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Abstracts

(in alphabetical order)

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Markers of Humorous Intention, Non-Verbal Communication, and Gesture

A small but growing body of research has been dedicated to examining how speakers negotiate the interpretation of an utterance, or parts thereof, to be intended as humorous. The intentionality may flow in either direction, i.e., the speaker may want to indicate to the hearer that he/she intends the utterance as humorous, or the hearer may want to indicate to the speaker that he/she chooses to interpret it as humorous. In the process of considering how the speakers manage this negotiation, terminology has been introduced, not always with the required care and attention to proper methodology and theory building (see Gironzetti 2016 for a review of the problem).

In this paper, we will review the problem and broaden the field of discussion to non-verbal communication and gesture. In particular the aspect of intentionality and integration (coextensiveness) will be discussed. Factors, indicators, markers and indices will also be discussed.

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Imperfect Puns in Farsi

In this paper I will examine puns in Farsi language from different aspects. The focus of my study will be on phonological features of puns in Farsi. In examining the phonological features of Farsi puns I aim to point out that Farsi puns as verbal humorous phenomena that exist in Farsi humorous texts use the phonetic processes and have the phonological features that have been observed in puns in other languages and in other studies. In this paper I will examine 40 imperfect puns from a phonological perspective. In my study I rely on previous studies about linguistic features of pun, more specifically those studies which deal with phonological features of puns and phonological processes involved in punning; and I attempt to verify a few of the findings of the previous studies through applying them to Farsi puns. By proving that those findings of previous studies and previously formulated hypotheses are applicable to puns in Farsi I will be able to provide further evidence of the validity of previous findings and hypotheses concerning phonological aspects of and processes involved in punning. In this study of Farsi puns I rely mostly on theoretical information and hypotheses gathered and proposed by Guidi (2012), in turn based on Hempelmann (2003). Guidi in her paper “provides a synthetic overview of the literature on puns and related phenomena.”

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The Corpus of Standup Comedy

What statistical trends mark the expression of humor in a language, distinguishing it from non-humorous language? To answer this, it would be ideal to create an algorithm to automatically reveal humor in a corpus, but this is not realistic currently (and to create one may first require an answer to the question). We can more easily address the question by building a corpus of humorous language use. The choice of standup comedy as the data source assures us that essentially all linguistic expression within the corpus is designed to be humorous, and permits us to ask further questions such as "What are the specific linguistic characteristics defining standup comedy as a genre?" and "How are the individual linguistic styles of various comedians manifested?"

Therefore, a pilot study was undertaken, employing the Sketch Engine website (Kilgarriff et al 2014) to create the Corpus of Standup Comedy (CSC), a small (125,000 word) corpus of 16 stand-up performances by five comedians (George Carlin, Eddie Murphy, Robin Williams, Jerry Seinfeld, and Louis CK), representing 15 hours of data.

To test the corpus, a comparative analysis of the use of (English) taboo words in three corpora is in progress. Preliminary results suggest that, in standup comedy, taboo words are employed primarily in order to achieve solidarity with the audience, whereas results from the other corpora suggest that the words are most frequently used to refer to taboo topics.

Kilgarriff, Adam, Vít Baisa, Jan Bušta, Miloš Jakubíček, Vojtěch Kovář, Jan Michelfeit, Pavel Rychlý, Vít Suchomel. 2014. *The Sketch Engine: ten years on*. Lexicography Vol 1, Issue 1, 7-36.

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Investigating Perception of Humorous Texts Originating from Chinese Language Learners' Errors

Foreign language learners often make errors when they use target language for communication. Some people perceive these errors as humorous. Many factors, such as background and text sources, influence these perceptions. The purpose of this study is to investigate these factors in the context of perceiving L2 Chinese learners' error-evoked humorous texts. 25 text stimuli were collected from three popular and often-cited online articles. 57 participants perceived the 25 texts and rated them in the following three categories: Very Funny, Somewhat Funny, and Not Funny. The 57 participants include 51 Native Speakers (NS) of Chinese and six Non-NS. Among these 51 NS, there are 28 females, 23 males, 17 Chinese teachers, and 34 non-teachers. The results indicated that teachers and No-NS perceived these texts less funny than non-teachers and NS. No significant gender difference was found. The study compared the humorous texts perceived most funny and the ones perceived the least funny. The comparison provided empirical evidence as to the effectiveness of using The General Theory of Verbal Humor to interpret humorous text. These findings improve our understanding of humor perception and creation in the context of perceiving learners' error-evoked humorous texts.

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The Interaction of Smiling Patterns and Eye Fixations During Conversation

Building on previous research (Attardo, Pickering, and Baker 2011; Calvo, Fernández-Martín, and Nummenmaa 2013; Calvo, Gutiérrez-García, Averó, and Lundqvist 2013; Gironzetti, Attardo, and Pickering, in press; Heerey and Crossley 2013), a mixed methods approach was adopted to collect qualitative and quantitative data in order to determine if there is a relationship between gaze patterns, humorous conversational events, and the smiling behavior of speakers taking part in a dyadic face-to-face conversation. Preliminary results show that the presence of humor tends to co/occur with increased participants' eye fixations to the mouth and eyes areas of the interlocutor's face, increased individual smiling intensity with respect to each participant's baseline, and increased smiling synchronicity and smiling intensity matching among conversational partners.

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Humor as the Academic Focus for a Capstone Course

As part of its recent, comprehensive Liberal Education requirements for undergraduates, Park University developed an Interdisciplinary Capstone Program for students to demonstrate critical thinking and analytical skills. With around 40 remote campuses as well as a strong online presence, it became evident that Capstone courses needed breadth of relevance as well as a depth in academic focus.

The paper will summarize the goals, development, delivery and outcomes of an Integrated, Interdisciplinary Capstone Course targeting upper-division students from a wide spectrum of academic disciplines. It will discuss the process selecting content material that would be relevant to students from a variety of majors, would be strong enough online delivery, and yet flexible enough face-to-face classes. The beta version of the course was taught face-to-face in 2013, and the online course was launched in 2014. The course quickly became popular and has been offered around 30 times, by at least a half-dozen instructors. The presentation will discuss outcomes that have been observed during the course's evolution, and considerations for future content modifications.

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Quantifying the Semantics of Humor

Measuring a phenomenon and expressing it in numbers is science, everything else understanding of "a meagre and unsatisfactory kind," as Lord Kelvin reminds us. Quantifying linguistic issues is relatively easy for observable (parts of) signifiers, like phonemes or words. But it is notoriously hard for signifieds, that is, the elusive meaning of language. The task of measuring meaning thus comes down to pinning meaning to the signifier, which is of course nothing at all like a one-to-one relationship. Humans make meaning with the help of signifiers, so the human contribution must somehow be figured into what is measured by emulating it with the help of artificial intelligence. This paper aims to prevent an overview of such attempts at emulating and

measuring artificially understood humorous texts, specifically their humorousness, and outline future avenues for this kind of research.

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Is Irony Humorous? Evidence from Children's and Adolescents' Reflections on Different Ironic Remarks

Although it is recognized that irony can have a humorous function in social interactions (Kalbermatten, 2013; Ruiz Gurillo & Alvarado Ortega, 2013), a full appreciation of the humorous nature of irony does not develop until late childhood and adolescence (Creusere, 2000; Dews, et al., 1996; Martin, 2007; Pexman, et al., 2005). This is probably because an adequate interpretation of irony involves the ability to evaluate the mental state of the speaker, as well as his/her intention to communicate certain moods and attitudes (Filippova, 2014). The present study attempts to show that the ability to appreciate humor in irony depends on age and on the type of ironic remark. Therefore 36 participants of 9, 12 and 15 years of age (12 participants per age group) were presented with texts that ended with four different ironic remarks: prototypical irony, ironic question, ironic offering, and ironic appreciation. Participants were asked to determine the meaning of each text ending, to say if they thought it was funny and to explain their reasoning. Results revealed that age and type of ironic remark play an important role in the the participants' ability to interpret irony. Data also suggest that the ability to detect humor in irony was present in 9 year-old children, but that the full appreciation of humor in ironic remarks as a pragmatic means of social positioning does not appear until adolescence (15-year-olds). Differences between humor appreciation due to the type of ironic remark were also present.

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The Narrative Strategy of Humor by Chinese Speakers

This paper explores a narrative strategy that Chinese speakers use in the narration of canned jokes. Although the Narrative Strategy Knowledge Resource was proposed as one of the six knowledge resources for jokes in the GTVH theory, it has largely been ignored (Attardo, 2002). The present study is based on the data of four canned jokes produced by four Mandarin Chinese speakers in randomly paired conversations. The Chinese participants used a question-answer strategy in their performance of canned jokes, in the set-up component preceding the punch line. This is different from the question-and-answer narrative strategy discussed in the literature in which the answer is the punch line. A closer analysis of the discourse use of the question-answer strategy revealed that the question-answer strategy serves some other discourse functions than a question. This strategy not only has the function to engage listeners in the canned joke narration; but it also prepares listeners for the upcoming punch line. The study also calls for a comparative study of the narrative strategies of canned jokes by speakers of other languages

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Signature Analysis of Gender Humor Based on Age Trend Classification

Humor classification based on adult age trend is truly empirical; jokes are classified depending only on humor appreciation or funniness scores. A joke falls into one of four classes: constant, falling, peaking or rising funniness over adult age groups. Because of its empirical basis, such classification can act as a reference to validate other more interpretive classifications of humor types.

Signature analysis is a statistical technique for identifying response patterns by comparing with known signatures, the technique is well known in physics and electronic warfare but not in the humanities. Signature analysis makes it possible to measure variability contributions of different factors such as individual jokes, age dependence and funniness in general, independent of age.

In this study, gender trend signatures of an online survey were calculated; figure 1 shows that female scores are lower than males in falling classes but higher in constant age trend jokes, the differences do not seem significant in peaking and rising classes. Also noticed, female signatures have generally larger Cramer-Rao bounds (variance limits) than males in all classes. Figure 2 shows that gender differences are not widely shared among jokes but caused by a few lines within the constant age trend jokes.

In conclusion, gender differences in funniness scores are a narrow phenomenon and signature analysis offers an easy graphical approach to identify gender-sensitive humor.

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Meaning-Blending and Mind-Bending in the Humor of Firesign Theatre

Mental spaces, frame-shifting, metonymy, and semantic humor scripts are all significant areas of study in Cognitive Semantics that explain various elements of how humor works in jokes and longer humor texts. How does the humor of the radio comedy troupe Firesign Theatre (1960s-80s) employ these aspects of language and meaning, and how do combinations of these cognitive semantic concepts illustrate humor in the text dialog that is experienced by the listeners? This paper analyzes the humor of Firesign Theatre's *Eat or Be Eaten* (1985) in the context of Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH) which was developed by Raskin (1985) and expanded by Attardo (2001). I provide a detailed humor script analysis with further commentary in some of the random radio spots in this voice comedy-drama album. Several examples are demonstrated and explored.

Keywords: semantic humor, script theory, cognitive science, Firesign Theatre, comedy, radio, album, performance

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The Translatability of Humor in Sitcoms: The Case of "Mind your Language"

Humor is considered to be one of the major features of humanity and is becoming more and more a part of the intercultural communication. One of the most important methods for exporting humor across cultures is television. To build up the gap between cultures, translation has always been and is still nowadays a necessity, especially in subtitling, since it is present in any program that is being diffused on TV. This is how it enters every house, every room, and reaches every person by becoming part of the program itself. Humor in the absolute sense of the word is an ambiguous concept which is strongly entrenched in the source culture.

Translating humor has been a debatable issue over the years, and is a task which has its own idiosyncrasies and poses its particular constraints. It is a great challenge for the translator to translate humor without reducing the effect, especially that the original humorous message is deeply rooted in a specific cultural and linguistic context. Translating humor becomes more and more challenging when it comes in an audio-visual context, because the translator will have to deal with very rigid technical constraints which are very particular to subtitling. Loss of information is sometimes an unavoidable part of subtitling since the translator who is limited by space and time finds no way or place to apply the translation strategy that would help resolving the problem, in order to be able to adapt or explain for instance a specific untranslatable joke.

This study was conducted on a British sitcom called *Mind your Language* which was aired in Britain in the year 1977. It is about an English teacher who struggles to teach English as a foreign language to evening class students from different nationalities with diverse stereotyped personalities. This sitcom is an interesting case study since cultural references and linguistic word play abound in it, which makes the work of the translator a great challenge and is worth studying to see whether humor was appropriately translated and will engender the laughter of target culture viewers

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Salmon 2.0: An Arduino Addition to the Original Cult Humor App Concept

This poster details the communication design methodologies leading up to a conceptual interaction design system consisting of a mobile (phone) application complemented by a wearable device. The type of humor pursued throughout is described as cult-status, boyish, and simplistic. Put specifically, the mobile app and wearable device work to digitally implement the physical act of 'salmoning' (i.e., slapping one's hand between a so-called 'victim's' armpit and abdominal oblique). Autoethnographic studies of successful, simple, humor-mongering technology (e.g., Reddit, Wechat, and Snapchat) are explained in detail leading up to the choice of the 'salmoning' gesture, along with innovation matrices conveying incremental and radical humorous technology ideations brought about through scrutiny of technological humor trend vectors. User testing of both the mobile app wireframes and physical gesture lead to hand drawn and digital ideations informed by testing insights, and tinkering with Arduino and Processing logically comes after. The poster concludes with final user interface branding designs, two versions of working proofs of concept concerning the wearable electronic device, and next steps in terms of implementing this tangible manifestation of offbeat physical humor.

Keywords: humor, cult-status, adolescent, simple, autoethnography, innovation matrix, user testing, interaction design, design system

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‘Tease me if you can’: Teasing and their Reactions in Casual Conversations

This presentation focuses on teasing in casual conversations through a specific humorous device: “linguistic pinning”. As defined by Guardiola & al (2002), following Traverso (1999), linguistic pinning is a *verbatim repetition* of a word or expression said by the hearer to tease her/him. Linguistic pinning is thus an in between repetition and punning.

After a formal presentation of linguistic pinning, and considering that teasing is an ambivalent activity, both aggressive in its content and cohesive in its social function(s), I will focus my study on the reactions triggered.

In 5 conversations between close acquaintances, 103 humorous sequences were isolated. Among them, 25 were based on linguistic pinning and, apparently, only 6 failed. If a count of such teasing is easy to make, the question of their success or failure is much more ambiguous. Such an assessment leads two questions:

- (1) Should one consider failure and success as a dichotomy or a continuum?
- (2) Considering the ambivalent nature of teasing and the fact that some are more aggressive than others, one could deduce that the more a tease is aggressive, the more it can fail. But, surprisingly, the data shows that the most aggressive teases are not necessarily those which are refused. Thus, the following question is: *what if the tease was refused by the target(s) not (always) because of its (real or supposed) aggressiveness but because of the play frame it introduces?*

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A Corpus Linguistic Investigation of Satirical Onion Headlines

Researchers in corpus linguistics have posited that creative language use, such as humor, irony, metaphor, and wordplay, are the result of deviations from typified language patterns such as collocation, colligation, semantic preference, and prosody. Empirical research of metaphor (Deignan, 1999a, 1999b), jokes (Goatly, 2012), idioms (Philip, 2011), literary irony (Louw, 1993), verbal irony (Partington, 2011), and word play (Partington, 2009) has confirmed these arguments.

One example of creative language that has not been investigated using corpus linguistic methods is satire. While typically defined as a literary genre, satire has also been identified as a commonly occurring type of subtle criticism that employs humor and irony to mock a satirical target (Simpson, 2003). However, satire remains understudied from the perspective of humor research. While Simpson (2003) has described the discourse functions of satire, there currently exist no empirical investigations of how satire operates on the linguistic level.

In order to address this gap, the current study applies corpus linguistic methods to a study of satirical newspaper headlines from *The Onion*, an American satirical newspaper. Specifically, linguistic features of newspaper headlines from *The Onion* were compared against a generalized corpus of American English using COCA (Davies, 2008) to answer whether satirical headlines exploit linguistic patterns in ways similar to irony, word play, and other types of creative language. Results based on an analysis of three language patterns suggest that satire does subvert typical language patterns of collocation, semantic preference, and prosody, but may also include deviations from larger, discourse level expectations.

Map

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- B Hotel Indigo, 1933 Main Street, Dallas, TX, 75201, (214) 741-7700
- C Texas A&M–Commerce, Universities Center, 1910 Pacific Place
Dallas, TX, 75201, (214) 915-1900
- D DART St. Paul Station

