend on politeness because "not all solidarizing activities are polite.”

Humour also has different functions for women and men. According to Branner (2005) and Cantor (1976: 114), women tend to create "self-directed humour,” while Gloor et al. 2021) found that puns reduced interpersonal anxiety for women and not for men. Branner (2005) also reported that women used humour to construct identity and maintain relationships (Norrick 2010, 233; Branner 2005). Meanwhile, among bilingual cross-cultural couples, “they also felt excluded if and when their partner partook in humorous discourse in his/her own language with fellow citizens” (Chiaro, 2009, p. 229)

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Moreover, the discursive meanings indicate humour moral evaluation. Linguistic studies show some categories of moral evaluation, such as Kádár and Haugh (2013: 63), providing a wide range of "possible-related evaluators," namely polite – overpolite – mock impolite – not polite – neither polite nor impolite – not polite – mock polite – under-polite – impolite. Leech (1983: 144) has "banter" or "mock-impoliteness" as an evaluator to indicate offensive behaviour and show friendliness. Some bilingual puns contain aggressive behaviours that need to be observed in their effects on readers. The study further used five indicators to evaluate EIPs and EJLPs: overpolite (excessively polite/very polite)-polite- banter (neither polite nor impolite)-impolite-very impolite. The evaluators accommodate the contents of the bilingual puns, which comprise emotions, advice, epic, and puns associated with women, either positively or negatively.

English, Indonesian, and Javanese Languages

Most Indonesians are bilingual, speaking Bahasa Indonesia, the national language and lingua franca, and a vernacular language. Indonesian is the official language in government offices, the language of instruction in education, and a means of communication between ethnic groups. Meanwhile, vernacular languages are used within ethnic groups. A study conducted by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture recorded 546 local languages in 2012 (Akuntono, 2012) and 652 in 2017 (Widiyanto, 2018). Among the vernacular languages, "Javanese is the most-spoken regional language of Indonesia and the most-spoken language of the Austronesian language family with about 75 million speakers" (Nothofer, 2006).

English is a foreign language in Indonesia, which is learned for instrumental purposes (Rini, 2014, p. 23), e.g., enrolling in higher education and applying for a job. While census data from 1980 and 1990 indicate that the number of youth using Javanese in daily conversation decreased by 16.3 percent (Smith-Hefner, 2009, p. 58), the parents in Indonesia encouraged their children to learn English in school in the 2000s (Sulistiyo et al., 2020, p. 1). Furthermore, English has another function to create laughter, such as in stand-up comedy (Badara, 2018) and in ethnic

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jokes (Wijana, 2015). Nirmala (2013) reported the use of English-Indonesian code mixing and code switching in comedy programs on Indonesian Television.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study scrutinized bilingual visual puns found in Central Java, Indonesia. It focused on visual puns on trucks; the truck's body often serves as a medium for artists to display their work. The wordplay can be monolingual puns in Bahasa Indonesia (BI), Javanese (JL) or other local languages, and bilingual puns. This study eliminated bilingual puns that used one or two English words.

Table 1. Syntactic and phonetic adaptation processes of English-Indonesian/Javanese Puns
(Norwanto & Bahroni, 2023)

No.	**Bilingual Puns**
	Syntactic adaptation processes
P1	*DOn'T TO MILK **(En)** *Ojo ke susu* **(JL)** 'don't touch the breast' *Ojo kesusu* **(JL)** 'do not rush'
P2	*I AM NOT FATHER **(En)** *Aku ndak [seorang] papa(h)* **(BI)** 'I am a not a father' *Aku ndak papa(h)* **(BI)** 'It doesn't matter'
P5	*DON'T RICH PEOPLE DIFFICULT **(En)** **Jangan kaya orang susah* **(BI)** *Janqan kaya(k) oranq susah* **(BI)** 'Don't be like a poor man'
	Phonetic adaptation processes
P3	1. Wis a does do wrong .. Next do wrong,. A does the seek been she gear. **(En)** /ø ə dʌz du rɔːŋ .. nekst du rɔːŋ ə dʌz ðə siːk biːn ʃiː gɪr / *Wis adus durung .. nek during., adus ndisik ben seger* **(JL)** /wɪʃ ɑːdus durəʊŋ .. nek durəʊŋ .. ɑːdus ðiːseɪk ben səgər / Already bathe not yet .. if not yet .. bathe first so fresh **Gloss**: Did you take a bath .. if you didn't.. take a bath first to make you fresh 2. Awake is so She Heat. Or a die ro boonk Smoot. and Law leer. Ben or a key cut.!! **(En)** /əˈweɪk ɪz səʊ ʃiː hiːt. ɔːr ə daɪ ø ø smuːð. ænd lɔː lɪr. Ben ɔːr ə kiː kʌt / *Awake iso sehat. Ora dirubung semut. lan laler. Ben ora kecut* **(JL)** /ɑːwaːke ɪsɔ sehɑːt. ɔːrɑ ðirubəʊŋ səmut laːn lɑler. ben ɔːrɑ ketʃut / Your body can healthy. Not surounded ant and flies. So not sour **Gloss**: You can be healthy. Ants and flies will not surround you. So you will not be stink
P4	New fear the me is 3 **(En)** (See introduction)
P6	Pra one are you the end tought so peer **(En)**

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	/ø wʌn ɑː juː ði end θɔːt səʊ pɪr/ *Prawan ayu dientot sopir* **(JL)** /prɑwʌn ɑːjuː ðienθɔːt səʊpɪːr/ Virgin beautiful copulated driver **Gloss**: A beautiful virgin was copulated by a driver
P7	The me a nack is tree **(En)** /ðə mi ə ø ɪz triː/ *Demi anak isteri* **(BI)** /dəmi ɑnɑk istəri/ for the sake of child wife **Gloss**: For the sake of son/daughter and wife
P8	To you lhe go like do white **(En)** /tu juː ø gəʊ laɪk duː waɪt/ *Tuyule golek duit* **(JL)** /tujuːle gəʊlɛk duːɪt/ tuyul looking for money **Gloss**: The tuyul is looking for money
P9	Go like do it or @ go like ray **(En)** /gəʊ laɪk duː ɪt ɔː ø gəʊ laɪk reɪ/ *Golek duit ora golek rai* **(JL)** /gəʊ lɛk duːɪt ɔː rɑː gəʊlɛk rɑːɪ/ Look for money not look for face **Gloss**: Working to get money instead of a good self-image
P10	Alone by must **(Eng)** /əˈləʊn baɪ mʌst/ *Alon bae mas* **(JL)** /ɑːlɔn baɪ mʌs/ Slow only brother **Gloss**: Slow down, brother

Note: The first line is the bilingual pun; The third line (italic) is the equivalence of the pun in BI or JL, which involves phonetic adaptation process; En: English; BI: Bahasa Indonesia; JL: Javanese language

The data were obtained in two steps. First, the research team collected bilingual puns through fieldwork and virtual observation in two months. During the field study, the research team documented puns on trucks' containers while they traveled around Central Java. To complete the data, this study searched for bilingual puns on the internet. During the observation period, this study identified thirteen bilingual puns; three were eliminated because they contained only one or two English words.

This study used first-order and second-order perceptions. The distinctions between them are in participant and scientific understandings; while first-order

involves participants /metaparticipants understandings and emic/etic conceptualizations, second-order refers to analyst/lay-observer understandings and theoretical/folk-theoretic conceptualizations (Kádár & Haugh, 2013, p. 6). Regarding the second technique for first-order data collection, the questionnaire's link was sent to WhatsApp groups to explore lay perceptions reflecting evaluations of humour. Of the one hundred and twenty-one respondents who completed the questionnaire via a Google Form, two were excluded: one disagreed with the research consent, and the other failed to understand JL. The respondents were adults (≥17 years old) and limited to those who understood BI, JL, and basic English. This restriction was applied because (1) some EIPs and EJLPs are aggressive and related to sex, and (2) the meaning of the bilingual puns needs to be understood in BI or JL. The respondents rated the humour levels of puns written in English and their equivalent in BI or JL.

The questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative statistics. The respondents were classified by gender (76 females and 43 males) and by evaluation of im/politeness. The research questionnaires, then, were subsequently tabulated based on humour evaluators (i.e., very funny, funny, colloquial languages, not funny, not very funny) and im/politeness evaluators (i.e., very impolite, impolite, banter, polite, and very polite).

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Some studies generalize puns as "string-based puns and alliterative ones" (Attardo, 2018, p. 5). The previous section shows ten types of puns. The latest study, Norwanto and Bahroni (2023), found puns based on syntactic errors as part of the string-based puns (see example 1). Furthermore, when the definition of puns includes the intention to create entertainment effects, puns are a complex system, which involves a "metalinguistic component" (Attardo, 2018, p. 92) or "the high degree of context-dependence" (Knospe, 2016a, p. 88). A successful bilingual pun must incorporate content, individual differences, social relations, and cultural understanding. Knospe (2016a) gives an example of a "ping-pong punning", in

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which the speakers engage in "a little verbal combat" characterized by face-threatening acts. Puns can be successful among close friends having an intimate relationship in a relaxed atmosphere. Otherwise, the situation could have turned to failed humour and resulted in angry reactions (Knospe, 2016a, p. 90). This article identifies other metalinguistic factors and sub-factors that affect successful and failed bilingual puns.

Successful Humour: English vs Colloquial Language

While it is clear that bilingual puns involve two languages, this section finds the asymmetrical effects of English, Bahasa Indonesia, and the Javanese language in the process of creating amusement. However, the results can not be generalized to other bilingual puns because of their context-dependence. To discuss the asymmetrical effects, this paper compared bilingual puns (i.e., EIPs and EJLPs) and their adequate meaning in BI or JL. The comparison is justified for a reason: seven bilingual puns (P3, P4, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10 have similar pronunciations to their intended meaning, even though they have different orthographic systems.

The survey shows that English creates entertaining effects. Table 2 indicates that EIPs and EJLPs are funnier than their translation in BI and JL. The table shows that the majority of Javanese native speakers agree that the equivalents of EIPs and EJLPs in BI and JL are colloquial language (CL) and less funny than the EIPs and EJLPs, except for data P2, P6, and P8. In other words, most EIPs and EJLPs are colloquial language (CL) of BI or JL rewritten in similar English words phonetically, which may not need to be grammatical. When data P7, for example, was written in BI *demi anak isteri* (see table 1), 91% of respondents categorized it as a language of ordinary conversation (see table 2 data no. P7 (BI/JL)), and only 3% perceived it as a funny sentence. The percentage of CL decreased dramatically (32%) (table 2 data no. 7 (EIPs/EJLPs)) when the respondents read it in English words 'The me a nack is tree' (see table 1), and the funny perception increased significantly by 45%.

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Table 2. Language and humour

Data Code	BI/JL (%)					EIPs/EJLPs (%)				
	VF	F	CL	NF	NVF	VF	F	CL	NF	NVF
1	3	9	78	10	1	15	43	21	20	1
2	4	43	31	23	1	17	60	14	8	1
3	8	26	57	8	2	22	53	14	9	2
4	1	20	73	7	0	17	48	29	5	1
5	4	17	64	15	2	12	37	40	10	1
6	17	31	14	38	14	9	40	7	32	12
7	2	3	91	5	1	13	45	32	8	1
8	8	47	24	22	3	17	53	15	13	2
9	7	30	50	13	2	13	39	35	12	1
10	3	13	73	11	1	13	48	31	6	2

VF: very funny; F: funny; CL: colloquial language; NF: not funny; NVF: not very funny

English is a 'high' language or "valued highly in diglossic situation" (Wardhaugh, 2006, p. 205) among Indonesian speakers. A census in 2010 reported that only 0.35% of Indonesian people acquire foreign languages (Na'im & Syaputra, 2011, p. 12); the exclusivity and limited users of the foreign languages can be the reason for English to receive a prestigious status.

Moreover, some comedians use their status as a source of amusement; they use English proudly while inserting ungrammatical English sentences or other languages to create laughter. The punsters use the high status of English to attract the readers and create a double surprise of bilingual puns. Alden et al. (2000, p. 7) found a positive correlation between "degree of incongruity" and surprise. Moreover, "surprises were significantly related to perceived humour" (Alden et al., 2000, p. 8). Incongruity refers to the deviation of content from general expectation (Alden et al., 2000, p. 2). Three stages of humour processing involve incongruity of detection, incongruity of resolution, and elaboration (Ku et al., 2017, p. 51). Regarding the bilingual puns, surprise can be found in the incongruity of detection and resolution. For instance, when a reader reads "The me a nack is tree", at the beginning, she/he expects to have an English text and thinks hard about the

JOURNAL OF PRAGMATICS RESEARCH – Vol 8, No 3 (2026), pp. 1149-1170
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v8i3.1149-1170
e-ISSN: 2656-8020

meaning. She/he will be surprised when she/he does not understand the English sentence (incongruity of detection). Finally, she/he will have another surprise when she/he matches English pronunciation to Indonesian; she/he is aware that the puns are a colloquial language of Indonesian (P7) *demi anak isteri* (incongruity of resolution).

Failed Humour: Sensitive Topic and Gender

Table 2 not only shows the fun of puns but also unsuccessful puns. Davies (2006, p. 111) argues that sense of humour is negotiated within and across gender categories. It indicates that gender can be a potential factor of unsuccessful humour. This section proves it and narrows the discussion on factors triggering failed humour among male and female participants. It finds that sensitive issues contribute to a negotiated sense of humour across gender categories.

Table 3 shows the relationship between humour evaluation and gender, indicating contested humour appraisal. In general, male and female respondents enjoyed the puns. 35.5% - 59.2% of the female group and 31.9% - 54.2% of the male readers evaluated the puns as 'funny' wordplay. Even though the evaluation of unpleasant feeling was lower (4.2%-18.1% of males and 6.6%-38.2% of females perceived the puns as 'not funny'), some topics were sensitive for female readers.

Table 3. Gender and humour evaluation

Data Code	FEMALE (%)					MALE (%)				
	VF	F	CL	NF	NVF	VF	F	CL	NF	NVF
P1	7.9	44.7	23.7	22.4	1.3	18.1	43.1	27.8	9.7	1.4
P2	14.5	57.9	14.5	11.8	1.3	18.1	54.2	22.2	4.2	1.4
P3	21.1	53.9	13.2	11.8	0.0	19.4	45.8	25.0	6.9	2.8
P4	9.2	56.6	26.3	6.6	1.3	18.1	40.3	36.1	4.2	1.4
P5	10.5	36.8	39.5	11.8	1.3	13.9	41.7	36.1	6.9	1.4
P6	6.6	35.5	6.6	38.2	13.2	11.1	45.8	19.4	18.1	5.6
P7	6.6	51.3	31.6	9.2	1.3	20.8	31.9	37.5	8.3	1.4
P8	17.1	59.2	9.2	13.2	1.3	13.9	43.1	30.6	9.7	2.8
P9	7.9	43.4	35.5	10.5	2.6	16.7	36.1	38.9	6.9	1.4
P10	10.5	48.7	31.6	6.6	2.6	15.3	43.1	34.7	5.6	1.4

VF: very funny, F: funny, CL: colloquial language, NF: not funny, VNF: not very funny

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Among female respondents, puns relating to money (P8), patience (P2), and compliments for women (P4 and P7) had higher positive evaluations. 59.2% of them consider P8 'funny', followed by P2 (57.9%), P4 (56.6), and P7 (51.3%). However, they were more sensitive to puns exploiting women (i.e. P6 and P1). 38.2% of the respondents evaluated P6 'not funny', which is higher than those who evaluated it as 'funny' (35.5%). P1 can be easily associated with women's breasts, while EJLP P6 is about sexual intercourse. Male respondents evaluated P6 differently; even though it is the most unfavourable pun (18.1%), the percentage is much less than those who perceived it 'funny' (45.8%). The facts indicate that sex is a sensitive issue among Javanese speakers.

Evaluation Of Impoliteness Can Cause Failed Humour

Another factor that contributes to failed humour across gender categories is the evaluation of impoliteness. Tables 2-4 consistently indicate that more readers experienced failed humour with a bilingual pun (6). Table 2 shows 44% (NF + NVF) of respondents did not have fun with the pun, the highest among the other puns. Furthermore, Table 3 shows that more female respondents (51% (NF+NVF)) failed to analyze humour effects than male (24%). The differences are quite striking, but it is not surprising; other studies find that women are much more likely to object to jocular abuse than men (Bell, 2009, p. 1826; Hay, 1994, p. 50). The next question is what factor potentially causes the objection. The discussion of bilingual pun (6) in its social and cultural context can uncover the reasons underlying the objection, which causes failed humour.

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Table 4. Gender and evaluation of im/politeness

Code	Topic	MALE (%)					FEMALE (%)				
		VP	P	B	I	VI	VP	P	B	I	VI
1	Advice/puns associated with women	4.7	35	56	2	2.3	1.3	26	61	9.2	2.6
2	emotion	4.7	28	67	0	0	5.3	20	74	1.3	0
3	Advice	14	40	47	0	0	3.9	41	54	0	1.3
4	Epic	12	60	28	0	0	7.9	46	45	0	1.3
5	Advice	12	44	44	0	0	3.9	46	47	1.3	1.3
6	Puns associated with sex intercourse	2.3	14	47	24	12	0	2.6	45	37	16
7	Epic	12	58	30	0	0	9.2	51	38	1.3	0
8	Mysticism	2.3	40	58	0	0	2.6	39	50	6.6	1.3
9	Epic	2.3	47	44	7	0	2.6	39	53	3.9	1.3
10	Advice	4.7	51	42	0	2.3	5.3	55	38	0	1.3

VP: very polite; P: polite; B: banter; I: Impolite; VI: very impolite

Table 4 indicates the effect of impoliteness evaluations and gender on failed humour. EJLP P6, evaluated as impolite – very impolite, is rated less funny (see Table 3); 36% (24% (I) + 12% (VI)) of male respondents evaluate it negatively. Meanwhile, 53% (37% (I) + 16% (VI)) of female respondents rate the pun negatively, which is higher than those who rated it a joke (45%). The content of the puns (i.e., P6) is likely to affect the readers' behaviours; it is a sarcastic pun exploiting sexual intercourse and women. The use of passive voice makes women the object of sex and emphasizes the dominance of men over them. In other words, P6 accentuates masculinity in sexual relations. The topic of sexual intercourse is also taboo to expose in public areas among Javanese people (Widiharto & Rakhmawati, 2020, p. 82). The culture expects a girl to keep her virginity until marriage. P6, which means 'a beautiful virgin was copulated by a driver,' can encourage the respondents to perceive that the pun opposes the culture vulgarly.

CONCLUSION

Humour perception of visual bilingual puns involves punsters' intentions and readers' assessments. While punsters intend to create amusement, this study found contested humour evaluation among readers, ranging from positive evaluation to negative emotions. Bilingual puns (i.e., English-Indonesian Puns (EIPs) and English-Javanese Language Puns (EJLPs)) are bound to form and context to create successful or failed humour. The string of English words can create double surprises of incongruity in detection and resolution to create amusement. While ambiguous meaning contributes to the creation of surprises, metalinguistic factors, such as the high sociolinguistic status of English, build initial interest and perceptions of English puns as high in expectation. Other metalinguistic aspects, i.e., sensitive issues and perceived impoliteness, can be the critical point of bilingual puns; they have a higher effect than the form (e.g., syntactic and phonological adaptation process), which can turn puns into failed humour. The sensitive issues are locally based context-dependence, such as sexual intercourse among Javanese speakers, which then affects the evaluation of impoliteness and humour. The data indicated that more readers enjoy the bilingual puns, but EJLP P6, indicating gender and sex, is taboo in public spheres in Javanese culture. Even though the effects are contested among individuals and across genders, more female readers experience unpleasant feelings with the bilingual puns, exploiting women and sex.

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