Adam Pluszczyk   iD https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2940-9657
Uniwersytet Śląski w Katowicach, Instytut Języka Angielskiego
e-mail: adam.pluszczyk@us.edu.pl

Artur Świątek   iD https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7264-3003
Uniwersytet Pedagogiczny w Krakowie
e-mail: artur.swiatek@up.krakow.pl

Linguistic mechanisms as a source of humour in selected verbal jokes: An analysis of stylistic figures and pragmatic mechanisms

Abstract

The following article seeks to analyze some linguistic mechanisms which occur in selected English verbal, or linguistic jokes. The focus of the research is concentrated on selected stylistic figures and pragmatic mechanisms that contribute to the creation of humorous contexts. The study is based on a corpus of miscellaneous linguistic jokes. The linguistic mechanisms that contribute to the funniness of the analyzed jokes will be analyzed from the pragmatic and rhetorical points of view. Pragmatically, we will seek examples based on entailments, presuppositions, violation of the maxims, implicatures. Stylistically, or rhetorically, our analysis will pertain to the occurrences of various stylistic devices, such as hyperbole, allusion, alliteration, euphemism, phraseology, irony, colloquial expressions, anaphora, cataphora, simile, puns, metaphor, metonymy. We will seek to determine which pragmatic mechanisms and which rhetorical devices are the most frequent in the jokes.

Keywords: humour, jokes, pragmatic mechanisms, stylistic figures

1. Introduction

The main objective of our article is to discuss marriage portrayed in a humorous way. We will focus on both rhetorical devices/stylistic figures and pragmatic mechanisms which can be encountered in the generally recognized humour pertaining to both men and women as they are portrayed in the marriage. We also intend to analyze English jokes with reference to marital issues with relation to both genders: a man and a woman. In addition, we wish to identify pragmatic mechanisms and the frequency of particular stylistic figures in order to make some observations as to which of them are the most prevalent and effective in the formation of a humorous effect.

Our article will briefly discuss theories of humour and the features of spontaneous conversational humour. Subsequently, it will refer to stylistic figures/figures of speech, pragmatic mechanisms and the structure of a joke. A joke here constitutes an element of humour. Our article will list a number of jokes on the basis of corpus analysis (originating from the selected Internet sources for the needs of the content of our article). The article closes with an overview of the relevant findings, conclusions, and implications for the further study.

2. Theories of humour

There are a number of theories pertaining to humour, such as the following:
1) cognitive-perceptual (associated with incongruity),
2) social-behavioural (associated with hostility, superiority, aggression, derision, disparagement),
3) psychoanalytical (associated with suppression/repression, the release /relief theory, the arousal-safety theory) (Raskin, 1985),
    a) the incongruity-based theories – are based on the deliberate ambiguity of the text of the joke, the occurrence of two or more interpretations and the unreal nature of one of the interpretations given,
    b) the disparagement-based theories – refer to one particular kind of script oppositeness,
    c) the release-based theories – involve the switch from bona-fide communication to the joke-telling mode (non bona-fide mode) (Raskin, 1985: 131).
The two most recognized theories deserve attention and are often used when analyzing humour:
1) The Semantic Script Theory of Humour (SSTH) – based on the notion of a "script"; according to this theory, one deals with the combination of scripts, that is the script oppositions where we receive an alternative interpretation of the story;
2) The General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH) – based on the addition of 5 Knowledge Resources: the script opposition (SO), the logical mechanism (LM), the target (TA), the narrative strategy (NS). The language (LA), and the situation (SI) (Attardo, 1994: 223).

In general, humour is characterised by incongruity – that is to say the conflict between what is expected or what can be predicted and what actually happens around (Mcloughlin, 1997).

3. Spontaneous Conversational Humour

There are a number of classifications of conversational humour. One of them is Norrick's classification into: *anecdotes*, *wordplay* and *irony*. On the other hand, we should also take into consideration Debra Long and Arthur Graesser's more extensive categorization of conversational humour into (Rod, 2007: 13):

1) *irony* – involves expressing a statement in which the literal meaning is opposite to the intended meaning,
2) *satire* – constitutes making fun of social institutions,
3) *sarcasm* – based on making fun of an individual,
4) *overstatement and understatement* – changing the meaning of something another person has said by repeating it with a different emphasis,
5) *self-deprecation* – using oneself as the object of humour, humour at one's own expense,
6) *teasing* – referring to someone's appearance,
7) *replies to rhetorical questions* – answering a rhetorical question where the answer is not expected and as a result violating a conversational expectation,
8) *clever replies to serious statements* – replying to a meaning differently as expected,
9) *double entendres* – causing a dual meaning to occur,
10) *transformations of frozen expressions* – modifying well-known, commonly-known clichés, saying etc into novel statements,
11) *puns* – using a word which has another meaning and thus a different interpretation.

4. Stylistic figures/figures of speech

Figures of speech occur when words and phrases are used in a sense other than their literal meaning in order to make a final effect more dramatic. These are the following:

1) **colloquial expressions/phraseology** – used extensively in everyday language,
2) **cliché** – a figure of speech in which the effectiveness of a word or phrase has been worn out through overuse, repetitive use or excessive familiarity,
3) **irony** – a figure of speech in which one conveys the opposite of a meaning; one meaning stated and a different, usually antithetical meaning intended,
   a) **verbal irony** – the meaning expressed by the words is different to the intended one,
   b) **irony** – an incongruity between what is expected and what occurs,
4) **sarcasm** – a figure of speech in which one conveys the opposite of the literal meaning; intentional, it is associated with verbal aggression,
5) **homonyms** – two or more words which have the same pronunciation or spelling but which are different in meaning,

6) **homophones** – two or more words which have the same pronunciation, but which differ in spelling and meaning,

7) **homographs** – words which have the same spelling, but which have different meanings,

8) **polysemy** – a figure of speech in which a word or phrase has multiple meanings,

9) **synonymy** – a figure of speech based on using words which have a similar meaning with a view to adding emotional force,

10) **antonyms** – a figure of speech based on using words which have opposite meanings,

11) **portmanteau word** – based on putting parts of two words together or creating another, combining the sense of each,

12) **ellipsis** – omission of a word or an element in a sentence,

13) **euphemism** – constitutes the substitution of an inoffensive expression, polite substitutes for taboo language,

14) **dysphemism** – a figure of speech based on the substitution of an offensive word or phrase for one regarded as less offensive,

15) **taboo language** – words and phrases which are regarded as inappropriate in certain contexts,

16) **cursing** – a figure of speech based on the use of swear words,

17) **taboo language** – goes against culture and cultural practices, it is based on violation of the norms of a culture, breaking the rules, controlled by circumstances, for instance culture, religion, social norms, based on cultural values, norms and beliefs, vary from culture to culture-culture-specific.

According to Jay (1999), linguistic taboos are categorized into eight types:

1) **taboo/obscene language** – expressions restricted from public use, i.e. *bitch*, *shit*, *fuck*, *fucking*, etc.,

2) **blasphemy** – the use of religious expressions in order to denigrate God, religious institutions,

3) **profanity** – the use of religious expressions disrespectfully,

4) **insults and slurs** – verbal attacks on other people, referring to physical, mental and psychological qualities,

5) **expletives** – emotional words used as interjections, not directed to anyone, serve to release negative emotions,

6) **vulgarisms** – expressions regarded as offensive,

7) **cursing** – using inappropriate language,

8) **slang** – created by social groups to identify membership,

9) **offensive language/swearing** – is based on inappropriate usage of words, it is taboo in every culture and is a universal phenomenon.

It is regarded as inappropriate in various contexts. Nevertheless, in some social groups swearing is not necessarily offensive, but the norm (Wilson, 2012), or even serves as a tool for solidarity (McLeod, http://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/384041/McLeod-swearing.pdf):

1) **pun** (known in rhetoric as **paronomasia** or **levrot jokes**) – a play on words: a word or phrase used in two or more different senses, that suggests two or more meanings:

multiple meanings of words or similar-sounding words to achieve a humorous or rhetorical effect;

2) **double entendre** – a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is understood in two ways;

3) **wordplay** – based on the manipulation of language, especially the sounds and meanings of words, usually with the view to amusing others;

4) **paradox** – a figure of speech in which a statement contradicts itself;

5) **oxymoron** – a figure of speech in which incongruous or contradictory terms are side by side, a compressed paradox;

6) **metaphor** – a figure of speech in which one makes a comparison between two unlike things which in turn have something in common; using one concept to understand another;

7) **metonymy** – a figure of speech in which one substitutes one word or phrase for another one with which it is closely associated;

8) **synecdoche** – a figure of speech in which a part is used to represent the whole or the whole for a part;

9) **simile** – a figure of speech in which two unlike things are compared, usually using expressions such as "like" or "as": *fight like a lion*, *run like cheetah*, *eyes twinkling like stars*, *treat someone like dirt*, *I like fast food like a mouse likes cheese*, *as pretty as Cinderella*, *as hard as nails*, *as fit as a fiddle*, *as right as rain*, *as busy as a bee*, *as hungry as a lion*, *as snug as a bug in a rug*;

10) **allusion** – a brief reference to a person, explicitly or indirectly;

11) **litote** – a figure of speech which consists of an understatement in which an affirmative is expressed by negating its opposite; negation of the opposite: *good – not bad*, *polite – not impolite*; litotes serve to express modesty or downplay one's achievements;

12) **meiosis –** a figure of speech which understates something, implies that it is lesser in importance (a synonym for **litote**);

13) **antithesis** – juxtaposition of contrasting ideas in phrases or clauses;

14) **hyperbole** – a figure of speech in which one uses exaggeration for emphasis or exaggerates the truth for emphasis;

15) **understatement** – a figure of speech in which a writer or a speaker diminishes the importance or seriousness of a situation; it occurs when one undervalues the gravity of a statement;

16) **personification** – a figure of speech in which an inanimate object is given human qualities or abilities;

17) **apostrophe** – a figure of speech based on animating something absent or non-living and addressing it directly;

18) **idiom** – a figure of speech where the literal meaning of the words is different to what they suggest;

19) **stereotype** – based on making false assumptions which have become common knowledge or truth; a simplified generalization, about members of a group, although there are both positive and negative stereotypes, most of them are offensive;

20) **diacope** – involves the repetition of a word or phrase for emphasis where the repetition is broken up by one or more words;
21) **rhetorical question/erotema** – a figure of speech in which one asks a question and does not expect to receive an answer; a question that is asked with a view to making a point: *Can't you do anything right?* (to insinuate a lack of abilities);
22) **malapropism** – based on absurd or humorous misuse of a word, especially by confusion with one of similar sound;
23) **boosting** – an adverbial used in order to support a claim or express a viewpoint more emphatically;
24) **verbal hedge** – an adverbial used to express a viewpoint less emphatically;
25) **errors** – erroneous usage to provoke funniness;
26) **hypophora** – a rhetorical figure in which a speaker raises a question and then immediately answers it, serves for asking a question in order to give a response immediately.

5. Pragmatic mechanisms

When analyzing jokes, it is obvious that one must encompass pragmatic aspects with a view to deciphering the meaning of the jokes, including the occurrence of *presuppositions*, *entailments* and *implicatures*. Whereas a **presupposition** refers to something the speaker assumes to be the case prior to making an utterance (Yule, 1996: 25), an **entailment** reflects something that logically follows from what has been asserted in the utterance (Yule, 1996: 25). It is important to stress that whereas *presuppositions* follow from the speakers and *entailments* follow from the sentences. However, an **implicature** means an additional conveyed meaning, communicating more than is said. It is undeniable that in a natural setting, we often communicate a lot more than we say and as a result we contribute to the formation of a number of implicatures: "Implicatures are primarily examples of more being communicated than said, but in order for them to be interpreted, some basic cooperative principle must first be assumed to be in operation" (Yule, 1996: 36).

It is also significant to mention *Grice's Cooperative Principle* which is based on 4 sub-principles, referred to as *maxims* (Yule, 1996: 37):
1) *quantity*: be as informative as required and do not be more informative than required;
3) *quality*: make true contributions;
2) *relation/relevance*: be relevant;
4) *manner*: be perspicuous, that is avoid obscurity, ambiguity, be brief and orderly.

It is an irrefutable fact that oftentimes we communicate a lot more than we physically utter. As a result, it gives rise to the formation of other possible interpretations and thus confusion and ambiguity, which can make communication difficult or even impossible sometimes. However, due to the ambiguities and incongruities which impede communication, one contributes to the occurrence of various humorous effects – that is humour occurs through the violation of the maxims: "Language, despite being rule-governed, is replete with ambiguities and incongruities, which operate at the different levels of

linguistic organization – phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactical and semantic […]" (McLoughlin, 1997).

6. The structure of the jokes – a joke as an element of humour

It would be reasonable to define the term "joke" before analyzing how it functions. A joke – constitutes a brief, amusing story which consists of *a setup* and *a punch line*. Whereas the former is responsible for creating in the listener a specific set of expectations, the latter involves a sudden, abrupt shift of the meaning unexpectedly and funnily (Rod, 2007: 11).

It should be stressed that jokes can be told in relation to what is being said at the particular moment, especially to evoke amusement, but they can also be deprived of context: "Although joke-tellers typically try to dray links between the jokes they tell and the ongoing topic of conversation, a joke is a context-free and self-contained unit of humor that carries within itself all the information needed for it to be understood and enjoyed" (Rod, 2007: 12).

It is obvious that the purpose of the joke is to evoke laughter. Jokes are ubiquitous and can occur in different forms, such as:

1) **one – liners, such as:**
– *When we divorced we shared the house 50/50. She got the inside… I got the outside!* (http://www.divorcehq.com/humor.shtml);
– *One woman told another: "My neighbour is always speaking ill of her husband, but look at me, my husband is foolish, lazy and a coward; but have I ever said anything bad about him?"* (https://www.thelaughline.com/complaining-about-their-husbands/);
– *My wife was afraid of the dark… then she saw me naked and now she's afraid of the light* – Rodney Dangerfield (1921–2004), stand-up comedian & actor (http://www. just-one-liners.com/category/marriage/page/7);
– *I don't want to have sex; you're my wife, for God's sake!* – Ed O'Neill (1946–), American actor (http://www.just-one-liners.com/category/marriage/page/8);

2) **question – response:**
– *Who is the perfect husband?*
   A: One who keeps his mouth shut and his checkbook open!;
– *What do you call a woman who knows where her husband is every night?*
   A Widow;

3) **dialogue:**
– *A man gets home, runs into his house, slams the door and shouts: "Honey, pack your bags. I won the lottery." The wife says: "Wow! That's great! Should I pack for the ocean, or should I pack for the mountains?" He says: "I don't care. Just get the fuck out!!!"*;
– A nice conversation between two friends:
   Man 1: My wife claims that I don't take care of my children. I can't stand it anymore!
   Man 2: How many children have you got?
   Man 3: Two… or maybe three?
– *"Daddy," a little boy asked his father. "How much does it cost to get married?"*
   "I don't know, son. I'm still paying for it!".

It is necessary to make a distinction between *bona-fide* communication and *non-bona-fide* communication. Whereas the former pertains to real exchanges, the latter is based on exchanges which do not contribute to real communication, as is the case with various types of humour, such as jokes, etc. As a result, the objective of the joke is not to convey any information or inform others as it is the case in bona-fide communication, but to achieve a hilarious effect and make other people laugh.

Hence, whereas the co-operative principle introduced by Grice (1975) occurs in *bona-fide* communication*,* joke-telling mode reflects *non-bona-fide* communication. In other words, joke telling is based on the violation of Grice's Cooperative Principle in which case one or some of the maxims are not abided by. However, according to Raskin (quoted in Attardo, 1994: 205), humour does not constitute a negation of serious communication, which means that it does not necessarily have to involve the violation of Grice's maxims. Raskin stresses that humour follows its own Cooperative Principle (Attardo, 1994: 205).

Thus, Raskin (1985) introduces new maxims which, as opposed to Grice's Cooperative Principle for bona fine communication, are based on the Cooperative Principle for the non-bona-fide communication. These are the following (Raskin, 1985: 103):

1) *maxim of quantity*: give exactly as much information as necessary for the joke;
2) *maxim of quality*: say only what is compatible with the world of the joke;
3) *maxim of relation*: say only what is relevant to the joke;
4) *maxim of manner*: tell a joke efficiently.

Unless one observes one of the maxims (or more), the interlocutors can fail communicatively in both bona-fide and non-bona-fide communication: "Just as *bona-fide* communication can fail if the speaker does not have full control of the maxims (114), humor fails if the maxims of (115) are not abided by. Similarly, the hearer can fail the speaker in *bona-fide* communication even if the speaker does everything right and the hearer of the joke can fail to get it even if the speaker provides all the necessary ingredients and follows all the maxims" (Raskin, 1985: 103).

It is also crucial to make a division of jokes and categorize them in order to have a better understanding of how they function. Jokes are usually divided into: **linguistic/verbal** and **situational/referential** (Raskin, 1985, quoted in Brzozowska, 2000).

If we substitute a word or phrase with another one and if the joke is still funny, it means that it is a *referential* or a *situational joke* (Brzozowska, 2000). If we replace a word or phrase with another one and if the joke is not funny any more, it is a *linguistic joke* as the funniness of the joke is based on a particular word or phrase which must not be replaced whatsoever. As a result, there are two main notions to be distinguished when analyzing the function of jokes, more specifically the disambiguation process: **disjunction** and **connection.** Whereas **disjunctor** (Raskin's script-switch trigger) is solely reserved for **referential/situational jokes**, **connector** (which is usually defined as *any segment of text that can be given two distinct readings*, Raskin, 1985) occurs in **linguistic/verbal jokes**. In other words, whereas *the connector* constitutes two or more meanings of the same word, *the disjunctor* – based on *script-switch trigger* introduced by Raskin refers to "the element of the text that causes the passage from the first to the second script actualized

in the text" (Attardo, 1994: 203) and as a result provides us with the passage from one isotopy to another and provokes a change in the interpretation.

An example of a verbal or linguistic joke based on the ambiguity of a word ("please" in this respect) would be the following: *Woman: "I know how to please a man." Man: "Then please leave me alone."*

A situational or referential joke is exemplified in the joke below:

Two married fellas, Jim and Alec were having a beer after work. Jim says: "Have you ever said something when you meant to say something else?"

"How do you mean?" said Alec.

"Well, see the other day, instead of two tickets to Pittsburgh, I asked for two pickets to Titsberg."

"Yeah, I know what you mean," said Alec. "Last week I was having breakfast with my wife. I meant to say 'Pass me the sugar.' But what came out was "You bitch, you've ruined my life!!!"

7. The corpus analysis

The corpus analysis, juxtaposed below, will demonstrate the selected jokes depicting the marital issue and pertaining to both genders in question: a man and a woman. Firstly, a man will be portrayed in section 7.1, followed by a woman, portrayed respectively in section 7.2.

7.1. The corpus: The picture of a man

This section comprises the jokes depicting a man fulfilling the role of a husband. We observe here the instances of personification and negative stereotypes. They are exemplified via the following jokes, as follows:

1. *At the cocktail party, one woman said to another, "Aren't you wearing your wedding ring on the wrong finger?" The other replied, "Yes, I am, I married the wrong man."* **(stereotype)** (http://unijokes.com/joke-2195/).

2. *One woman told another: "My neighbour is always speaking ill of her husband, but look at me, my husband is foolish, lazy and a coward; but have I ever said anything bad about him."* **(personification)** (http://www.indiaeveryday.in/jokes/marriage/husband_wife_short_jokes.txt).

3. *Q: Who is the perfect husband?*
   A: One who keeps his mouth shut and his checkbook open! **(stereotype)** (http://www.jokes4us.com/peoplejokes/marriagejokes.html).

4. *A man was telling his friends, "When my wife is infuriated, she starts shouting at me, my children and even at our dogs and nobody dares answer her."*
   One of his friends asked, "And when you are angry, what do you do?"
   The man replied, "I also shout angrily at the windows and doors of the house and none of them dares to answer back." **(personification)** (http://olympiavn.org/forum/index.php?topic=33646.10;wap2).

5. *What do you call a woman who knows where her husband is every night?*
   A Widow. **(stereotype)** (http://www.top10-best.com/h/top_10_best_husband_jokes.html).

6. *My wife accused me of being immature.*
   I told her to go out of my fort. **(personification)** (http://www.tickld.com/x/the-25-best-two-line-jokes-ever-14-is-priceless).

7. *I never wanted to believe that my Dad was stealing from his job as a road worker.*
   But when I got home, all the signs were there. **(stereotype)** (https://www.reddit.com/r/Jokes/comments/1g14bz/i_never_wanted_to_believe_that_my_dad_was/).

8. *There were three guys talking in the pub. Two of them are talking about the amount of control they have over their wives, while the third remains quiet. After a while one of the first two turns to the third and says, "Well, what about you, what sort of control do you have over your wife?" The third fellow says "I'll tell you. Just the other night my wife came to me on her hands and knees." The first two guys were amazed. "What happened then?" they asked. "She said, 'get out from under the bed and fight like a man'."* **(stereotype)** (http://academictips.org/funny-jokes/funny-jokes-about-men/).

9. *My wife was afraid of the dark… then she saw me naked and now she's afraid of the light.* **(personification)** – Rodney Dangerfield (1921–2004), stand-up comedian & actor (http://www.just-one-liners.com/category/marriage/page/7).

10. *Men are like… Bananas.*
    The older they get, the less firm they are. **(stereotype)** (https://unijokes.com/joke-1576/).

7.2. The corpus: The picture of a woman

This section is devoted to depict a woman, who fulfils the role of a wife. We distinguish here the instances of personification, similarly to the jokes presented in section 7.1. In addition and what is contrastive to the former subchapter, a woman is portrayed in the jokes below via swearwords, invectives, puns and stereotypes. The jokes are the following:

11. *A man gets home, runs into his house, slams the door and shouts: "Honey, pack your bags. I won the lottery." The wife says: "Wow! That's great! Should I pack for the ocean, or should I pack for the mountains?" He says: "I don't care. Just get the fuck out!"* **(swearword)** (http://www.stamey.info/Humor/pggeneral.htm).

12. *A man was telling his friends, "When my wife is infuriated, she starts shouting at me, my children and even at our dogs and nobody dares answer her."*
    One of his friends asked, "And when you are angry, what do you do?"
    The man replied, "I also shout angrily at the windows and doors of the house and none of them dares to answer back." **(personification)** (http://lindanizam.blogspot.com/2013/01/ive-got-email-2-husband-wife.html).

13. *"Daddy," a little boy asked his father. "How much does it cost to get married?"*
    "I don't know, son. I'm still paying for it." **(stereotype)** (http://unijokes.com/marriage-jokes/16/).

14. *Two married fellas, Jim and Alec were having a beer after work. Jim says: "Have you ever said something when you meant to say something else?"*
   "How do you mean?" said Alec.
   "Well, see the other day, instead of two tickets to Pittsburgh, I asked for two pickets to Titsberg"
   "Yeah, I know what you mean," said Alec. "Last week I was having breakfast with my wife. I meant to say 'Pass me the Sugar.' But what came out was "You bitch, you've ruined my life!!!" **(swearword, invective)** (https://kentucky.forums.rivals.com/threads/bad-jokes-told-by-your-parents-older-generation.105552/).

15. *Woman: "I know how to please a man."*
   Man: "Then please leave me alone." **(pun, play with words)** (http://www.lukaro-ski.com/jokes/manwoman.asp).

16. *Wife: "I look fat. Can you give me a compliment?"*
   Husband: "You have perfect eyesight." **(stereotype)** (http://onelinefun.com/marriage/).

17. *I asked my grandma if she had ever tried 69. She said, "No, but I have done 53 – that's all the sailors I could screw in one night."* **(stereotype)** (https://www.reddit.com/r/Jokes/comments/1av69i/i_asked_my_grandma_if_she_ever_tried_69/).

18. *When a man opens the car door for his wife, it's either a new car or a new wife.* **(personification)** (https://quotepark.com/quotes/1865769-prince-philip-duke-of-edinburgh-when-a-man-opens-a-car-door-for-his-wife-its-eit/).

19. *Will you take this woman to be your awful wedded wife?* **(stereotype)** – Dylan Thomas (1914–1953), Welsh-born poet & writer (http://www.just-one-liners.com/category/marriage/page/4).

20. *I don't want to have sex; you're my wife, for God's sake!* **(invective)** – Ed O'Neill (1946–), American actor (http://www.just-one-liners.com/category/marriage/page/8).

21. *I haven't spoken to my wife in years; I didn't want to interrupt her.* **(stereotype)** – Rodney Dangerfield (1921–2004), stand-up comedian & actor (http://www.just-one-liners.com/category/marriage/page/23).

22. *As an airplane is about to crash, a female passenger jumps up frantically and announces, "If I'm going to die, I want to die feeling like a woman." She removes all her clothing and asks, "Is there someone on this plane who is man enough to make me feel like a woman?" A man stands up, removes his shirt and says, "Here, iron this!".* **(stereotype)** (https://www.reddit.com/r/Jokes/comments/3jyygw/as_an_airplane_is_about_to_crash_a_female/).

23. *Women are like rocks. They're only cool after they get wet.* **(sexism)** (https://vic.bg/jokes/women-are-like-rocks-they-re-only-cool-after-they-get-wet).

24. *Marriage isn't a word… it's a sentence.* **(stereotype)** – King Vidor (1894–1982), American film director, film producer & screenwriter (http://www.just-one-liners.com/category/marriage/page/24).

25. *Marriage is an adventure, like going to war.* **(stereotype)** – G.K. Chesterton (1874–1936), English author & mystery novelist (http://www.just-one-liners.com/category/marriage/page/10).

26. *"I Will" is the shortest sentence in the English language... "I Do" is the longest –* *Submitted by Mike Agan* **(stereotype)** (http://www.meetup.com/Divorce-Breaku-pBuddy/pages/FUNNY_DIVORCE_JOKES/).

27. *A husband and wife are trying to set up a new password for their computer. The* *husband puts, "My penis," and the wife falls on the ground laughing because on the* *screen it says, "Error. Not long enough."* **(sexism)** (http://www.laughfactory.com/jokes/popular-jokes).

28. *The teacher asked Jimmy, "Why is your cat at school today Jimmy?" Jimmy replied* *crying, "Because I heard my daddy tell my mommy, 'I am going to eat that p*ssy* *once Jimmy leaves for school today!'"* **(invective)** (http://www.laughfactory.com/jokes/popular-jokes).

29. *"Babe is it in?" "Yea." "Does it hurt?" "Uh huh." "Let me put it in slowly." "It* *still hurts." "Okay, let's try another shoe size."* **(stereotype)** (http://www.laughfactory.com/jokes/sex-jokes/6).

8. Findings and conclusions

The jokes presented in this article contain a lot of information about the features and the behaviour of both a man and a woman. Thus, one can distinguish two levels of the analysis: linguistic and social.

The linguistic level is based on the violation of the rules of the cooperation principle (the violation of the Grice's maxims) and as a result it contributes to the formation of a number of implicatures, ambiguities, confusion and misunderstandings. Two maxims are violated, namely the maxim of quantity by not providing enough information and the maxim of relevance by not avoiding ambiguity. In addition, the linguistic level incorporates the infraction of the maxims, violating the maxims, the occurrence of implicatures (as a result we are able to interpret the jokes correctly by obtaining the intended meaning of the joke). Within the linguistic level we distinguish the incongruity-based theories as well, which are based on the deliberate ambiguity of the text of the joke, two or more interpretations and the unreal nature of one of the interpretations.

Humour depicted in the jokes is characterised by incongruity, the conflict between what is expected or what can be predicted and what actually happens around (Mcloughlin, 1997). We also observe the occurrence of a number of stylistic devices, such as colloquial expressions, irony, ellipsis, stereotypes, swearwords, puns are a common source of humour in jokes. Due to the occurrence of a number of stylistic devices, the whole situation in a particular joke is more dramatic. Both aspects, pragmatic and stylistic, contribute to the funniness of the jokes.

As for **the social level**, we observe the violation of the social norms in everyday life, which also contributes to the funniness and which pertains to both men and women. In other words, whatever is anti-social, against the established norms (social, cultural etc.), it causes laughter.

Regardless of the language, the picture of a man and the picture of a woman portrayed in the abovementioned jokes are negative. The man is portrayed as unfaithful, irresponsible, dependent, rude, boring, selfish, self-centred, conceited, insensitive, incompetent and stupid.

The image of a woman is usually negative. She is depicted as unfaithful, lazy, violent, irresponsible, cunning, arrogant, selfish, insensitive, boring, dumb and wise at the same time.

9. Implications for further study

The portrayal of a man and a woman is more or less the same: the presented jokes deal with losing freedom, frustration, violence, disappointment. However, it would be advisable to give a more exhaustive account of the themes of the jokes cross-culturally (both quantitative and qualitative studies): what the differences in the presentation of a man and a woman are and what themes (and to what extent) are dealt with in various jokes cross-linguistically (Polish jokes vs. Spanish jokes or English-Spanish). Additionally, it would be advisable to identify the differences of the stylistic devices in terms of frequency pertaining to jokes and compare the incidence of a particular trope/device occurring in jokes across two or three languages.

References

Attardo S. (1994), *Linguistic theories of Humor*, Berlin.

Brzozowska D. (2000), *O dowcipach polskich i angielskich*, Opole.

Grice H.P. (1975), *Logic and Conversation*, [in:] P. Cole, J.L. Morgan (eds.), *Syntax and Semantics*, vol. 3, New York.

Jay T. (1999), *Why we curse: A neuro-psycho-social theory of speech*, Philadelphia–Amsterdam, http://www.stanford.edu/class/linguist1/Rdgs/jay00.pdf [accessed: 13.12.2023].

McLoughlin D. (1997), *Humour in a second language – the problems for advanced learners*, http://jomynard.tripod.com/d_mphil.html [accessed: 13.12.2023].

Raskin V. (1985), *Semantic mechanisms of humor*, Dordrecht.

Rod A.M. (2007), *The Psychology of Humour: An Intergrative Approach*, Amsterdam–Boston–Heidelberg–London–New York–Oxford–Paris–San Diego–San Francisco–Singapore–Sidney–Tokyo.

Wilson N. (2012), *Swearing and linguistic impoliteness in social interaction*, http://neon.niederlandistik.fu-berlin.de/ss19/paper/309 [accessed: 13.12.2023].

Yule G. (1996), *The study of language*, Cambridge.

Streszczenie
Mechanizmy językowe jako źródło humoru w wybranych żartach werbalnych: analiza figur stylistycznych i pragmatycznych mechanizmów

Artykuł ma na celu przeanalizowanie niektórych mechanizmów językowych, które występują w wybranych angielskich werbalnych lub lingwistycznych żartach. Koncentruje się na wybranych figurach stylistycznych i pragmatycznych mechanizmach, które przyczyniają się do tworzenia humorystycznych kontekstów. Badanie opiera się na korpusie żartów językowych o różnej tematyce. Mechanizmy językowe, które przyczyniają się do komizmu wynikającego z analizowanych żartów, zostaną przeanalizowane z pragmatycznych i retorycznych punktów widzenia. Pragmatycznie autorzy szukają przykładów opartych na presupozycjach, założeniach, naruszeniu maksym, implikatur. Pod względem stylistycznym lub retorycznym analiza dotyczy wystąpienia różnych figur stylistycznych, takich jak hiperbola, aluzja, aliteracja, eufemizm, frazeologia, ironia, wyrażenia kolokwialne, anafora, katafora, symulacja, gra słów, metafora, metonimia. Autorzy starają się ustalić, które pragmatyczne mechanizmy i które figury retoryczne są najczęstsze w analizowanych żartach.

Słowa kluczowe: humor, żarty, pragmatyczne mechanizmy, postacie stylistyczne