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ZAVRŠNI MAGISTARSKI RAD

SEMANTIC THEORIES OF HUMOR

SEMANTIČKE TEORIJE HUMORA

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Apstrakt

Cilj ovog završnog magistarskog rada jeste predstaviti semantičke teorije humora, tačnije teoriju semantičkih polja Viktora Raskina koja je nastala od teorije nekongruentnosti. Glavni dio analize rada će se fokusirati na to da li se uopšte može prevesti humor, što zavisi od toga da li se semantička polja na bosanskom i engleskom jeziku podudaraju. U radu će također biti predstavljeni problemi sa kojima se jedan prevodilac susreće dok pokušava prevesti viceve i humoristične elemente sa jednog jezika na drugi. Analiza viceva će se fokusirati na deskriptivnu i semantičku analizu kao i prevodilačke strategije koje se mogu primijeniti na određeni vic. Korpus rada će se sastojati od viceva na bosanskom i engleskom jeziku.

Ključne riječi: semantika, humor, vicevi, prevodilačke strategije.

Abstract

The final diploma paper aims to present semantic theories of humor, more precisely the theory of semantic fields proposed by Victor Raskin, which stems from the incongruity-based theory. The analysis will portray whether one can translate humor, which depends on whether the semantic fields in Bosnian and English are congruent. The paper will also present the issues a translator faces while trying to "translate" jokes as well as the humor elements from one language to another. The analysis of the jokes will be focused on the descriptive and semantic analysis, while discussing the translation strategies that can be used for each joke. The corpus will consist of jokes which will be presented in Bosnian and in English.

Key words: semantics, humor, jokes, translation strategies.

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1. Introduction

This final diploma paper is mainly focused on The Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH), introduced by Victor Raskin, which is one of the most important and widely accepted theories of humor. Therefore, the final diploma paper starts with remarks and definitions related to humor, what it essentially is, and when and why it is "used". It is important to state that the paper will not try and determine what joke should or should not be funny, since that is subjective and also of psychological nature. The focus is simply seeing the incongruity that might or might not appear.

Furthermore, famous theories of humor will be briefly discussed such as hostility, release, and incongruity theories. The incongruity theory functions as the base of the SSTH, thus it will be closely described through Suls' Incongruity Resolution Model. The main focus falls on the SSTH and it will be explained by defining the script and terms such as script opposition and overlapping. Also, the famous doctor joke will be used as an example.

Besides the linguistic part, a very important element for this final diploma paper is translation, therefore several classifications will be included according to authors such as Francisco Yus, Eugene Nida, and Patrick Zabalbeascoa. Each of these classifications will be exemplified with suitable jokes. This part is also important for the analysis and will be included in it.

The inevitable element is the analysis. Five jokes will follow the classification made by Debra S. Raphaelson West and they will be analyzed in detail, paying attention to the following three elements: the description of the jokes, translation, and semantics. If there is no direct counterpart for a certain joke, I will make my own attempt at translating it.

The final part is the conclusion. In the conclusion, all of the ideas will be summed up, including some comments and ideas made after writing the final diploma paper.

The corpus consists of 49 jokes, both in English and Bosnian. The jokes are mostly taken from online sources. All of the semantic scripts are written in capital letters. Bosnian or English words that need to be contrasted, as well as certain linguistic terms, are written in italics. The goal is to answer whether incongruity is necessary for the appearance of humor and to portray what translators face when translating humor, as well as what are the most suitable and most common solutions, if they can be found.

2. What is Humor?

This final diploma paper will present the semantic theory of humor proposed by Raskin, i.e. the Semantic Script Theory (SST). In the introductory part of the diploma paper, it is crucial to explain what humor is and if it can be defined at all. There have been many proposed theories of humor over the years, therefore, the interest in the linguistics of humor is widespread.

An inevitable part for this final diploma paper is mentioning modern theories discussed by some of the most important linguists who addressed the notion of humor such as, Victor Raskin's extensive survey in his book Semantic Mechanisms of Humor (1985) and Salvatore Attardo's discussion in his book Linguistic Theories of Humor (1994).

As Attardo (1994) points out, it is quite hard to define humor itself since different elements are included and cannot be separated easily:

> Ultimately, it seems that not only has it not been possible to agree on how to divide the category of "humor" (e.g. "humor" vs "comic" vs "ridiculous"), but it is even difficult to find a pretheoretical definition of "humor" in the most general sense. (Attardo, 1994)

Furthermore, Victor Raskin carefully discussed the meaning of humor in his book Semantic Mechanisms of Humor and he believes that every person has a different idea of what is funny or what can provoke laughter, which makes it a universal human trait, therefore it can be described as "…partly natural and partly acquired." (Raskin, 1985)

It is perfectly normal to assume that people are going to laugh at different things and as Raskin puts it, some people simply have a sense of humor while others do not. This does not mean that one group will never laugh, it simply shows discrepancies in terms of how individuals react to funny stimuli. The ones who "have" a sense of humor derive pleasure from laughing and could even be more successful as members of the society, whereas the "humorless" group will not at all react to the same funny stimuli and can reject that one exists. (Raskin, 1985)

Besides, Attardo states that humor has its functions. The most obvious function of humor is to create solidarity among the participants:

> Humorous exchanges are co-constructed, with participants taking up the humor produced by another speaker, elaborating on it, repeating it, commenting on it, or merely signaling their appreciation, thereby reinforcing it. (Attardo, 2017)

One can show solidarity merely by showing some kind of support, i.e. *humor support*. For example, Attardo (2017) mentions how Haugh and Bousfield (2012) found that *jocular mockery* (humorous teasing) created solidarity by building an in-group of friends: "…one could not mock a stranger without risking serious offense." (Hugh & Bousfield, 2012 as cited by Attardo, 2017)

It is said that once one individual "mocks" the other, they must be involved in a friendly relationship for the "mockery" to work. Most importantly, Attardo (2017) explains that humor can challenge authority by using something called *decommitment*, which can serve as a kind of test for a risky joke merely by including the popular "just kidding" phrase at the end of the humorous statement.

3. Theories of Humor

This final diploma paper will also address the Incongruity Theory which is the "starting point" for the development of other theories. The second theory is the Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH) which will be used for the analysis of the jokes. Another theory that is also one of the "most accepted" theories of humor is the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH), yet this theory will not be dealt with, since it requires extensive research and more accumulated jokes which, unfortunately, will not be possible to incorporate for this final diploma paper.

It is rather complex to try and analyze how and why one laughs; some authors ask whether only incongruity is enough for triggering laughter. An important thing to note is that laughter is not the same thing as humor, hence it is not important for this final diploma paper. Attardo states that humor and laughter are very often confused, but are, in fact, very different reactions that have only apparent similarities. Laughter is a reaction that is either psychological (originate from certain chemical elements) or caused by actual humor. (Attardo, 1994) This paper will only analyze and focus on the semantic variations which happen in humor incongruity.

However, before discussing theories in detail, another classification should be made. Theories of humor are generally divided into three different groups: *hostility*, *release*, and *incongruity theories.* All of these will be briefly explained in the following part.

Hostility Theories deal with the social aspects of humor. Central figures who discussed this theory are Plato, Aristotle, Hobbs, and Bergson. From the earliest times, it was considered that humor had a negative and aggressive element. The central notion is that laughter arises from the superiority of laughing towards something, or that it serves as a social corrective used by society to correct nonstandard behavior. According to this, the theory is based on the groups that are included or excluded. (Attardo, 1994)

Release Theories are mostly based on psychoanalytic concepts proposed by Sigmund Freud. On one hand, people use humor to release certain tension and energy, and on the other hand, it can be

used for the release from certain laws or conventions that were once proclaimed and that were perceived as quite limiting.

> Release theories are interesting because they account for the "liberation" from the rules of language, typical of puns and other word-play, and also for the infractions to the principle of Cooperation typical of humor at large. (Attardo, 1994)

Incongruity theories are based on the discrepancy between two notions or concepts, and as such should be perceived as the source for two theories: Semantic Script Theory (SST) and the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH).

As cited by Attardo, Shopenhauer, one of the pioneers of this theory, sees it as:

> The cause of laughter in every case is simply the sudden perception of the incongruity between a concept and the real objects which have been thought through it in some relation, and laughter itself is just the expression of this incongruity. (Shopenhauer, 1987 as cited by Attardo, 1994)

Finally, all of these theories are necessary for the identification of essential properties of all instances of humor. The main goal is to try and "discover" the necessary conditions which make something funny and humorous. The mentioned groups do not contradict each other, but rather differ in their supporters as well as in their main source. (Attardo, 1994)

3.1. Incongruity Theories

If there is one certain thing, it is that humor always involves incongruity. Incongruity in humor mainly refers to the incongruity which appears between the expectations of the listener and the punch line in humorous texts. Those expectations trigger laughter in a comical situation. The term incongruity is defined in the Cambridge dictionary as follows:

> incongruous:
> 1. unusual or different from what is around or from what is generally happening.
> 2. appearing strange or wrong within a particular situation.
> (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/ - 8/2/2020)

The roots of the incongruity theory are defined by Immanuel Kant and Arthur Schoppenhauer. Kant explains how laughter is based on absurdity in his work The Critique of Practical Reason (1781).

> In everything that is to excite a lively laugh, there must be something absurd (in which the understanding, therefore, can find no satisfaction). Laughter is an affection arising from the sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing. (Kant, 1781)

As afore mentioned, the understanding between incongruity of a certain concept and real objects triggers laughter. Therefore, it can be concluded that incongruity is one important factor when it comes to humorous jokes, like the following ones:

> (1) Why did the diet coach send her clients to the paint store?
> She heard you could get thinner there.
> (https://www.rd.com/jokes/weight-loss-jokes/ - 8/2/2020)

This joke projects the gap between the listener's expectation and the punch line. A piece of constructive advice on how the diet coach helped her clients is expected, however, the answer is not even close to that. It does not make any sense, i.e. the punch line appears completely out of the blue, making it fun for the reader.

The joke would be an issue for the average translator only because of the wordplay (*polysemy*) since it is very hard to convey the same humorous element into Bosnian when it does not contain any similarities between the topic of paint and weight loss.

Semantically, there are several oppositions here, first is NORMAL/ABNORMAL, when analyzing the NORMAL script, one could think that the diet coach is going to send his clients to a place where they could get some useful advice and find a certain sort of help for issues with their weight, however, then looking at the punch line it is obvious that it reaches the ABNORMAL script, a diet coach would, first of all, never send his clients to the paint store and they would not get any useful advice there.

The trigger is the word *thinner* that activates two possible meanings: a paint that is used in the paint store or the adjective thin written in the comparative form. This is a case of *polysemy*: "the fact of having more than one meaning." (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/polysemy - 9/1/2020)

Secondly, even after seeing the word *thinner*, it still does not make sense since they are not there to look for any paint, nor can it help them lose weight, hence the joke would trigger scripts of LOGICAL/NOT LOGICAL, or PAINT/WEIGHT LOSS.

The same thing can be shown by including a joke in Bosnian:

(2) Žena: - Ja sam tebi poput Pepeljuge, kuvam, peglam, perem, brišem...
Muž: - Pa jesam li ti rekao da ćeš živeti kao u bajci kad se udaš za mene?!
(http://www.vicevi-dana.com/najbolji-vicevi/ - 8/2/2020)

This joke has failed the expectations of the reader. After reading the first line, one gets the picture of a dissatisfied wife who is probably working a lot, trying to be a good housewife and wife for her husband, trying to clean up and cook as much as possible.

The joke starts with the wife saying that she is living the life of a real Cinderella, but before she ever went to the ball; cleaning the house, washing and ironing the clothes, sweeping the floor, cooking food, etc. So, the assumption is that the husband is going to, either change or say something that might make her feel better about herself and the life she is living. However, this is the punch line and the moment where something completely different from the average

expectations happens. The husband responds by saying that he promised her that she will live like a character from a fairytale, meaning that she is living like Cinderella, but long before she got the prince and moved away from her stepmother.

It most certainly does not represent a hardship for the translator because it can be directly translated to almost any language and probably with the same or similar result. Cinderella is a fairytale and it could be translated easily since everyone who knows the basis of the story could laugh and see this as a funny statement, yet some other jokes that use references familiar for only a certain culture, represent a real problem for translators.

From a linguistic point of view, it is interesting because of the fields it activates. First of all, the readers see the conversation between a married couple so the first semantic field would be HUSBAND/WIFE. After reading into it, one sees that another possible semantic field might be FIGHT/NON-FIGHT, as previously stated the wife is not satisfied. However, the incongruity lies in the last activated field which is ACTUAL/NON-ACTUAL i.e. REALITY/FAIRYTALE the wife is not Cinderella but lives as she did before the prince.

However, this is an issue that will be addressed later. Now, in order to understand the incongruity theories and their development, it is important to present the Incongruity-Resolution Model introduced by psychologist Jerry M. Suls in 1972.

3.1.1. Incongruity-Resolution Model by Jerry M. Suls

There is an everlasting debate as to whether incongruity alone is sufficient for humor, or whether the incongruity must be resolved, i.e. shown to be logical. Certain authors believe that the founders of incongruity theories have not yet given precise definitions when it comes to this subject:

> Incongruity-resolution theorists typically (a) differentiate between the set-up and the punch line of a joke, (b) claim that the punch line does not make immediate sense to the cognitive agent, and (c) assume that, subsequently, the cognitive agent somehow finds a 'resolution' which allows the punch line to be congruous. (De Mey, 2005)

In his work, A Two-Stage Model for the Appreciation of Jokes and Cartoons: An Information-Processing Analysis (1972), Jerry Suls claims that that humor is created by a multistage process in which an initial incongruity is created, and then some further information causes that incongruity to be resolved.

According to this model, the perceiver must proceed through two stages to find a joke or cartoon funny. In the first stage, the listener has a certain expectation that will not be confirmed by the end of the joke. In the second part, the listener will try and find a way to solve the problem which should resolve the punch line and result in a humorous joke. The following joke will portray how these two stages work.

> (3) Why did the cookie cry?
>
> Because its mother had been a wafer so long.
>
> (https://theoatmeal.com/djtaf/j/79 – 8/8/2020)

Thomas R. Shultz says that the answer to the joke is actually incongruous. The first thing to look at is the word choice: there are two types of cookies in the joke, a plain cookie, and a wafer. Only when the resolution occurs, one notices that the funny part is another interpretation of the word *wafer* which is *away* and it signalizes that the cookie is sad since his mother is not there at the moment. Thus, the word *wafer* is creating this incongruity. (Shultz, 1976)

Two additional things are unusual for the reader: the cookie has emotions - it is crying and the cookie has a mother who is not next to him. By hearing these things out loud and acknowledging their "foolishness" the reader automatically creates a humoristic mental image and although the joke is not logical it ends up being funny.

Once again when a certain wordplay is included the translator has to think of strategies that he will use to convey the funny effect. *Away for a long time* would be translated as *otišla na duže vrijeme* which has no connections to the word *wafer, keks.*

When reading this joke, the listener firstly activates the semantic field of POSSIBLE/IMPOSSIBLE i.e. something living vs. non-living, ANIMATE/INANIMATE. As stated above, it has emotions and there is the case of sexual reproduction. The incongruity appeared due to the linguistic phenomenon of *polysemy* and *anthropomorphism*: "the showing or treating of animals, gods, and objects as if they are human in appearance, character, or behavior." (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/anthropomorphism - 9/1/2020)

(4) What do clouds wear under their shorts?
Thunderpants.
(https://theoatmeal.com/djtaf/j/66 - 8/11/2020)

This is a very similar example of a pun with two similar connections; based on the topic: *clouds* and *thunder* and based on the pronunciation: *thunder + underpants*. Besides, the listener is left with some questions that need to be cleared up; why would a cloud wear shorts or underpants? The joke triggers scripts such as ACTUAL/NON-ACTUAL since a cloud is not capable of wearing any clothes but also the script of POSSIBLE/IMPOSSIBLE, the reader sees possible scenarios that cannot be given to a cloud, so again there is the case of *anthropomorphism*. The incongruity lies in the word *thunderpants* that undoubtedly rhymes with the word *underpants* and stands as a funny statement.

Suls says that the incongruity of the joke is related to the listener's expectations, i.e. the more the expectations are violated the bigger the incongruity is. Incongruity is not the only element that results in humor on itself, there needs to be some kind of resolution for the joke to be funny.

Therefore, humor intensifies as the incongruity between expectation and resolution is bigger. (Suls, 1972) Humor is perceived as a solution for cognitive problems, which can be seen in the diagram below (figure 1):
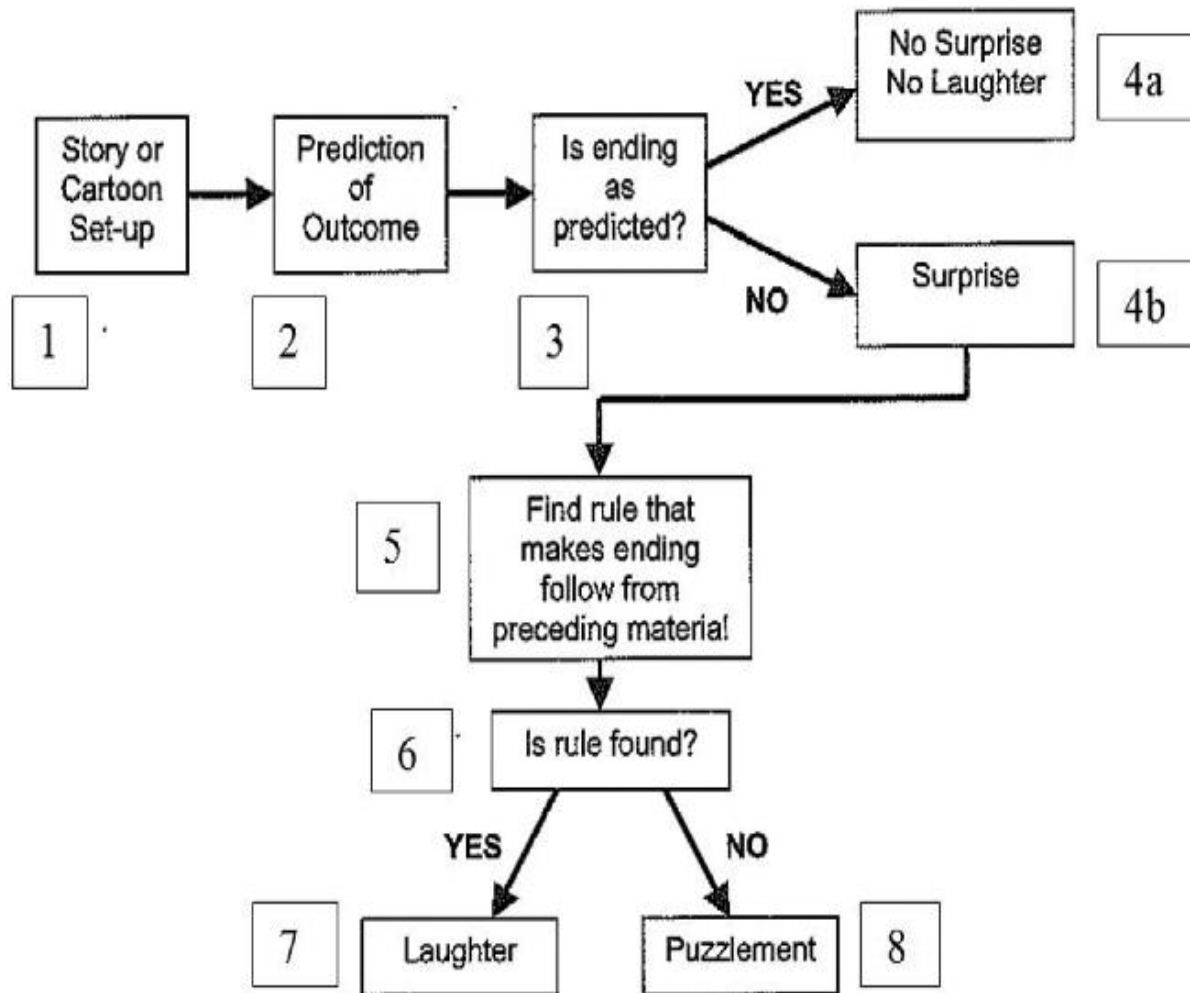

Figure 1: Jerry M. Suls' Incongruity Resolution Model of Humor Appreciation (Yus, 2016)

Suls' diagram means that if the punch line is following the expectations, there is no surprise and hence no laughter. Yet, if that is not the case that the listener will be surprised which immediately triggers a cognitive process. During that cognitive process, the listener will try and find some kind of rule or scheme that will help him realize when and how the resolution happened, which is when the laughter begins. If this is not achieved, the listener will only be confused.

Another element that is often discussed in this context is "surprise", or *violated expectations*, but the term "expectation" also lacks a precise definition.

> The punch line may (1) provide no resolution at all (2) provide a partial resolution (leaving an essential part of the incongruity unresolved) or (3) create new absurdities or incongruities. (Ruch, 1992)

> (5) O'Riley was on trial for armed robbery.
> The jury came out and announced, "Not guilty."
> "Wonderful," said O'Riley, "does that mean I can keep the money?" (Suls, 1972)

One might assume that Suls will allow the usual conflict between the punch line and the set-up, however, he wants to include a prediction with the conflict. So, one might feel O' Riley would express happiness or gratitude because of what happened during the trial, or that he might ask whether that means that he can leave.

However, since O' Riley answers in a completely different way, which is contrary to the expectation of the listeners, incongruity which needs to be solved appears. Has the jury made a mistake? Will O' Riley get in trouble after asking this question?

One might even assume that he might do something outrageous since he is Irish and that is one stereotypical assumption, just like it is that girls with blonde hair are not intelligent or that Scottish people are stingy. Once some of the questions are answered the listener will laugh.

Willibald Ruch (1992) believes that the punch line does not need to offer any resolution, but to create another absurd, and such a joke is called *nonsense humor*.

> In nonsense humor, the resolution information gives the appearance of making sense out of incongruities without actually doing so. The recipient's ability to make sense or to solve problems is exploited; after detecting the incongruity he is misled to resolve it, only to later discover that what made sense for a moment is not really making sense. (Ruch, 1992 as cited by Raskin, 2008)

(6) Pričaju dvije pukotine gluposti i kaže jedna pukotina drugoj:

    Jesi ti pukla!

(http://www.mojivicevi.com/glupi/3/ - 8/8/2020)

In Bosnian it would sound something like this:

(7) Two nut cases were talking nonsense to each other and one says to the other:

    You are nuts!

This joke is an example of complete nonsense. There is no point and no punch line or resolution. One could laugh because the joke is so dumb and not logical, however, there is no intentional punch line that would make it funnier. It is just related to the topic of "foolishness" hence the Bosnian words related to that topic are being used.

(8) What do you call a boomerang that never comes back?

A stick.

(https://bestlifeonline.com/actually-funny-bad-jokes/ - 8/8/2020)

This joke is not a *nonsense joke*, as in the previous example, it is related to the end and it is logical. A stick is not returning as a boomerang would, so it does not offer the expected result. Semantically, there is the script of POSSIBLE/IMPOSSIBLE, since a boomerang always comes back, and by seeing the script of BOOMERANG/STICK the reader gets the incongruity through the punch line and has to laugh.

(9) My roommate thinks our house is haunted. Nonsense.

I've lived here for 219 years and never noticed anything strange.

(https://upjoke.com/nonsense-jokes - 8/8/2020)

On the other hand, this one is a bit more different. So, at the very beginning, this joke starts with something unrealistic such as a ghost, and after thinking about it, one can realize that the narrator is the ghost. Therefore, the reader activates the semantic field of POSSIBLE/IMPOSSIBLE and SENSE/NONSENSE when thinking about the fact that there are no ghosts in the human world and

it is a completely unrealistic scenario. The incongruity lies in the fact that he already lives for 219 years but is not aware of the fact that he is a ghost. Therefore, there is the script of LIFE/DEATH or MORTAL/IMMORTAL. It can be considered as a joke that does not make a lot of sense for the fact that it is not realistic. However, compared to the jokes above it does include more elements that are connected– the topic of ghosts, something supernatural, his awareness, etc.

This model leaves the hardest parts still to be done and is more a sketch of a "delivery" mechanism than an explanation of incongruity in humor. One should also remember that he developed his theory in 1972, long before Raskin has discussed theories of humor and long before Raskin and Attardo discussed the Semantic Script Theory of Humor and the General Theory of Verbal Humor.

4. Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH)

Victor Raskin presented The Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH) in his work Semantic Mechanism of Humor (1985). The SSTH is based on certain beliefs taken by Noam Chomsky related to humor competence. As Raskin puts it, since the speaker can recognize whether a sentence is grammatical or not, he can also recognize if it is funny or not. In other words, it deals with the semantic elements a certain text needs to have to be recognized and treated as a joke.

This theory has one main hypothesis:

> A text can be characterized as a single-joke-carrying-text if both of the [following] conditions are satisfied:
>
> i) The text is compatible, fully or in part, with two different scripts
>
> ii) The two scripts with which the text is compatible are opposite (Raskin, 1985)

Providing such a theory can result in two tasks: to "separate" a funny text from its elements that might not be so funny when analyzed as individual elements, and to recognize a funny text, i.e. this theory, as such, portrays the "necessary and sufficient conditions that a text must meet for the text to be funny as an algorithm for checking whether a given text is funny or not." (Attardo, 1994)

4.1. Definition of the Script

According to Salvatore Attardo, the script "…is a cognitive structure internalized by the speaker which provides the speaker with information on how things are done, organized, etc." (Attardo, 1994)

Raskin defines it as follows:

> A script functions as some kind of semantic knot that is surrounding a word, so every person has this internalized individual script which has to be influenced by the person's background, experiences, and restricted scripts, influenced by experiences with our families or friends, but not with the whole community. (Raskin, 1985)

In other words, a script refers to a sequence of actions and once the script is activated, one might expect a sequence of activities to take place in a certain order. Also, different words activate different scripts, depending on the context provided.

Raskin (1985) introduces different levels of scripts. Scripts can contain other scripts within them and those other ones are called *macro scripts* and *complex scripts*. *Macro scripts* are organized chronologically, and *complex scripts* are made of other scripts, but they are not organized chronologically.

One example that will be provided in the paper is Raskin's famous RESTAURANT example. RESTAURANT is an example of a *macro script* because it manages to activate a series of ideas about a certain order of events that follows it or that is expected. So, scripts like WAITING TO BE SEATED/RECEIVE MENU/DECIDE WHAT TO ORDER, etc. activate ideas of a certain order of events that is expected, and it is interestingly positioned in the correct chronological order. However, it can also be positioned in a sense that it lacks this chronological order when thinking of scripts that are not in chronological order such as CHEF/WAITER/DISHES. Another example that Raskin provides is WAR that also consists of many scripts such as

ENEMY/WEAPONS/WINNER/DEFEAT/ARMY, which are not really in chronological order. (Raskin, 1985)

4.1.1. Script Overlapping and Script Opposition

The following section is crucial for explaining how "funniness" is judged according to the SSTH. The first one is *script overlapping* and it is perfectly normal to assume that some words may fit in more than one script.

> Imagine a text describing someone getting up, fixing breakfast, leaving the house, etc. These events could fit the script for GO TO WORK but also for GO ON A FISHING TRIP hence the stretch of text would be compatible with both scripts. (Attardo, 1994)

The second crucial element for this paper is that of *script opposition*. It is not enough for a text to just overlap in order to be considered funny. The script oppositions fall into three classes: ACTUAL vs. NON-ACTUAL, NORMAL vs. ABNORMAL, and POSSIBLE vs. IMPOSSIBLE. These three classes are all cases of a basic opposition between real and unreal situations in texts. These three classes of oppositions are then set in more concrete oppositions. (Raskin, 1985)

Therefore, Raskin mentions the most common oppositions such as GOOD/BAD, LIFE/DEATH, OBSCENE/NON-OBSCENE, MONEY/NO-MONEY, AND HIGH/LOW STATURE. So, to sum up only if both conditions are met, a joke can be considered to be funny. However, in everyday life and some very casual humoristic remarks, it is almost impossible to meet all of these standards. (Raskin, 1985)

4.2.   The Doctor Joke

In order to closely explain both the theory and how SSTH handles a simple joke, a very famous one will be presented.

>   (10)   Is the doctor at home?" the patient asked in his bronchial whisper.
>   "No," the doctor's young and pretty wife whispered in reply. "Come right in. (Raskin, 1985)

Raskin further clarifies that there are several steps in the analysis of this joke.

>   The first step of the analysis is the listing of all the senses of the words in the text (in other words, of all the scripts activated by the text). The second step is the activation of the combinatorial rules that will combine the various scripts according to compatibility (i.e., they will look for words that evoke the same script) and to syntactic and subcategorization rules, ignored here for simplicity. (Raskin, 1985)

As stated here, Raskin's first step is to list all of the activated senses. The word *doctor* can activate the possible senses of the lexeme such as ACADEMIC/MEDICAL/MATERIAL, etc. The MEDICAL script is activated once the word *patient* activates the same script. The same goes for the word *is* that has senses of EQUAL/EXIST/SPATIAL and *at* which entails senses SPATIAL/TARGET/CAUSE, etc. Now, since both the words *is* and *at* have something in common, which is the SPATIAL script it triggers this at the preferred reading and context of the text.

In his work Humorous Texts: A Semantic and Pragmatic Analysis (2001) Attardo provides a semantic interpretation of the joke:

>   Someone who was previously treated for some illness inquiries about the presence of a doctor at the doctor's place of residence, with the purpose of being treated for a disease which manifests itself by a whispering voice. The doctor's wife (who is young and pretty)

answers (whispering, as the patient) that the doctor is not at home, and invites the inquirer to enter in the house. (Attardo, 2001)

So, once this happens and the patient is invited by the wife, the readers might get "puzzled" as to what the actual meaning of this could be. Raskin "solves" the puzzle by using *macroscripts*. The *macroscript* of DOCTOR would usually go like this: ILL PATIENT/VISITS DOCTOR/DOCTOR PRESCRIBES MEDICINE. However, here there is the turn of events where the wife invites the doctor although he is not at home. This means that another script needs to be activated and if one considers the wife's beauty and youth the activated script is SEX. Then if one sees the word whisper the script LOVER is activated, and now the text makes perfect sense to the reader. (Raskin, 1985)

For Raskin (1985), there are three levels based on which the DOCTOR/LOVER scripts are opposite; ACTUAL/NON-ACTUAL, SEX/NO SEX, DOCTOR/LOVER. ACTUAL/NON-ACTUAL which is the most abstract concept since the readers were presented with something that is not actual. SEX/NON-SEX which stays a mystery even after reading the joke and lastly, the most basic opposition, DOCTOR/LOVER. They are compatible with the text; hence the joke is and can be considered as funny, at least from a linguistic point of view. (Raskin, 1985)

5. Humor and Translation

This final diploma paper contains a theoretical background related to translation and the issues that translators face. This part will include a classification of the issues according to authors such as Francisco Yus, Eugene Nida, and Patrick Zabalbeascoa. The examples will be taken from online sources and portrayed after each theoretical part.

In his book Humor and Relevance (2016), Francisco Yus defined some problems that translators face while translating jokes. He defines the process of translating in the following way:

> Translation is pictured as an inferential gap-filling activity in which the translator is challenged to infer the intended interpretation, context accessibility and predictions of mutuality between the source language communicator and the source-language addressee (all framed in the source-language culture), and then transfer all of this information to a target audience with a different language, a more or less different way of coding information, and possibly different social values, norms and stereotypes. (Yus, 2016)

Yus explains that translation is a process in which the translator needs to adjust the interpretation of the joke from the source language to the target language without actually losing the point that he has made. The punch line should be understandable to both the source language audience and target language audience. (Yus, 2016)

Yus (2016) continues explaining how when translating there are certain elements that the translator just cannot control. However, if he manages to convey a similar joke to the audience it will also result in a similar reaction. The response relies on the addressee whose reception is merely based on the culture, the context of the joke, therefore there needs to be a certain connection between the translator but also the reader of the joke. Of course, the translator cannot be a mind-reader but he needs to predict certain strategies that will happen in the addressee's mind.

> "… its interpretation resembles that of the original closely enough in the relevant respect. Using his knowledge of the audience, the translator has to make assumptions about its

cognitive environment and about the potential relevance that any aspects of the interpretation would have in that cognitive environment." (Gutt, 1991 as cited by Yus, 2016)

The first terms to be discussed are *semantic* and *pragmatic faithfulness*. *Pragmatic faithfulness* fully relies on the pragmatic elements that carry the joke and that need to be conveyed, however, the *semantic faithfulness* is more concerned with semantics and can therefore fail to convey the point of the joke by following it. For that reason, it is believed that *pragmatic faithfulness* is always more relevant than *semantic faithfulness*. (Yus, 2016) A joke needs to go through a series of changes to be translated properly, yet keep the humorous element and keep the faithfulness.

"…faithfulness in reproducing humorous effects is more important than faithfulness in reproducing coded content, since preserving the strategies and producing similar effects is what makes the joke fully relevant to the target-language hearer." (Yus, 2016)

Semantic and *pragmatic faithfulness* are the counterparts for the *dynamic* and *formal equivalence* introduced by Eugene Nida and Charles Taber in their book The Theory and Practice of Translation (1982). *Formal equivalence* is simply formally replacing one word by another and protecting the linguistic part, whereas the *dynamic equivalence* is concerned with the dynamic rapport between the author and the audience. Therefore, the focus of *the formal equivalence* is mostly the source and *dynamic equivalence* is simply the audience and their understanding. They should receive the same message that someone tried to convey. Authors agree *that dynamic equivalence* has the advantage. The goal for it is to convey the source text so that the point is in accordance to the message the author in the source language sent. (Nida & Taber, 1982)

(11)   What does DNA stand for? The National Dyslexic Association? (Arnott & Haskins, 2007)

This is an example where it is of huge importance to try and preserve the element that is causing laughter but also to make sense in the target language. It is directed towards people suffering from dyslexia, who have trouble with reading despite their intelligence. So, the direct translation of the

acronym into Bosnian is DNK. Different letters are used, A and K, so the translation of the word *association* in Bosnian is *savez* or *udruženje* and this would be the perfect semantic example, yet it would lose the element. Therefore, the translator might go through an adjustment to keep the humorous instance and choose words that start with K, such as *konferencija*. Then the acronym would be NDK which is pragmatically faithful to the original.

Clearly, the faithfulness cannot be achieved always, hence Yus (2016) mentions 3 scenarios that are an issue when translating and that are almost always a part of a joke*: cultural, semantic, and pragmatic scenario.*

Cultural Scenario is related to people living in one community, hence they have certain cultural notions which are almost always of a stereotypical nature. The main problem is that different audiences might get different outcomes and not understand the joke, so the question is what can a translator do in such instances.

The translator has various choices to make when translating. Some jokes are usually very easy to translate since it is a famous stereotype, blondes, politicians, policemen, etc.

> (12)   How many blondes does it take to change a light bulb?
> A hundred and one. One holds the bulb and the others turn the ladder. (https://unijokes.com/joke-272/ - 9/2/2020)

This is a familiar stereotype; hence it does not need any special efforts and is translated in Bosnian as such:

> (13)   Koliko treba plavuša da se zavrne jedna sijalica?
> Treba ih 101-na. Jedna čuva luster, 100 njih okreće kuću! (https://vicevi.net/plavuse - 9/2/20202)

However, it is obvious that not all stereotypes are going to have corresponding items in the target language.

> (14)   What is the difference between Michael Jackson and a grocery bag?

One is white, plastic, and dangerous for children. You put groceries in the other. (http://www.jokes4us.com/ - 9/2/2020)

This is a joke that is related to the Michael Jackson scandals and it is known that he was accused of being a sexual predator and pedophile. It is easy to translate the joke, but according to the *cultural scenario*, it deals with an issue that is not familiar in every culture. The joke needs to be translated directly but it will not be familiar to everyone since not everyone is aware of this topic. In such cases, Yus (2016) claims that the joke needs to be, in a way, described to the audience so they will be able to understand the punch line.

Semantic Scenario: this scenario only focuses on the semantic changes, i.e. whether the target language has similar idioms or metaphors in the target language.
In order to portray it an English joke will be presented:

(15)   Who says you can't judge a book by its covers?
I knew you were an idiot when I first saw you. (https://upjoke.com/idiom-jokes - 9/2/2020)

The idiom *judge a book by its covers* might be the main problem here, yet a very fortunate event is that in Bosnian one can also say *ne sudi knjigu po koricama* and it carries the same meaning. Of course, this is not always the case and therefore Yus (2016) presents the example of a commercial:

(16)   List of features as long as your arm.
But not an arm and a leg (Yus, 2016)

To cost an arm and leg means for something to be extremely expensive, in Bosnian it would only be translated as very expensive, *veoma skupo*. It would not be acceptable to say *košta ruku i nogu,* since it does not make any sense in the target language. Idioms like this can simply not be translated and need to have some kind of equivalent idiom in the other language, which means that the translator always needs to do a thorough research when translating.

Pragmatic Scenario: many authors find this scenario as the most crucial for the translation of jokes. This was divided into two areas, *inferential steps* and *balance of effects and effort*. This merely refers to the translator making certain inferential steps that are simultaneous to the source language yet it results in a totally different balance of cognitive effects and mental effort.

This scenario accounts for all of the jokes that undergo a certain replacement in the target language and therefore follow the *dynamic equivalence/pragmatic faithfulness* so that they can be funnier for the average reader

There are various types of issues that a translator can face since the English language is one of the richest languages when it comes to wordplay. Homonymy, homophony, polysemy, rhyme or alliteration are just some of the examples that can be used for a humorous effect but can be a real struggle for the translator. The words in Bosnian, however, are pronounced the same way as they are spelled, so they do not rely so much on the wordplay when making jokes and puns.

5.1. Patrick Zabalbeascoa's Classification of Jokes

The last author to mention is Patrick Zabalbeascoa, who provided a classification of jokes that takes into account the major factors that affect the translation of jokes.

International joke: this is the type of joke that does not rely on language or any particular culture. Therefore, it is not dependent on puns or wordplays or any other category that causes difficulties. This joke refers to the binational type of jokes, mainly relying on the pairs of languages in which one could understand the same joke, for example, jokes about blondes or certain characters like Chuck Norris, Don Juan, etc.

(17)   Zašto se plavuša nikako ne smije kada se sunča?
         Boji se da će joj zubi pocrniti. ([https://vicevi.net/plavuse - 9/3/2020](https://vicevi.net/plavuse))

(18)   Why are blondes not smiling when they sunbathe?
         Because they are afraid that their teeth will get a tan.

National-culture-and-institutions joke: humor is often adapted to a certain culture, institution, etc. Therefore, only people living in that institution might be able to get the joke. The translator, therefore, needs to take the joke from the original language and find its counterpart in the source language for the audience to understand the punch line and overall point of the joke.

(19)   Zašto Fočaci imaju rupu na frižideru?
         Da bi vidjeli je li se ugasilo svjetlo.   (https://www.vicevi.click/vicevi-o-focacima/- 8/23/2020)

(20)   Why don't Scotsmen buy fridges?
         They don't believe the light goes out when you close the door (Arnott & Haskins, 2007)

Here, it is obvious how the translators made certain adjustments for the joke to make sense. This is a stereotypical joke, and in both languages mentions stingy people. Commonly, Scottish people

are stingy, however when trying to convey that humorous statement the best solution would be to find a counterpart in the target country, but it is not always possible.

National-sense-of-humor joke: this is a similar case as the previous one since it refers to topics that are simply more popular in a country. This category is considered as the most controversial category because it relies heavily on events that are related to history, religion, or politics therefore the translator must make some big decisions to avoid offending anyone. Yet, he would still need to maintain humor.

(21)   Kakva je razlika između Bosne i filma?
Film se razvija. (https://vicevi.net/narodi - 9/3/2020)

The joke would be translated as follows:
(22)   What's the difference between a film and Bosnia?
You can develop a film.

This joke merely refers to the fact that the country Bosnia and Herzegovina is not so developed in financial, educational or political terms. It is possible to translate it normally, yet it would not be familiar to the average American reader. The translator would yet again have to try and use some sort of adaption for the reader and try not to offend anyone, which is sometimes impossible.

Language-dependent jokes: these jokes are important for the semantic analysis, as well and they are very challenging but not in the same sense as the national-sense-of-humor joke since they are not controversial. They are challenging because of the language barriers that exist. It heavily relies on wordplays polysemy, homophony, etc. It is very difficult, almost impossible to try and translate a joke that contains polysemy for it does not have its counterpart in the target language.

(23)   How did they know the shark attack victim had dandruff?
They found its head and shoulders on the beach. (Arnott & Haskins, 2007)

This is an interesting example since anyone who is in America knows that *Head & Shoulders* is the brand of shampoos used against dandruff, however, it is also very familiar to Bosnians, yet it cannot be translated due to the linguistic barrier, *Head & Shoulders* is a related to the body parts. In Bosnian, one could just say Head and Shoulders (Hed end šolders) and everyone would understand. However, it is not at all related to the body parts and cannot be treated as such.

(24)   Zašto perec nema karijeru? Zato što je smotan. (http://www.vicevi-dana.com/vicevi--p-Za-to-pereca-nema-karije/2016032184 - 9/3/2020)

The humorous element is created by the word *smotan* which translates to *clumsy* but also *wrapped up* or *rolled up,* which is exactly what a pretzel is. Yet, there is no suitable translation that could convey the same effect.

C*omplex joke*: these are all of the jokes that the translator has certain problems with, semantic or pragmatic and it combines two or more of the categories mentioned.

There is an immense amount of challenges that the translator faces. Translators are obligated to make many decisions, starting from whether to translate it directly, to include or exclude a certain element, or to completely change the joke in order to regain and keep the funny element. All of these methods have one goal in common which is to convey the joke from the source to the target language the same, or at least a similar way if it is possible.

6. Analysis

In her work, The Feasibility and Strategies of Translating Humor (1989) Debra S. Raphaelson-West mentions that there are three types of jokes to take into account such as: *linguistic, cultural,* and *universal.*

This analysis will be organized according to this classification. Five jokes will be included for each type and they will be analyzed descriptively to show what is funny about them. Next off, each joke will portray whether it stands as an issue for the average translator. The jokes will include possible translations from Bosnian to English and vice versa. Every translation will be provided by me, unless stated otherwise. Lastly, jokes will be analyzed according to the semantic scripts that they activate.

6.1. Linguistic Jokes

Linguistic jokes are the hardest to translate since they include puns and words that sometimes do not have any equivalents in the target language. These are the jokes that contain the biggest number of puns. West uses the sentence "linguistic jokes are punny as hell" (West, 1989) to portray how the point is the play on the words *funny* and *punny* which rhyme so that it sounds like *funny as hell*. The word pun in Bosnian means *dosjetka* or *igra riječima*, it is obviously possible to translate it but very hard to try and find a word that rhymes in the same way.

Sometimes it is possible to translate it because the words simply are both a part of the cultures:

> (25)   What   do   you   call   an   Arab   dairy   farmer?   A   milk   sheik.
>   (https://www.reddit.com/r/Jokes/ - 8/23/2020)

Since many English words are adapted into Bosnian such as the word *milkshake – milkšejk*, it will be no problem to translate this type of joke:

> (26)   Kako se zove Arapski mljekar? Milkšejk

Both the *milkšejk* and *šeik/šejk* are familiar in Bosnian as well as in English, which enables a translation that conveys the funny element. Yet, this is just one lucky attempt where the words used in the original joke can be a part of the translated joke also.

In terms of translation, there are no big issues. This can serve as a *national-culture-and institutions* joke since it is more of a stereotypical nature regarding the topic of sheiks, the translator can focus on both the *semantic* and *pragmatic faithfulness* here, the word *sheik* is already adapted in the Bosnian language and pragmatically the meaning is conveyed in the sense that the humorous element is presented through a play with words: *milk + shake/sheik.*

The joke is also providing a script overlap between ARAB/DAIRY FARMER but the opposition between the scripts ACTUAL/NON-ACTUAL since a milkshake cannot be a farmer or perform any actual functions. The incongruity is visible through the punch line and the opposition of DRINK/SHEIK i.e. the words *shake/sheik*. The words *sheik* and *shake* are *homophones*: a word that is pronounced the same as another word but has a different meaning or spelling, or both. *(*https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/homophone - 9/3/2020)

> (27)   What do you call a fish with no eye?
>
> Fsh.
>
> (https://www.fatherly.com/play/57-funny-jokes-kids-adults-who-like-dumb-jokes/-
> 8/11/2020)

> (28)   Kako se zove foka bez oka?
>
> F
>
> (http://www.mojivicevi.com/pitalice/1/ - 8/11/2020)

These are examples of direct translations of a joke, adjusted to the target language, of course. They are direct counterparts but trigger the same type of reaction for the reader. They do not represent the usual type of "funniness" because our expectations are not let down. The audience actually gets their answer but in a completely different sense. One might try and figure out what the name of a fish without an eye is, however, after hearing the punch line it becomes clear that there is no answer to the joke since it was never about the "eyeless fish" but rather about the phonetics of the words *fish* and in Bosnian *foka*.

This is an *international* joke, and universal in the sense that it could be told even in front of children and they would understand the point. This could have been an example of a *language-dependent* and *complex joke* since it is highly unlikely to find an equivalent for *fsh,* therefore the translator can follow the *pragmatic scenario* and switch the word *fish* with the word *seal* which is *foka* in Bosnian, and can undergo a parallel process of taking one letter away and producing the same punch line. By doing so, he might step away from the direct translation of the word but he will preserve the humoristic element.

In terms of semantics, the first script might be NORMAL/ABNORMAL since it is not normal for a fish not to have an eye. It is very apparent that this joke is simply not logical and triggers the script of SENSE/NONSENSE, the reader expects a certain resolution but is left with a play with words and letters, in this case, so instead of the name for the eyeless fish gets the only *fsh*, hence the incongruity lies in the scripts FISH/FSH.

The following examples are quite familiar in the Balkan region and are based on a certain play on words, they are usually short jokes that rely on the *homophony* of the provided words. They usually do not make any sense and need to have certain complements in order to be logical, yet anyone from the Balkan region would be able to understand them.

      (29)   Leže dva psa jedan se češka a drugi Poljska. – (https://vicevi.ba/37333 - 8/23/2020)

      (30)   Idu dva čovjeka ulicom, jedan je uzrujan, a drugi uz kolovoz... (Ibid. – 8/23/2020)

      (31)   Idu dvije životinje... Jedna puma druga Benetton. (Ibid. – 8/23/2020)

The jokes above represent very hard to convey to another language. The first one would sound something like this:

      (32)   Two dogs were laying down; one was scratching himself and the other one was Poland.

The joke makes absolutely no sense even in Bosnian; therefore, it is regarded as a *nonsense joke* which was mentioned already. In Bosnian the verb *scratch* sounds the same as the country Czech

Republic, therefore the joke lies in the fact that inserting the name of another country, Poland would be the funny element, it makes no sense whatsoever relating the context, however, it is nonsensical and anyone who lives in the Balkans would understand it and therefore laugh due to the discrepancy created between our expectation and the result. However, when translated to English the joke loses the connection between the funny elements since there is no way to connect the countries and the verbs in the same way, hence it loses the humoristic part.

Translating the joke would be a real challenge, which is visible in example (29), hence this joke is an example of a *complex joke* in which neither the *semantic* nor *pragmatic faithfulness* can be kept and conveyed to the target language. The joke is not grammatical, to begin with and should have a certain complement after the word *Poljska* to be grammatical.

In linguistic terms, it activates scripts such as SENSE/NONSENSE, because after reading the punch line the expectations of the readers are completely violated by seeing the word *Poljska* which makes no sense. The opposed words are the verb scratch and the country Czech Republic ČEŠKATI SE/ČEŠKA. However, in English, the opposition would be SCRATCH/CZECH REPUBLIC, which does not produce any divergence or incongruity and hence no humorous effect. Lastly, the main script opposition is that of POSSIBLE/IMPOSSIBLE since a dog cannot be a country.

The second joke (30) shows almost the same issue; it is a *nonsense joke* that is humorous just because of the unexpected outcome. The translation would sound something like this:

(33)   Two men are walking on the street, one is upset and the other one by August.

This translation, again, does not make any sense nor is it funny at all in English. In Croatian the adjective *upset* also consists of the word *September*, therefore the next included word is *August*, making it illogical but funny since it is a play on words.

The translator would have huge issues with translating it, which classifies it as a complex joke. Semantically, the first opposition is again SENSE/NONSENSE, since even in Croatian the joke stops being logical once the punch line is "introduced". The semantic overlap is visible in the words RUJAN/KOLOVOZ, yet the incongruity is related to the verb *uzrujan* and *Kolovoz*. Again, the next one is POSSIBLE/IMPOSSIBLE, since a person can be upset but cannot be August.

Lastly, an example where a joke carries the same structure and relies on the same type of punch line but is possible to translate will be included:

(34)   Two animals were walking, one was a puma and the second one was Benetton.

Luckily, this joke has universal elements, since two brands are included. The *puma* is an animal but simultaneously represents the famous brand *Puma*, consequently, the punch line is the brand *United Colors of Benetton.* Yet, the translator now has the freedom to use another maybe more recognizable brand and to convey the same message; *Adidas*, *Converse, Nike*, etc. This would classify the joke as an *international* joke and the translator managed to respect the *semantic* but also *pragmatic faithfulness.*

The first script would again be that of SENSE/NONSENSE, since the expectations and punch line are completely contradictory, and the joke is not logical after hearing the punch line. The scripts are overlapping, i.e. the animal is also a brand, PUMA/PUMA (ANIMAL/BRAND). As in the previous example, the activated scripts are POSSIBLE/IMPOSSIBLE, since the two animals cannot be a puma and a clothing brand.

6.2.   Universal Jokes

The second category consists of *universal jokes.* Those are considered as being a part of a very broad category, making them very hard to categorize since they are simply unexpected. They also stand as an example of how, yet again, incongruity might be a good element as to why something is funny. Universal jokes are simply not of a big problem to the translators since they are mostly very stupid jokes.

(35)   Why don't blind people skydive? It scares the hell out of the dog. (Donohue, 2014)
The translation to Bosnian would go like this:

(36)   Zašto slijepi ljudi ne skaču iz aviona? Jer bi se pas vodič nasmrt prepao.

As mentioned, this is a *universal joke* which is not tied to any traditions, customs and do not need any special understanding of a certain topic to understand it, one just needs to understand the

connection between the blind person who would skydive and his guide dog who would have to jump with him.

In terms of translation, the joke is mostly an *international* joke, yet this type of comparison could maybe be offensive to a certain audience, however, this would be a very mild offense compared to the topics of politics or religion. It respects the *pragmatic and semantic faithfulness* and follows Yus' (2016) *semantic scenario.*

The semantic analysis would be ACTUAL/NON-ACTUAL, even if the blind person would agree to jump off a plane, there is no way the dog would ever be allowed to do that. The next opposition would be HUMAN/ANIMAL, i.e. what can a human do that an animal cannot. The last triggered opposition would be BLIND/ NON-BLIND, since it is obvious that blind people could not skydive and non-blind people could. The incongruity occurs once the form DOG appears so that the next opposition BLIND PERSON/DOG. Lastly, one could wonder that the last activated script might be LIFE/DEATH since the dog might not survive the fall, but that is of course not visible from this joke as is.

Moreover, the stereotypes of dumb women are widely spread nowadays, and blonde women have been a target of many jokes for a long time, which makes them fall into the category of universal jokes.

> (37) Zašto plavuša dok stoji ispred ogledala drži zatvorene oči?
> - Da vidi kako izgleda dok spava! (https://vicevi.net/plavuse - 9/1/2020)

> (38) Why is the blonde standing in front of the mirror with her eyes closed?
> So she can see what she looks like when she sleeps.

This conveys the absurdity but also offensiveness of these joke. It describes a situation in which the girl is not able to realize that she cannot see herself when her eyes are closed and there is no point of standing in front of the mirror.

In terms of translation, it is apparent that there are no huge issues with the translation and it is mainly descriptive; just retelling what happened. The joke is an *international joke* and there are no big issues with the *semantic* or *pragmatic faithfulness* either.

Semantically, the joke explains an impossible situation, no one would stand in front of the mirror with their eyes closed, hence the opposition would be POSSIBLE/IMPOSSIBLE and also ACTUAL/NON-ACTUAL. Most of all it is an offensive joke which leads to the opposition of OBSCENE/NON-OBSCENE. Lastly, it presents a situation which could only happen to a blonde woman not a brunette or redhead, so it shows the contrast between BRUNETTE/BLONDE and SMART/STUPID.

>
> (39)   Kako se zove najpametnija plavuša?
>   Zlatni retriever. (https://vicevi.net/plavuse - 9/1/2020)

>
> (40)   Who is the smartest blonde?
>   A golden retriever.

The second joke is even more ridiculous because it contrasts humans and animals and puts humans, in this case blondes, in the inferior position. The joke starts with the assumption that retrievers and blondes have the same hair color and since retrievers are considered a very intelligent dog breed, they have more competences than an average blonde, and are therefore the smartest blonde.
Again, as in the previous example the average translator would probably not find any big problems here since he is just describing a situation and following the *semantic* and *pragmatic faithfulness*. Lastly, the semantic oppositions would be ACTUAL/NON-ACTUAL but also POSSIBLE/IMPOSSIBLE since it is not really possible to compare a dog to a human being in terms of intelligence. Of course, it is a joke with an offensive element OBSCENE/NON-OBSCENE. The last semantic scripts that are triggered are those of STUPID/SMART, ANIMAL/HUMAN, RETRIEVER/WOMAN, since it is obvious that the animal is considered superior and more intelligent than the blonde.

6.3.   Cultural Jokes

The third category, is that of *cultural jokes.* These jokes can be easy to translate in the sense that no puns or plays on words are necessarily included. However, these jokes are heavily tied to the customs and traditions familiar to only a certain nation, so if a person from another nation reads the joke, he or she might not get it at all, and therefore might not find it funny. This is where Yus's (2016) *cultural parameter* plays an important role too.

These jokes heavily rely on stereotypes that are familiar to the citizens and as such are portrayed as funny. When it comes to stereotypical jokes, they are a part of every culture, therefore Irish people in England and Australia are considered dumb just as Polish people are in Europe and Scottish and Jewish people are seen as sly or stingy. Likewise, Bosnian people are perceived as dumb, people living in Foča are seen as very stingy, Montenegrin people as lazy, etc.
Therefore, some stereotypical jokes will be presented in this category.

> (41)   What is the Cuban National Anthem? Row, row, row your boat. (Arnott & Haskins, 2007)

In Bosnian the joke would sound something like this:

> (42)   Kako se zove kubanska himna? Veslaj, veslaj, veslaj čamac.

This is a joke that refers to the Cubans who are living in America and they arrive there with boats and ships, hence it is an evident mockery.
The translation is possible, yet this song is not so prominent in the Balkan region and even if it was, it would probably not trigger the same cognitive process and result in laughter like it would in the original language. This is a *national-sense-of humor joke* since it contains stereotypical elements that can be offensive to the target of the joke: the people from Cuba. The translator might try to follow the *semantic scenario* and directly translate the song *row your boat* to *veslaj čamac*, although it is not so popular in the target language.
Semantically, the activated script is ACTUAL/NON-ACTUAL, since the actual national anthem of Cuba is El Himno de Bayamo, therefore the reader sees that this is a mockery that causes the humorous element. Another script is, of course, OBSCENE/NON-OBSCENE, the joke starts like

a plain question and the audience might expect to get an actual answer like El Himno de Bayamo, however, they get the punch line formed as a mockery to the Cubans.

(43)   Who is the poorest person in West Virginia? The Tooth Fairy. (Arnott & Haskins, 2007)

(44)   Kako se zove najsiromašnija osoba u Zapadnoj Vrdžiniji? Zubić Vila.

This joke makes fun of the people living in West Virginia since one of their "traits" is losing all of their teeth. They are usually considered as *hillbillies*: "a person from a mountainous area of the US who has a simple way of life and is considered to be slightly stupid by people living in towns and cities." (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/hillbilly - 8/23/2020)

This joke can be included in the category of *national-culture-and institution jokes,* it deals with a stereotype that is familiar to the source language audience, hence follows the *culture scenario.* As seen in example (44), the joke can be translated without any semantic issues, yet it might not be so clear to the audience which is not familiar with the stereotypes about West Virginians and hillbillies. Therefore, the translator might try to follow the *pragmatic scenario* and try to replace West Virginians with another nation that is familiar to the target audience, e.g. Gypsies.

Lastly, when it comes to scripts the first activated one is ACTUAL/NON-ACTUAL, since the Tooth Fairy is not real, it is an imaginary character. The next opposition is OBSCENE/NON-OBSCENE since it mocks the West Virginians for being not very intelligent, or good looking. After reading the punch line, one might think of the script of INTELLIGENCE/STUPIDITY since this joke is mostly directed towards their cleverness, which is not remarkable and the joke would not be humorous if, instead of the West Virginians, the author included a Nobel Prize winner.

(45)   What is the difference between a Scotsman and a coconut? You can get a drink out of a coconut? (Arnott & Haskins, 2007)

Both of these jokes are related to a stereotypical trait of the Scottish people, which is that they are very stingy. The joke (45) is humorous for the mere fact that coconut will "give" you something to drink before a person from Scotland will.

This joke is a *national-culture-and institutions joke,* because yet again it deals with stereotypical topics. However, the translator might have some issues with the phrase *get a drink out,* it could be translated as *iz kokosa možeš izvući piće,* yet it is not a perfect translation and a part of the humorous effect would be lost.

Lastly, when talking about the semantic elements, the first opposition is that of ACTUAL/NON-ACTUAL since a human being is compared to a coconut which triggers the opposition of ANIMATE/INANIMATE. The last opposition could be MONEY/NO MONEY since the Scots might just not have enough money for the drink, however in this case it is not the possibility since the joke is just a mockery towards the mindset and behavior of generally stingy people.

> (46)   What is the difference between a Scotsman and a canoe? A canoe tips occasionally.
>   (Ibid.)

Furthermore, the joke (46) refers to the play on words, due to the waves a canoe might tip over into the water. However, here it refers to the act of leaving a certain amount of money for the bartender which is seen as impossible for the Scottish people.

When it comes to the translation process, it would represent a challenging process because of the words used such as *tip* which is a *homonym* and has 2 meanings: to tilt over or to give someone, who provided you with a service, extra money. In Bosnian it would translate to *nagnuti se* or *počastiti* and it cannot be connected to a canoe like in English, for which reasons it would lose the punch line. The translator might completely change the structure and follow the *pragmatic scenario* to preserve the humoristic element: *kanu se nekad naginje, a Škoti (ne naginju) piće nikada.* However, the humoristic element is not even close to the one in the original version. This is a *national-culture and institutions joke* but might also be seen as a *complex and linguistic joke* for the plays on words that cannot be translated easily.

The activated semantic scripts are: POSSIBLE/IMPOSSIBLE, it is possible for a canoe to tip but not for a Scot. Next one would be OBSCENE/NON-OBSCENE, since it mocks the Scottish people and lastly, like in the previous example MONEY/NO MONEY, since the Scott might just not have money at the moment. The incongruity is intensified by the double meanings of the word *tip.*

The next joke shows a more familiar stereotype used for Italians:

(47) What do you call an Italian man with arm shorter than the other? Speech impaired. ([http://www.laughfactory.com/jokes/national-jokes - 9/3/2020](http://www.laughfactory.com/jokes/national-jokes))

(48) Kako se zove Italijan kojem je jedna ruka kraća od druge? Italijan s govornom manom.

This joke relies on a stereotype that might be familiar to many Europeans which is that Italians are quite loud and talkative people. That is why sometimes, to clarify their point to someone, they have exaggerated hand gestures.

This is a *national-culture-and-institutions joke* and the translator would probably have no problems with translating it since it does not have any hidden meanings, puns, or plays on words. Maybe the joke would not be equally funny after being translated, but it would essentially carry the same point and he would keep the *semantic* and *pragmatic faithfulness.*

Semantically, the activated scripts are NORMAL/ABNORMAL since it is normal to have arms that are the same length, yet here it is the opposite. The semantic overlapping shows that the Italian having a shorter arm equals him having a speech impairment.

Lastly, one interesting fact is that stereotypes that are known or familiar to other nations, can be accepted hence the reader gets the point although the target is not a part of his culture. The following example shows a joke about Scotts found on a Balkan website among other jokes about Balkan nations and stereotypes:

(49) Škotlanđanin izveo kompletnu porodicu na večeru u restoran i kad su bili pri kraju sa jelom pozove konobara i zamoli ga:
- "Molim vas da nam ove ostatke zapakujete da ponesemo keru."
Čuvši to deca povikaše:
- "Dobićemo kera, dobićemo kera." ([https://www.vicevi.click/ - 9/2/2020](https://www.vicevi.click/))

7. Conclusion

The goal of this final diploma paper was to depict what the Semantic Script Theory of Humor relates to in terms of different jokes in both English and Bosnian. The analysis was mostly focused on portraying that every joke has a certain opposition and introduces a punch line that carries the incongruity. In the provided jokes there were evident semantic script oppositions which proved the main hypothesis of the Semantic Script Theory. These oppositions undoubtedly cause the humorous effect.

Another goal was to see the issues a translator faces and there are many of them, however, if the translator is skilled enough, (s)he can conquer them. The translator needs to make certain choices and priorities to convey the same message. The translator is lucky if there are some similarities or parallels that he can rely on, which enable him to adjust certain elements or targets, like it was presented in the *national-culture and institutions jokes* where the translator could take different target groups for the same stereotype.

The humor that "appears" due to an incongruity is not at all easy to translate which in a big issue for the translator, and this mainly refers to the category of *complex jokes,* which the translator sometimes has to translate by describing them either live, when it is a case of standup comedy, in a footnote, etc. Lastly, the final diploma paper showed the importance of *pragmatic faithfulness*. In order to convey the joke, the translator needs to "preserve" the humorous element even if it means completely changing or adjusting the structure of the joke.

Luckily, Bosnia and Hercegovina and the Balkan region in general, have an abundance of jokes which can be taken as the basis for further analysis and comparisons, especially when it comes to offensive jokes, which are almost a part of the Bosnian culture. Nevertheless, even nowadays humor and the reaction to jokes are considered a very complex process in the human brain, that is probably going to be explored in the years to come.

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