On the Speech Style and Humour Effect
of the Chinese Stand-up Comedy *"ROCK & ROAST"*[*]

การศึกษารูปแบบภาษาและการชนะใจคนด้วยอารมณ์ขัน
ของรายการ *Rock & Roast*

Yujiao Ma[1]

Chatuwit Keawsuwan[2]
จตุวิทย์ แก้วสุวรรณ์

Kanokporn Numtong[3]
กนกพร นุ่มทอง

Abstract

Stand-up comedy, originating from the West and now thriving in China, has become widely accessible to the general public through hit variety shows like "ROCK & ROAST." The humorous and witty expressions of stand-up comedians have made this format widely appreciated by audiences nationwide. Stand-up comedy, as a unique form of performance art, is characterized by its distinctive language style. As an improvised speech, the show needs to attract the audience quickly. Stand-up comedians usually need to be adept at using colloquial language to connect with the audience. Compared with formal written language, the speech of stand-up comedy is more concise, easier to understand, and richer in humour. This study

---

[1-3]*Affiliation:* Faculty of Humanities, Kasetsart University, Thailand
  หน่วยงาน*:* คณะมนุษยศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยเกษตรศาสตร์ ประเทศไทย

Corresponding Author: Yujiao Ma
E-mail: ma.y@ku.th

utilizes discourse analysis and content analysis methods. By systematically examining the transcripts of talk shows, research results: the use of modal particles, internet vocabulary, and dialect vocabulary in speech style makes the language livelier, and many words are vivid and interesting, which easily triggers humour. With over a hundred dialects spoken across China, each with its distinct vocabulary and pronunciation, dialects play a crucial role in comedy performances. They bring performers closer to their audience and provide them with diverse linguistic tools, blending humour to create distinctive punchlines. The use of dialect in a particular context highlights the regional characteristics and creates a unique atmosphere of humour.

Keywords: "ROCK & ROAST", Speech Style, Humour Effect, Chinese Stand-up Comedy

บทคัดย่อ

รายการตลกยืนเดี่ยว (Stand-up Comedy) ซึ่งมีต้นกำเนิดจากตะวันตกและปัจจุบันกำลังเฟื่องฟู ในประเทศจีน กลายเป็นรายการวาไรตี้ที่คนทั่วไปเข้าถึงได้อย่างกว้างขวางผ่านรายการวาไรตี้ยอดนิยมอย่าง "ROCK & ROAST" การแสดงออกด้วยคำพูดตลกขบขันของนักแสดงตลกยืนเดี่ยวทำให้รูปแบบการแสดงนี้ ได้รับความชื่นชอบจากคนทั้งประเทศ รายการตลกยืนเดี่ยวเป็นรูปแบบการแสดงที่มีเอกลักษณ์เฉพาะตัว มี รูปแบบคำพูดชัดเจน และเนื่องจากเป็นรายการที่พูดสดจำเป็นต้องดึงดูดผู้ชมอย่างรวดเร็ว นักแสดงจึงต้องมี ความชำนาญในการใช้ภาษาที่เข้าใจง่ายและสามารถสร้างจุดเชื่อมโยงกับผู้ชมได้เป็นอย่างดี คำพูดในรายการ ตลกยืนเดี่ยวจะกระชับ เข้าใจง่าย และเต็มไปด้วยอารมณ์ขันมากกว่าเมื่อเปรียบเทียบกับภาษาเขียนที่เป็น ทางการ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้ใช้การวิเคราะห์วาทกรรมและเนื้อหาจากรายการที่ถอดเสียงออกมาโดยทำการ ตรวจสอบข้อความในรายการตลกยืนเดี่ยวอย่างเป็นระบบ จากการศึกษาพบว่า การใช้อนุภาคกิริยาหรือคำพูด เสริมน้ำเสียง คำศัพท์ทางอินเทอร์เน็ต และคำศัพท์ภาษาถิ่นในรูปแบบคำพูด ทำให้ภาษามีชีวิตชีวามากขึ้น และคำหลายคำมีความแจ่มชัดและน่าสนใจ ซึ่งสามารถกระตุ้นให้เกิดอารมณ์ขันได้ง่าย เนื่องจากประเทศจีนมี ภาษาถิ่นมากกว่าร้อยภาษา และในแต่ละภาษาจะมีคำศัพท์และการออกเสียงที่แตกต่างกันมาก การใช้ภาษา ถิ่นช่วยให้นักแสดงใกล้ชิดกับผู้ชมมากขึ้น และทำให้นักแสดงมีตัวช่วยในการพูดที่หลากหลายซึ่งเมื่อผนวกกับ อารมณ์ขันจะทำให้เกิดจุดที่สร้างเสียงหัวเราะได้อย่างมีเอกลักษณ์เฉพาะตัว อีกทั้งการใช้ภาษาถิ่นในบาง สถานการณ์ไม่เพียงแสดงให้เห็นถึงจุดเด่นของแต่ละภูมิภาคเท่านั้น แต่ยังสร้างบรรยากาศที่ตลกขบขันที่ไม่ เหมือนใครอีกด้วย

คำสำคัญ: รายการ Rock & Roast รูปแบบการพูด การชนะใจคนด้วยอารมณ์ขัน รายการวาไรตี้จีน

Introduction

"ROCK & ROAST" is a stand-up comedy competition show produced by Tencent Video, jointly produced by Penguin Film and Television, and Shanghai XiaoGuo Culture Media Co., Ltd. According to the topic of each episode, the show is based on different perspectives, using professional comedy writing ability to produce high-quality content output to meet the audience's information needs and competing with each other for the annual "Comedy King" crown.

There were over 5 million interactions with the show in just three weeks, setting a new high for growth in the 2022 Tencent Video Variety Art Pop-up Interaction and making it the best on-air variety art show during that time. Lighthouse Professional Edition data shows that the show has been the daily variety list champion seven times and made it into the top 3-month list in September, with a 22.75% market share, the highest in the show's history. According to data from Weibo (a Chinese social media platform like Twitter.) , the topic "ROCK & ROAST" has been read more than 15 billion times. Whenever a new episode airs, related topics will be at the top of the hot search list. For language variety shows, the fifth season of "ROCK & ROAST' is the top line. (The Self-Cultivation of Proper Public Relations, 2022)

It only takes five minutes for comedians from all walks of life and backgrounds to use funny words to show their lives, how they feel, and what they think about things. Their excellent word control and stage presence can make the audience laugh. The people who watched this life-themed show were very interested in it. The different ways the comedians used humour to make the show more interesting were a big part of it and the subject of this study.

Objectives

The research aims to analyze the presentation of speech styles and their causes of laughter in the "ROCK & ROAST" from a linguistic perspective.

Research Methodology

This research use discourse analysis as the core research tool to deeply explore the elements of speech style and the relationship between it and the humour effect in the program "ROCK & ROAST" from season 1 to 5.

In this study, the following steps are used to analyze speech style and humour effect systematically:

1. Collect and transcribe the performance texts of the contestants who participated in the show more than twice from season 1 to 5 to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the data.

2. Conduct a preliminary qualitative analysis to identify and classify the program's humorous speech strategies and style features.

3. Explore the reasons for the humorous effect through speech style.

Review of Relevant Literature

In the academic circle, numerous studies have delved into the linguistic analysis of "ROCK & ROAST" employing various theoretical frameworks and methodologies.

1. Construction and Efficacy of Humorous Language

Xie and Cui (2023) examined the Humorous Language in "ROCK & ROAST" is crafted using various rhetorical devices such as hyperbole, ambiguity, contrast, metaphor, and distortion. These rhetorical strategies leverage contrasts between maximal and optimal relevance, enhancing the comedic effect through audience interaction. Wang (2023) applied Relevance Theory to analyze the cognitive processes of verbal humour, revealing how "ROCK & ROAST" engages audiences through dynamic cognitive processes.

2. Sociolinguistic Perspective

From a sociolinguistic standpoint, code-switching is prevalent in "ROCK & ROAST." Wang and Liu (2022) examined code-switching in"ROCK & ROAST,"exploring its societal functions and origins. Furthermore, Wang (2022) analyzed the linguistic characteristics of the show, including style, technique, and rhythm, discussing how "ROCK & ROAST" fulfills audiences' needs for stress relief, social voyeurism, self-expression, and identity recognition.

3. In-depth Analysis of Humour Mechanisms

Presupposition theory plays a vital role in verbal humour in "ROCK & ROAST". Zhao (2020) analyzed presuppositions in "ROCK & ROAST" speeches, demonstrating how they cleverly employ presuppositions for success of comedies. Sun (2018) used pragmatic presupposition theory to analyze verbal humour in "ROCK & ROAST," unveiling the relationship between presuppositions and humour generation.

4. Multimodal Discourse Analysis

Yang (2022) employed multimodal discourse analysis to study the third season of "ROCK & ROAST," exploring linguistic, bodily expression, and background modalities. This approach offers a theoretical framework and data support for researching dynamic discourses in "ROCK & ROAST" performances.

5. Pragmatic Research

Yang (2021) examined the pragmatic features, effects, and strategies of humour in "ROCK & ROAST," providing normative recommendations to advance the development of "ROCK & ROAST."

6. Cognitive Model Theory

Hu (2022) utilized cognitive model theory to categorize and analyze verbal humour in "ROCK & ROAST," exploring humour generation mechanisms and contrasting them with traditional cross-talk and comedy sketches.

7. Social Function and Norms of Humorous Language

"ROCK & ROAST" not only entertains but also serves a satirical and critical function. The research identifies issues and proposes normative suggestions to guide the positive development of Humorous Language in "ROCK & ROAST."

8. Study of Humorous Language in Stand-Up Comedy

Wang (2022) focused on the third season of "ROCK & ROAST," studying the Humorous Language of stand-up comedy. The study delineated linguistic variations in phonetics, vocabulary, grammar, and pragmatics, including features like accentuation, intonation dynamics, harmonious rhyme, diverse vocabulary, semantic distortions, unconventional phrasing, concise expressions, independent clauses, and cohesive sentences. It elucidated the comedic techniques, mechanisms, and principles of stand-up comedy, asserting that it amalgamates phonetic, semantic, and discursive elements to satisfy incongruity, unpredictability, and straightforwardness. These humour principles align with the Incongruity Theory's disharmony-based humour and the Relief Theory's emotion-driven humour.

Based on the comprehensive analysis of existing literature, it shows that humor in stand-up comedy shows is a multidimensional phenomenon. It not only involves language arts, sociolinguistics, cognitive science, pragmatics, and multimodal discourse analysis but also closely relates to audience demands and societal cultural values. Through in-depth analyses from different researchers, common patterns and characteristics can be identified to help us gain a more comprehensive understanding of the construction and effects of humor in stand-up comedy language.

Firstly, rhetorical strategies are key means of constructing Humorous Language. Stand-up comedians create unexpected linguistic effects by using contrast, metaphor, distortion, and language or dialect switching, eliciting laughter from the audience. The application of these strategies and techniques not only showcases the linguistic creativity of comedians but also meets audiences' expectations for novelty and creative expression.

Secondly, the use of presuppositions and intentional violations of the cooperation principle are crucial mechanisms for humor generation. Comedians often set specific presuppositions and deliberately violate them at appropriate times to create humorous effects. This subversion of expectations and breaking of norms enrich the generation of humor and adds layers of complexity.

Furthermore, the integration of multimodal elements enhances the expressive power of humor. The combination of linguistic modality, body gestures, facial expressions, and

background settings in stand-up comedy programs provides a richer channel for conveying humor. Comedians' body language, facial expressions, and eye contact, along with language itself, work together to make the transmission of humor information more vivid and intuitive.

Lastly, stand-up comedy programs play an important role in satisfying audience needs and conveying social information. As a form of entertainment, stand-up comedy not only provides audiences with opportunities for relaxation and stress relief but also satirizes and criticizes social phenomena in a humorous way. This dual function allows stand-up comedy programs to strike a balance between entertainment and social responsibility.

To summarize, humor in stand-up comedy shows is a complex phenomenon that integrates various language skills, cognitive strategies, and multimodal expressions. By identifying and understanding these common patterns, A deeper insight can be gained the construction mechanisms of humor in stand-up comedy language and how it conveys societal cultural values through entertainment.

Findings

People use different types of language and styles when they talk to each other depending on the situation, the task, and the quality and personality of the people talking. There are four main types of style: everyday oral style, applied style, artistic style, and personal style. Each has its vocabulary, grammar, phonetics, rhetorical devices, and other style elements.

1. Spoken Expressions

Language is a symbol of human civilization and the most important tool of communication. It exists in two forms: oral and written. Before the emergence of written texts, human beings relied primarily on oral language for communication, thereby establishing the initial importance and roots of spoken language.

Stand-up comedy is a unique form of performance with a distinctive style of speech. This style comes from stand-up comedy, a spontaneous speech show that needs to grab people's attention quickly. Most of the time, stand-up comedians need to be good at using slang to connect with their audience. Standard written language is longer, harder to understand, and less funny than stand-up comic language. Spoken language is used for talking and listening, focusing on getting information across quickly. In face-to-face communication, there is not much time for careful consideration, so spoken language tends to be loosely structured, with more colloquial vocabulary and shorter sentences. The results of the odd slip of the tongue or catchphrase are often more surprising than expected. Shortness and looseness are essential parts of spoken language. Spoken language often uses short sentences, elliptical sentences, suggestive sentences, and broken sentences. Its grammar is also very casual. Owing to the need for more time to prepare hard words and phrases, the words are often broken up with "you know?" For instance: "What is incorrect, for instance? It

seems like the big foreign brands are having crazy clearance sales, while I, a small brand in a third-tier city, am trying to raise prices against the grain, you know?" (Yang, 2019) It does not have any real meaning; it is used to give the brain a moment to think.

The sentence needs to be better organized. Conversely, talking depends on shared and situational past knowledge, so there is no need to go into too much detail. Speaking uses many different ways to express ideas, which makes comments short and easy to understand.

One of the most basic ways people communicate is through spoken language, which has many unique qualities, such as its immediacy, variety, shortness, and reliance on context. The success and fun of talk shows are built on these traits, which also improves how people talk to each other in daily life.

1.1 Modal Particles

Modal particles are rarely used in writing because writing is formal, structured, and logical. Friendly speech is common, and sentences are short and often omitted. Using more words in a sentence makes it stronger. Spoken language is more flexible than written language when adding or removing parts of phrases. This is also reflected in modal particles. Modal particle words can be used in sentences, at the end of words, to connect them, or with other types of words. Commonly used modal particles in "ROCK & ROAST" are:

āi yā āi yōu	wā	wǒ de tiān nà	hēi	wā sāi
1.唉 呀，唉 呦	2.哇	3.我 的 天 呐	4.嘿	5.哇 塞
mā yā	wǒ qù	ō hēng	āi	yí
6.妈 呀	7.我 去	8.噢，哼	9.哎	10. 咦

There are many ways of presenting humour, including using words in context and other techniques. Modal particles can also be a good expression of humour. Modal particles are in the statement's expression because they are directly connected to the emotion, so expressing the comedian's emotion is evident. Example 1: Chizi uses intonation word to express annoyance: 唉呀，唉呦（āi yā, āi yōu）. Everyone understands at once that this is pretending to the other person, thus inducing laughter.

哇（wā）is often utilized by the comedian Wang Siwen and tends to be employed more by women than men in everyday situations. It serves not only to indicate surprise but also convey a sense of charm. When combined with expressions like 'Oh no,' 'Oh my goodness,' or 'D'oh,' it emphasizes astonishment, usually in response to something unexpectedly funny or incredible. Consequently, these expressions quickly bring about a feeling of happiness.

嘿（hēi）, added at the end of the sentence in example four, has a sense of stolen joy. The wow of example five expresses surprise. In examples 8.噢，哼（ō, hēng）9.哎（āi），

the use of modal particles makes people feel that the life scene of the landscape is reproduced and that life is exciting.

咦（yí）, without adding this modal particle, the whole sentence falls flat as a plain old declarative sentence. Adding a modal particle that expresses surprise and makes it funny.

1.2 Internet Vocabulary

Most of the buzzwords are generated and initially used in cyberspace. These buzzwords generated on the Internet gradually expand their application fields with the users' understanding and use of them and begin to appear in people's daily lives and other contexts such as literary works. Therefore, as far as buzzwords are concerned, internet buzzwords should be the most influential category.

As the most active language component, internet buzzwords play an essential role in the Chinese language; due to the fast speed of Internet communication and the fact that young people like freshness and novelty, popular internet words are not only used on the Internet. However, they will be quickly applied to daily life and become a part of oral expression.

The internet vocabulary in "ROCK & ROAST" are:

wò cáo			dǎ guǐ chù		
1. 卧槽	2. diss	3. BGM	4. 打call、鬼畜	5. 666	6. battle
	Kāi xuàn	diē wèi	shuān	bà bǐ bié	
7. YYDS	8. 开炫	9. 爹味	10. 栓Q	11. 爸比别Q	12. CP

卧槽 (wò cáo) is a rewording of a swear word into the most commonly used word to express surprise that has taken the Internet by storm. Until now, the word was the default consensus, an unspeakable word on TV programs broadcast to the public. It was not expected that the comedian would use the word in the segment, but instead, it would create a sense of joy.

Diss is the abbreviation of English words "disrespect or disparage", which means to look down on, despise and is used to denigrate or insult other people or groups, and is now mainly used to express dislike for someone. It has become a very trendy expression of "dislike".

BGM stands for Background Music. In this context, comedian Wang Siwen adds a layer of humour by speaking with the inflections of an old Shanghai auntie, blending it into the background to create an amusing sense of stereo surround.

打call（dǎ call）、鬼畜(guǐ chù), and deep admiration for someone as buzzwords. The main audience is young people, and the comedian is Rear Admiral Zhang Zhaozhong, born in 1952; such a trendy word is inexplicably comical when it used by such an older man.

YYDS stands for the first letters of the pinyin for the Chinese phrase "永远的神" (yǒng yuǎn de shén), which translates to "eternal god" and is used to describe something or someone as exceptionally outstanding, almost god-like. CP originates from the Japanese ACGN fan community, where it stands for "Coupling" (カップリング in Japanese), and refers to a fictional romantic pairing in fan works. Battle, YYDS, and CP are newly popular internet terms that have quickly been adopted by actors in their speech. Since their audience is typically of a similar age group, these terms are seamlessly understood when used in conversation.

开炫（kāi xuàn）、爹味（diē wèi）、栓Q（shuān Q）、爸比别Q（bà bǐ bié Q）. These words happen to be the most popular internet words of that year, popular vocabulary is usually embraced most swiftly by young people, whereas their acceptance and usage rates are comparatively lower among middle-aged and elderly individuals. Middle-aged and elderly comedians often integrate the latest internet slang into their routines, creating a significant contrast with our expectations and thereby generating humor.

1.3 Dialectal Vocabulary

Dialect vocabulary is only prevalent in a particular area; there is no general use in the common language of the Chinese people.

The dialect words in the Talk Show are:

nà ge shá	ză	kēng chī biě dù	zǎzhěng	niángmén	nòng
1. 那个啥	2. 咋	3. 吭哧瘪肚	4. 咋整	5. 娘们	6. 弄
Ne	lǎo bí zi	gāo dī	xiǎo nī ér	jiè	
7. Ne	8. 老鼻子	9. 高低	10. 小妮儿	11. 介	

In the use of dialectal vocabulary, excluding "娘们" (niáng mén) and "弄" (nòng) as they have a broader regional usage., the小妮儿 (xiǎo nī er) is the Henan dialect, 介 (jiè) for the Tianjin dialect words, the rest are all northeastern dialect vocabulary. Northeastern dialect features such as 啥(shá), 咋(ză),啥玩意儿(shá wán yi'er) make the tone of voice words with the unique local characteristics of the Northeast, it has the characteristics of being straightforward, rough, and direct.

2. The Relationship between Humour and Dialect

This section focuses on the relationship between dialects and humour. Dialects are unique in spoken expression, mainly because they carry rich geographical and cultural characteristics, deep historical settlements, and local customs. Dialectal vocabulary is often associated with specific geographic regions, reflecting the region's social customs, lifestyles, and cultural traits. This nature makes dialects unique in style and emotion in expression and can communicate more accurately the emotions and attitudes of the speaker. Many dialects have a long history; they are the living fossils of language evolution and cultural heritage. The

vocabulary often contains stories and cultural backgrounds in the region, making them unique in cultural content and depth in their expression. Using the same dialect can evoke a common identity and sympathy. This sense of affection is an unlikely substitute for common words or popular networks (Zheng, 2012).

Comedian Uncle Wei is the host of Golden Eagle 955 Radio Station; because of the requirements of his profession, his Putonghua (mandarin, Chinese official language) is very standard. When Yang Tianzhen commented on comedian Uncle Wei 's segment in the third season of "ROCK & ROAST," she said his Putonghua was too standard, unlike a real person, less popular, with a little accent, and felt like a living person. ("ROCK & ROAST," season 3, Episode 7, 2020) The ratings of the audience and the feelings of the other comedians were also the same, so he lost to his fellow comedian competitors by only five votes. In contrast, Uncle Chang and Jiang Zihao, two comedians from the Cantonese-speaking area, performed in a way that their Putonghua with a dialectal tone, which weakened their words in conveying the message, thus reducing the humour. Based on these two situations, this section analyses the relationship between humour and dialect.

China has 56 ethnic groups and is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-dialect and multi-script country. China has always put much effort into promoting Putonghua so that there is less of a difference between the dialects and languages spoken by different ethnic groups in different parts of the country. Article 19 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China says, "The state promotes the nationwide use of Putonghua." (National People's Congress, 2018)

As the official language of China, Putonghua plays a vital role and is supported by the government. However, it is not quite as good as dialects when making jokes. This is why dialects are still prevalent in comedy films or TV dramas, comedies, sketches, stand-up comedy shows, and popular short videos on sites like TikTok.

2.1 Dialect

Dialects are branches and variants of languages. Dialects can be divided into two categories: regional dialect and social dialect. Regional dialect refers to the variations of the language in different regions. Borong Huang and Xudong Liao's edition of Modern Chinese divides dialects into seven major dialect areas: Northern dialect (the official dialect), Wu dialect, Xiang dialect, Gan dialect, Hakka dialect, Min dialect, and Cantonese dialect. (Huang & Liao, 2017)

According to the program's regulations, stepping onto the stage twice is required to be officially considered a contestant. The table shows the stand-up comedian's hometown:

Table 1 List of Hometowns of Stand-up Comedians

	Stand-up comedian	Native place
1	Zhou Qimo	Liaoning Province
2	Wang Jianguo	
3	Qiu Rui	
4	Li Xueqin	
5	Zhang Cailing	
6	Wang Shiqi	
7	Hu Lan	Heilongjiang Province
8	Wang Mian	
9	Niao Niao	Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region
10	Li Dan	
11	Rock	
12	Yang Mengen	
13	Yang Bo	Hebei Province
14	Xiaobei	
15	Yang Li	
16	Pang Bo	
17	Zhang Boyang	
18	Meng Chuan	Shandong Province
19	He Guangzhi	
20	Zhang Haozhe	
21	Cheng Lu	
22	Xu Zhisheng	
23	Tang Xiangyu	
24	Mao Dou	
25	Wang Siwen	Shaanxi Province
26	Bu Jingyun	
27	Tong Monan	Beijing Municipality
28	Xiaokuai	
29	House	
30	Guo Zhanhao	
31	chizi	
32	Dou Dou	Zhejiang Province

33	Yanyi, Yanyue	Jiangxi Province
34	Huang Huang	Tibet Autonomous Region
35	Da Mu	Xinjiang Uygur
36	Kamu	Autonomous Region
37	Wei Daye	Hunan Province
38	Xiaojia	Fujian Province
39	Hei Deng	Jiangsu Province
40	Kid	
41	Jiang Zihao	Guangdong Province
42	Chang Shu	
43	CY	
44	Liang Haiyuan	
45	Norah	Shanghai Province
46	Pi Qiu	Sichuan Province
47	Zhang Jun	Hubei Province
48	Wu Xingchen	No introduction
49	Bo Luo	No introduction

Only two of the 49 screened comedians could not be found outside their home country. The other 47 were mainly from the Northeast (Heilongjiang, Jilin, and Liaoning Provinces), where the accents and ways of life are very similar. The second most reported is Shandong Province, and the third most mentioned is Beijing and Hebei Province. Traditionally, the seven main dialect areas are split into the following groups:
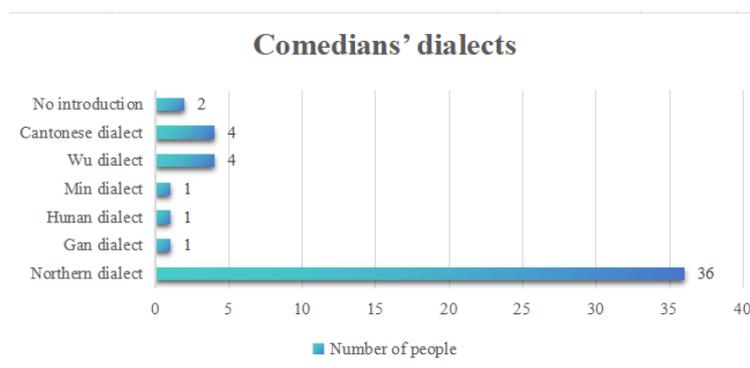
The northern dialect has the largest share, which corresponds to the fact that the northern dialect has the most speakers. The statistics on the origin of stand-up comedians show that a relatively small number of people use the southern dialect, and the understanding of dialects is low, which makes it difficult to arouse people's resonance when humour is

transmitted. Although dialects have distinct advantages and characteristics for expressing humour, not all can deliver humour well on stage due to public acceptance.

Among the eight northeastern comedians, those with distinct accents are Li Xueqin and Zhang Ceiling. Wang Jianguo has a weaker Northeastern accent, and the skits contain a lot of Northeastern dialect words, while the other five have more standard Putonghua.

Two of the Shandong comedians, Xu Zhisheng and Mao Dou, add to the humour of their segments because of their heavy dialect accents, e.g., Zhisheng "jiao měi." Because of the inability to pronounce the word "jué," it made everyone laugh. Later, he makes fun of him in the passage, and after he finds out that he is weak, no one feels sympathy for him. Some people laugh at his accent. Mao Dou's accent is heavier than Xu Zhisheng's, but it did not cause any difficulty in understanding; instead, the accent was very much in line with his experience as a soldier, which added special element to his segment. Norah, who is from Shanghai, adds a certain amount of Shanghainese dialect to her segments to recreate the scene of her own life, which is also very interesting. Cheong Uncle and CY, both Cantonese-speaking comedians, incorporate Cantonese vocabulary into their segments, as the difference between Cantonese and Putonghua is too great, resulting in a much lower acceptance level, which weakens the delivery of the punchline. In addition to the Shandong dialect, which has accidentally left the circle, the Northeast dialect still occupies the first place in the field of humour in "ROCK & ROAST."

2.2 Causes of Humour in the Northeast Dialect

As per You Rujie's analysis, the term "Official Dialect," synonymous with Northern Putonghua or Northern Dialect, is subdivided into eight regions based on the criteria of "ancient entering tones and modern tone categories." These regions are delineated as the Beijing Official Dialect Region, Northeast Official Dialect Region, Hebei-Shandong Official Dialect Region, Jiaoliao Official Dialect Region, Central Plains Official Dialect Region, Lanyin Official Dialect Region, Southwest Official Dialect Region, and Jianghuai Official Dialect Region. Characteristics specific to Northeast Official Dialect include the transition of ancient entering tones with clear initial sounds into Yin Ping, Yang Ping, Shang Sheng, and Qu Sheng. A noteworthy difference from Beijing Official Dialect is the increased prevalence of ancient entering tones with clear initial sounds pronounced as Shang Sheng. Furthermore, the pitch values of Yin Ping tones are generally lower than those in the Beijing dialect. Most local dialects in this region lack the [ʐ] initial sound, found in Beijing Official Dialect and pronounced as zero initial sound. Northeast Official Dialect is prevalent in most Heilongjiang, Jilin, and Liaoning provinces (You, 2004).

The Northeastern dialect system is open, concise, vivid, graphic, rough, and bold but humorous, showing a strong vitality (Sheng & Han, 2006). Zhou's (2007) study found: "As a cultural system, Northeastern folk humor significantly shapes and sustains the daily lives and thinking of its people" (pp. 140-150).

The art of laughter in the Northeast is manifested in various linguistic expressions using the Northeastern dialect as the primary medium. This form exists in everyday conversations between Northeasterners, is incorporated into folk tunes, and is reflected in literary works that record Northeastern legends and beliefs and depict Northeastern life. Today, Northeastern dialect humour is so prevalent in Northeastern comedies that its influence has spread across the country and has won the hearts of fun-loving audiences around the globe.

As an essential part of Northeastern culture, the dialect vividly captures the region's diverse cultural elements, including its history, natural surroundings, production lifestyle, and unique characteristics. Influenced by Northeast China's rich historical and cultural heritage, the locals have developed an optimistic personality, viewing smile as a common response to life's challenges and hardships. The Northeastern people's cheerful and optimistic disposition is expressed through the humour embedded in the Northeastern dialect.

The Northeastern dialect is used predominantly as its primary medium for various linguistic expressions in the humour art in the Northeast region. This form is present in the daily conversations among Northeastern people, seamlessly blending into folk performing arts. Moreover, it is expressed in literary works that document Northeastern legends and beliefs and portray the region's daily life. Today, humour rooted in the Northeastern dialect is widely popular in comedic works within the Northeast.

In the early 1990s, figures like Zhao Benshan, Gong Hanlin, and Pan Changjiang brought forth productions such as "Thirteen Fragrances" "Facing Each Other" "Mahjong·Tofu" and "Such Competition" Over the subsequent decades, Zhao Benshan collaborated with Fan Wei, Gao Xiumin, Song Dandan, producing a series of works with distinct Northeastern characteristics, including "Selling Cars" "Selling Crutches" "Yesterday·Today·Tomorrow" "Delivery Water Worker" "Kung Fu" and "Talking Affairs" These works consistently held the dominating position in the China Central Television's Spring Festival Gala, to the point that the presence of entertaining and laughter-inducing sketches became a crucial criterion for evaluating the success of the annual Spring Festival Gala (Xue, 2005).

When the proportions of various regional dialects were compared, Northeastern dialect comedies took the lead. During the 2004 Spring Festival, the TV drama "Ma Dashuai," directed by Zhao Benshan, received 28% viewership in the three Northeast Chinese provinces, with Harbin receiving 46%. Compared to other dialects, the Northeastern dialect has a lower comprehension threshold and is notable for its comedic effects. As a result, it became popular with viewers far beyond the Northeast. When "Liu Laogen" aired on CCTV-1 in 2002, it attracted more than 10% of the audience. "Ma Dashuai," which aired on CCTV-8, also attracted a 10% viewership. During the first season of "Country Love" in 2006, CCTV had an average viewership of around 11%. The second season aired on CCTV

in 2007 and had an average viewership of 8.64%, with single-episode ratings surpassing "Xinwen Lianbo." No other regional dialect TV dramas have aired during CCTV primetime.

Nationally acclaimed TV dramas, such as "Wulin Wai Zhuan"and "Chu Shi Ban De Gu Shi," incorporate dialects from regions like Northeast, Shaanxi, Shandong, Fujian, Hubei, and Sichuan. "Passionate Years" and "Country Love" are primarily in the Northeastern dialect. "My Brother is Shunliu" features Hubei, Henan, and Tianjin dialects. The movie "Speak Well if You Have Something to Say" uses Northeastern, Beijing, and Shaanxi dialects. "Crazy Stone" is mainly in Chongqing dialect, interspersed with Hebei, Shandong, and Tianjin dialects. "Perfect Ten" utilizes Yunnan, Hebei, and Northeastern dialects. "Cell Phone" includes dialects from Henan and Sichuan. "Hot Tofu in a Hurry" uses the Baoding dialect in Hebei. "Aunt's Postmodern Life" features Shanghai dialect. "Let the Bullets Fly" even released a complete version in Sichuan dialect, and so on. Regarding the distribution of dialects by province, the majority belong to the Northern dialect area, including Northeast, Tianjin, Shaanxi, Shandong, Shanxi, Hebei, Henan, Hubei, Sichuan, Chongqing, etc. Hunanese belongs to the Xiang dialect area, Shanghainese belongs to the Wu dialect area, and Fujianese belongs to the Min dialect area.

In 2014, Zhiguo Wang and Bingnian Liu used the Questionnaire Star website to send out a survey. They got 203 valid answers. Only 1.48% of the people who answered were younger than 18; 51.23% were between the ages of 18 and 30; 37.93% were between the ages of 31 and 40; 7.39% were between the ages of 41 and 50; and 1.97% were between the ages of 51 and 60. The question that was looked at through the statistics was: Which dialect would be interesting for the audience of the show? The poll found that 39.41% of people who answered were interested in programs using the Beijing dialect. This was followed by 34.98% interested in programs using the Northeastern dialect. The rate at which Beijing and Northeastern dialect programs win is much higher than other dialect programs and is in the top tier. The survey asked people how they felt when they listened to or watched dialect programs. The results showed that people felt calm (64.04%) and friendly (58.13%) when they listened to or watched dialect programs. They also found the programs funny (46.8%), which helped them relax. Also, 35.96% of those who answered thought that getting speech programs made them feel like they belonged. The majority of respondents do not believe that dialect programs have a negative impact on the promotion of Putonghua. Only a few respondents think that dialect programs impede the promotion of Putonghua. The poll results show that 90.15 percent of people think that dialect and Putonghua programs will not stop the development of Putonghua as long as they keep the right balance. Not even 9.85% of those who answered think that dialect programs should be banned because they take away from the educational purpose of language-based media. Answers to the poll question about how people feel about keeping dialect programs or not showing them show that most people like dialect programs and hope they can be kept. 33% of those who answered said they were very much in favor of keeping dialect programs, and 62.07% said they were in favor of it. A few people (3.45%) said they do not agree with keeping dialect programs on, and another 1.48% said

they highly disagree with keeping dialect programs on (Wang & Liu, 2014, pp Zhao, Q. Q. (2020). 23-24).

In 2021, China Youth School Media conducted a dialect questionnaire survey for 900 college and university students across China, which showed that the TOP 3 most popular dialects were Northeastern, Sichuan, and Cantonese. Dialect of northeast: nǐ chǒu shá?（你瞅啥）56.17%, Cantonese: liáng zǎi（靓仔）44.61%, Sichuanese: zuò shǎ zi（做啥子）37.15% (Sina.com, 2022)

In comedy, the Northeast dialect has always accounted for a significant proportion of years of deep cultivation; the accent of the Northeast dialect and humour are closely linked; we have equated the Northeast dialect with humour due to the Northeast region in the field of comedy in the emergence of a very large number of talented people, so it is even more to strengthen this perception.

Conclusion

Compared to the strict structure of written language and the elegance of the words used, spoken language has a looser structure, the use of tone words, network vocabulary, and dialect vocabulary is more colloquial and life-like, and many vocabulary words are vivid and interesting, as well as more likely to elicit humour. This colloquial term adds a casual and amusing tone to the play, making it simpler for the audience to connect and laugh.

The show's usage of dialect is particularly noteworthy. Some particularly Chinese Northeastern dialects are purposefully inserted into segments by the performers. Some comedians have non-standard Putonghua pronunciation, but their use of dialect phonetics and vocabulary has become their personal characteristic. Dialect gives artists a diverse linguistic instrument and generates unique punchlines when combined with humour. Dialect in a certain setting emphasizes regional traits and generates a distinct sense of comedy.

While this study has yielded some interesting findings, there are also several limitations:

Firstly, this study only selected "ROCK & ROAST" as the research subject and did not cover other comedy shows. Future research could consider expanding the scope of research subjects to gain a more comprehensive understanding of humor expression styles and genres.

Secondly, the analysis in this study primarily focused on textual and discursive aspects and did not delve into the audience's reception and response. Further research could employ methods such as audience feedback and psychological experiments to gain deeper insights into how audiences perceive and react to humor in comedy shows.

Additionally, this study did not conduct a detailed comparison of different seasons of "ROCK & ROAST" programs but rather analyzed them as a whole. Future research could consider comparing each season and then all five seasons to reveal trends in program development and changes.

References

Hu, G. W. (2022). *A study of talk show language under the cognitive model theory* [Master's thesis, Sichuan Normal University]. China National Knowledge Infrastructure. https://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbname=CMFD202301&filename=10220 34546.nh

Huang, B., & Liao, X. (2017). *Modern Chinese. Volume 1 (Revised 6th ed.)*. (in Chinese). Higher Education Press.

National People's Congress. (2018, March 11). *Constitution of the People's Republic of China (2018 Amendment)*. Xinhua News. Retrieved May 31, 2024, from http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2018lh/2018-03/22/c_1122572202.htm

"ROCK & ROAST" Season 3, Episode 7. (2020, September 2). Retrieved June 19, 2024, from Tencent Video https://v.qq.com/x/cover/mzc00200lhn9f21/m00340axepw.html

Sheng, L. Ch., & Han, M. (2006). The relationship between northeastern dialects and regional culture. *Journal of Changchun Normal University, 11*, 74-77.

Sina.com. (2022, January 11). *"Lone Brave" makes "cicada larvae" popular*. Sina. Retrieved October 31, 2023, from http://k.sina.com.cn/article_1988518703_7686632f001011jdt.html

Sun, X. (2018). A brief analysis of language in talk shows—Taking Season 3 of "ROCK & ROAST" as an example. *Chinese Character Culture, 7*, 18-20. doi:10.14014/j.:CNKI.cn11-2597/g2.2021.07.009

The Self-Cultivation of Proper Public Relations. (2022, November 21). *Stand-up comedy on the ceiling: How long can the "comedic effect" last?* Baidu. Retrieved July 2, 2023, from https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1750113164489040755&wfr=spider&for=p.c.

Wang, C. (2022). *A study of Humorous Language in stand-up comedy* [Master's thesis, Central China Normal University]. China National Knowledge Infrastructure. https://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbname=CMFD202301&filename=1022091302.nh

Wang, J. X. (2023). A cognitive analysis of verbal humor in "ROCK & ROAST" from the perspective of comprehension theory. *Western Radio and Televisi*on, 5, 92-94. doi:CNKI:SUN:XBGS.0.2023-05-031

Wang, J. Y. (2022). The language art of talk shows and audience alignment—Taking Season 4 of "ROCK & ROAST" as an example. *Media Forum, 22,* 57-60. doi:CNKI:SUN:CMLT.0.2022-22-017

Wang, X. J., & Liu, H. (2022). An analysis of rhetorical strategies in Humorous Language in "ROCK & ROAST". *Cai Xie Bian, 12*, 155-157. doi:CNKI:SUN:CXBI.0.2022-12-053

Wang, Zh. G., & Liu, B. (2014). Investigation on the reception of dialect programs. *Youth Journalist*, (34), 23-24.

Xie, J., & Cui, M. W. (2023). A study on rhetorical devices in Humorous Language of talk shows from the perspective of relevance theory—Taking Season 4 of "ROCK & ROAST" as an example. *Journal of Chuzhou University, 4*, 43-49. doi:CNKI:SUN:CZSB.0.2023-04-009

Xue, Ch. R. (2005). An analysis of the artistic charm of northeast dialect sketches. *Heilongjiang Historical Records*, (11), 30-31.

Yang, J. (2021). *A pragmatic study of talk show language: A case study of "Talk Show Conference"* [Master's thesis, Beihua Normal University]. https://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbname=CMFD202201&filename=1021750024.nh

Yang, L. (2019, August 4). Episode 3 of Season 2 of *"ROCK & ROAST."* Retrieved June 19, 2024, from Tencent Video https://v.qq.com/x/cover/mzc00200iqko65a/f0041payivr.html

Yang, L. F. (2022). *A multimodal discourse study of "ROCK & ROAST"* [Master's thesis, Harbin Normal University]. China National Knowledge Infrastructure. https://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbname=CMFD202202&filename=10224 91134.nh

You, R. J. (2004). *Hàn yǔ fāng yán xué dǎo lùn* (A course in Chinese dialectology). (in Chinese), Shanghai Education Press.

Zhao, Q. Q. (2020). An analysis of verbal humor in "ROCK & ROAST" from the perspective of presupposition. *Cultural Innovation Comparative Research, 11*, 48-49. doi:CNKI:SUN:WCBJ.0.2020-11-020

Zheng, Z. S. F. (2012). Formation of Chinese dialect characteristics and analysis of historical levels. *Journal of Linguistic Studies*, (00), 1-5.

Zhou, F. Y. (2007). Dialects, errenzhuan, and the issue of northeastern regional culture. *Folklore Research*, (02), 140-150.