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Multimodal Humour at Play

A Cultural Linguistic Approach

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY · NOVI SAD ·

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To Milica and Dunja

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Few examples in this book are based on some previous research done by the author, which will be referred to explicitly in the given passages, and listed in the Reference section. Most of the pic-

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Novi Sad, February 2023

D. P. S.

Humour is a serious thing. I like to think of it as one of our greatest earliest natural resources, which must be preserved at all cost.

James Thurber
(American humorist and cartoonist, 1894-1961)

1. OPENING REMARKS

Humour is a universal and omnipresent phenomenon that we encounter in everyday communication and social interactions of different kinds. Even though we usually do not think about it, we cherish and appreciate different instances of humour when we recognise them in various everyday situations, especially when these instances reflect creative language use and make us decipher ambiguity and incongruity entailed in it. The emotional and cognitive response we get after revelling in a funny utterance is typically human. Humour plays an indispensable role in our relationships, private and public life in different spheres. It is heavily embedded in culture and closely related to the given social context: what a person or a speech community might find funny and humorous may differ significantly across different cultures.

At first glance seen as a frivolous pursuit, however, studying verbal and multimodal humour offers a deeper insight into the ways language and dynamic meaning construction function on different structural, cognitive, and social levels. Humour can be found across a wide range of genres and forms, and as Laineste (2016: 7) rightly argues, it is "a trans-genre phenomenon that functions above the established rules, challenging them through parody and other subversive practices". In general, humour refers to the quality of being amusing or comic, or to the ability to make other people laugh or to be amused by something that is funny. With regard to communication, humour is often the mode, or the way something is said, a key used to contextualize any bit of spoken or written language as humorous.

Yet, the omnipresence of humour and the ease with which it is used in social interactions do not guarantee neat and clear-cut scholarly definitions and theoretical models that account for every instance of it. Particularly bearing in mind that our interactions have changed drastically: we communicate much more on social media and humour transformed accordingly. Due to globalisation and technology, it seems that the role and the ways of expressing humour in the modern world slightly changed. As much as it has always been regarded as important in any society, within the given speech community, nowadays, more than ever, people seem to create and appreciate humour globally, and not just in their own language, but using English as an international language to communicate (digitally).

The overall aim of this book is to view humour, as a specific type of language use in the social and cultural context and describe some of its main features both in the theoretical and applied sense. Written from a cultural linguistic perspective, the main idea behind this book is to deconstruct the patterns on which multimodal humour is based, to determine how it gets its full potential in social interactions, and to explore how we can apply these findings in the domains of translation and education. Hopefully, this would represent a step towards a more holistic understanding of underlying humour mechanisms, its production and comprehension. This book intends to offer some deeper insights into the ways language use, cognition and culture are interwoven and manifested in discourse from the perspective of Cultural Linguistics.

Since this book will suggest some new approaches to the study of humour in the theoretical and practical sense, the first part provides an overview of the most relevant theoretical concepts related to humour. In Chapter 2 the reader can expect to find a summary of different linguistic approaches to the study of humour, various definitions and functions humour may take in discourse. Chapter 3 gives an insight into Cultural Linguistic framework and its application to Humour Studies. This chapter deals also with the universality of humour and its culture-specific features, as well as the relevance of culture in the linguistic study of this phenomenon.

As one of the aims of this book is to tap into cultural conceptualisations different speech communities have regarding humorous

discourse, the second part of the book (Chapter 4 and 5) represents the application of Cultural Linguistic approach to studying translating humour and teaching with or about humour. These chapters will draw on contrastive analyses including English, Serbian and German, but also varieties of these languages. The underlying objective of this contrastive and comparative approach is to determine and describe typical and recurring discursive patterns related to humour, as well as cultural conceptualisations of the given speech communities that can be inferred from these observations.

Initially, linguistics was primarily involved in verbal humour, however, the changes in the ways we communicate, the fact that we spend a lot of time chatting on social media and that humour that we exchange and laugh at is often multimodal, imposed the application of some other disciplines. Due to these complexities, humour has been studied using different approaches: philosophy, psychology, anthropology, linguistics. Considering the linguistic approach, which is the primary objective of this book, it mostly centres around humour production vs. humour comprehension. Raskin (2012) tried to summarize the most relevant propositions related to humour research into the following questions:

- What is funny?
- Why is it funny?
- How is it funny?
- Who is it funny to?

As much as each of these questions is indispensable for tackling the phenomenon of humour and gaining a deeper insight into both production and comprehension of it, a more interdisciplinary approach that would integrate them all is needed to account for these, still largely unanswered, questions. For example, as it was mentioned above, something may be funny due to a combination of an image, a textual message, some background sound or music with some lyrics that evokes some element of meaning opposed to the one suggested by the text or the image. Also, in the global world, where English is typically used to create and share humour online, even among non-native speakers, the question is to which specific cultural elements is such use of language related? These are just some of the questions that have become pertinent in the 21st century and that require further explorations.

To answer these questions, relying strictly on semantics, Raskin (1985), and later Raskin and Attardo (1991), started from the premise that there is an idealised speaker/hearer whose humorous competence is devoid of any social factors conditioning his mood, worldview and the like (Raskin 1985: 57; Attrado 1994: 197), who would be able to recognise, perceive, understand and appreciate verbal humour once he/she hears it. They used a canned joke, as a prototypical form of humour, to formulate a comprehensive formal theory of humour, firstly *Semantic Script-based Theory of Humour* (SSTH) (Raskin 1985) and then its more developed version: the *General Theory of Verbal Humour* (GTVH) (Attardo and Raskin 1991, Attardo 2001). Their aim was to formulate a formal universal theory that would account for most instances of verbal humour competence or production, to be more precise. In essence, it was initially based on the incongruity of scripts (or script opposition in their terminology) that can be related to ambiguity of lexical meaning. Later on, pragmatic aspects were also included to account for different forms of verbal humour (Attardo 2001), because the authors realized that sometimes relying just on semantic meaning is not sufficient when we try to explain some examples embedded in conversation or any other context. Broadly speaking, GTVH holds that humorousness and/or laughter result from a sudden realisation that there is some incongruity (script opposition) between the concepts and objects involved: every kind of verbal humour involves a certain degree of incongruity that "it has to be resolved in an unexpected way and a semantic-pragmatic process activated by a (fragment of a) text and a violation of Grice's Maxim's and CP (Attardo 2003: 1287).

Leaving the concept of incongruity aside for the time being, and the fact that Raskin (1985) himself claimed that no formal theory can nor should account for all instances of verbal humour, there are many other issues that remain unexplained, particularly the questions pertaining to how and to whom something is funny. In other words, humour performance is neglected in these linguistic approaches and the fact that humour is typically jointly and dynamically co-constructed and negotiated by interlocutors in context (Tsakona 2021).

For that reason, some scholars (Chłopicki and Brzozowska 2017, Chovanec and Tsakona 2018, Tsakona 2021) advocate mov-

ing away from the strictly semantic-pragmatic approaches to humour and the analysis of de-contextualised canned jokes to include a more dynamic and discourse-oriented approach, which would underline the significance of other factors that define it. Chłopicki and Brzozowska (2017:1) rightly argue that the starting point in such approaches should be the premise that humour is a type of discourse. Since discourse is always embedded in the nonverbal context and involves both the linguistic and non-linguistic elements, the social group involved and culture (Chłopicki and Brzozowska (2017:1), it represents a good starting point for dealing with various humorous effects, types of humorous forms, genres, framing devices used to signal it, and other sociocultural parameters closely related to it.

The term *discourse* is typically understood in a broad or narrow sense, depending on the research tradition, but also the underlying conceptualisation related to it. Hence, it can denote natural spoken or written language in context. In another use, taken over from Foucault (1970) and Derrida (2001), discourse is heavily influenced and shaped by social, political and other powers, and in that sense, it refers to the totality of a social interaction, and text, by contrast, only to its linguistic components (cf. Foucault 1970, 1972; Fairclough 2003, Barron and Schneider 2014). Discourse may also refer to a unit of language use (in the sense of Saussurean "parole", or Chomskyan "performance"), which contrasts with text as a unit of the language system (in the sense of "langue", or "competence") (Barron and Schneider 2014: 2). As a complex notion that operates on different levels, it considers discourse action, "the text-creation process, always embedded in the nonverbal context, built communicative situation, the social group which takes part in the communication and the culture in which the process unveils" Chłopicki and Brzozowska (2017:2). It can be added here that in that respect discourse and humour are very similar – both can be regarded as a process and a product at the same time – an emergent structure that results from the interplay of cognition, cultural context, and language. Also, the concept of discourse can be applied to the analysis of humour, not only humorous texts, but other forms and different genres – humour in everyday communication, regardless of the fact whether the source of humour is language play, text, context, or co-text.

In this attempt to relate and embed humour in real context and background knowledge, Tsakona (2021) proposes the *Discourse Theory of Humour* (DTH), as a kind of complement to the GTVH in order to include the elements from context in the analysis of different humorous utterances and the ways these factors influence both humour production and reception. She (Tsakona 2021) argues that sociocultural assumptions, genre, and text represent three main analytical foci, which can be applied in the analysis of different kinds of humour, verbal, nonverbal, and/or multimodal. In addition to that, humorous discourse may serve as an umbrella term covering a multitude of humorous forms as well as fuzzy categories that are related to it, especially when there is no need to differentiate specific forms and types in research. Raskin (1985) and Attardo (2001) used canned jokes as a prototypical form of humour in the formulation of the SSTH and GTVH, which might be useful for methodological purposes, as it allows using a clear-cut analytical unit in analysis. Nevertheless, judging by the frequency of other forms of humour, it appears that prototypically humour is dynamically co-constructed in interaction as conversational humour, and it surfaces in a whole range of diverse forms. That also has some significant implications for research, as it calls for the need to account for the context in which humour is created and recognised/interpreted.

However, this brings us to another problem – that of defining humour, or humorous discourse, if we want to use this term as a kind of umbrella term to cover different instances of humour, as well as spontaneous conversation mixed with humour. Chłopicki and Brzozowska (2017: 2) warn against the potential circularity of the notion humorous discourse, which is closely related to the difficulty of distinguishing humorous from non-humorous, or bona fide and non-bona-fide modes of discourse. Therefore, they (Chłopicki and Brzozowska 2017: 2) rightly stress the need for identifying mechanisms that create perlocutionary humorous effect locally, as opposed to identifying those mechanisms that operate globally, on the level of discourse, which may not be entirely known or predictable to the recipients. This leads us inevitably to the critical issue of methodology applied to the analysis of humour. As opposed to formal approaches that advocated top-down theories of humour competence, bottom-up approach, which is necessary if we

are to start the analysis from real discourse, i.e. corpora, would lead us to formulating a theory of humour performance (cf. Tsakona 2021).

Trying to answer the question pertaining to the functions and perlocutionary effects of humour in context, and the fact that despite universality of the humorous phenomenon, as speakers of a given language we have some preferences, expectations, and habits, when it comes both to humour production and reception – this book will try to address these issues in theory and practice. Using an emic and etic perspective, the main idea behind this approach is to get a deeper insight into cultural conceptualisations and shared values of the given speech community related to the use of humour across different genres and languages. For that reason, in the beginning we will try to cover the most relevant theoretical concepts and then deal with some practical applications to corpus. However, in some studies that will be described in the second part of the book, an etic approach will be used, especially when in- and out-group humour will be compared.

1.1. Scope of this book

The overall aim of this book is to view humour, as a specific type of language use in the social and cultural context. It will be attempted to deconstruct the patterns on which it is based, as well as its discourse functions from a perspective that combines language, cognition, and culture. Hopefully, it would represent a step towards a more holistic understanding of underlying humorous mechanisms, its production and comprehension. Even though humour as a research topic is increasingly gaining ground, resulting in many books, thematic volumes, journals, and conferences devoted solely to it, this book intends to offer some deeper insights into the ways language use, cognition and culture are interwoven and manifested in discourse from the perspectives of Cultural Linguistics. As a distinctive feature of human beings, humour is by default regarded as universal phenomenon, yet, as much as it may be based on the same cognitive mechanisms, it is still heavily influenced by culture. In reference to a shared sense of humour, considering people in general, Kuipers (2006: 1) succinctly remarked that it "is made obvious

by its absence", and to some extent, humour can be used as a measurement of mutual understanding, not just between two people, but between two speech communities. And this understanding implies shared cultural knowledge in the first place, and then a shared language.

Since this book will suggest some new approaches to the study of humour both in the theoretical and practical sense, the first part of it will provide an overview of most relevant theoretical concepts and the second will be devoted to some practical applications of this approach. The examples used in the book, different instances of verbal or multimodal humour are part of larger discourse and context, and they are used to uncover what is funny in the given language and culture.

Since one of the aims of this book is to tap into cultural conceptualisations different speech communities have regarding humorous discourse, the second part of the book will draw on the analysis of the lexical or visual manifestations of these cultural conceptualisations. Sometimes, contrastive analyses and comparison including English and Serbian or German and their varieties will be used, since multilingualism is sometimes used a resource for creating humour in the first place. The main idea behind this contrastive and comparative approach is to determine and describe typical and recurring discursive patterns related to humour, as well as cultural conceptualisations of the given speech communities that can be inferred from these observations.

Some specific findings and examples in this book will be based on some previous research done by the author, which will be accordingly referred to. Finally, it must be mentioned that analysing humour represents to some extent a futile feat: as it has been mentioned on countless occasions. The famous quote by Elwyn Brooks White can be used to warn us against undertaking this task: "Explaining a joke is like dissecting a frog. You understand it better, but the frog dies in the process." Yet, the arguments and examples provided in this book are not used for the purpose of discussing individual sense of humour or taste, but rather to get a deeper insight into the interrelationship of language, cognition and culture.

1.2. Structure of this book

This book will be organised as follows. Chapter 2 starts with definitions of humour, humorous discourse, and key, and ends with a discussion about humorous genres and different functions humour can have. Chapter 3 introduces the theoretical framework of Cultural Linguistics and some key concepts relevant for this book, in the first place, cultural conceptualisations, cultural schemas, cultural metaphors and metonymies. Then it moves on to the discussion of universality of humour, culture specific and global elements used in humorous mechanism. Chapter 4 is devoted to some practical applications of cultural linguistic theory to translating humour. It will elaborate on some case studies and suggest some specific translation strategies that can be applied in translating different instances of humour. Chapter 5 will discuss humour in the educational setting, also drawing on some specific case studies that describe the application of humour in teaching, or rather, teaching with and about humour. The book ends with a Conclusion that provides a summary of the most relevant aspects of the book and offers some suggestions for further research in this field.

2. APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF HUMOUR IN DISCOURSE

This chapter discusses definitions of verbal and multimodal humour and other key concepts pertinent to this book and provides a brief outline of the most relevant theories and research related to linguistic and non-linguistic studies of humour, shifting the focus to linguistic approaches. It ends with a description of humorous genres and different functions humour has in discourse.

Given the prevalence of verbal humour in social interactions of different kinds, it is quite surprising that it became a topic of linguistic interest only relatively recently, with Victor Raskin's (1985) *Semantic Script Theory of Humour* (SSTH), further developed into the *General Theory of Verbal Humour* (GTVH) (Attardo and Raskin 1991; Attardo 1994, 2001, Raskin 2008). Still, the path to linguistic explorations of humour has been paved first by philosophers, who pondered on the essence of humour and its relevance to society (Aristotle, Plato, Hobbes, Kant) (cf. Morreall 2020, Destrée and Trivigno 2019), of course, not in linguistic terms, but rather in reference to incongruity and some other key concepts relevant for the study of humour. Later, the physiology of laughter and emotional underpinning of humour came into focus, which led to the Relief Theory (Freud 1905 [1974]). These and similar ideas have given rise to some traditional humour theories (Morreall 2009), or non-linguistic theories of humour (Attardo 1994).

First and foremost, in ancient times, humour was regarded as a useful and highly recommended rhetoric technique for skilled and witty orators (Aristotle in *Rethorics* II, 12), who were advised to use it carefully, as the opposite indicated bad taste and a form of scorn (Pluto in *Philebus* 48-50, *Republic* 388e). Humour was potentially dangerous for ancient philosophers because it was tightly linked to emotions, and as Pluto argued in *Republic*, in an ideal state comedy should be controlled. Roman ideas about humour were similar

(Waisanen 2015), for instance, both Cicero and Quintilian wrote about keeping boundaries and the importance of striking the balance between rhetoric goals and comic excess. This social aspect related to the use of humour was later discussed by Thomas Hobbes who viewed laughter as an expression of sudden glory (Morreall 2009), and Bergson (1900 [1958]), whose essays on laughter are considered to represent the foundation of the Superiority Theory of Humour.

Beside these social theories, there were two other important groups of humour theories that had an impact on the linguistic research of humour: The Incongruity Theories (Morreall 2009), also called Cognitive Theories (Attardo 1994), and Relief Theories (Freud 1905). These theories are not competitive and exclusive, but rather complementary, as each tries to characterize and describe the essence of humour (Raskin 1985: 40) from a different angle. Cognitive in their name refers to incongruity, which belongs to the conceptual domain and is not to be mistaken for Cognitive Linguistic approaches to humour (cf. Brône, Feyaerts and Veale 2015).

The Incongruity Theories centre on the object of humour, which they see as a response to perceived *incongruity*. This concept of incongruity was later adopted by psychologists (cf. Suls 1972, 1983) and linguists (Raskin 1985, Attardo and Raskin 1991, Attardo 2001), as the essential condition that needs to be satisfied for a joke to be perceived as humorous, in the form of the incongruity–resolution model. The model was initially formulated to account for the interpretation of jokes and cartoons (Suls 1972), and in essence explains that upon encountering and recognizing incongruity in the punch line of the joke, the hearer/recipient resolves this cognitively, and gets to another interpretation.

Incongruity is a concept defined as opposition, a sort of ambiguity, logical impossibility or a kind of inappropriateness that results from the perceived opposition between the expected and unexpected. This mismatch may stem from the structural features of the stimulus, or it can be related to the opposition between expectations related to some mental patterns. As Morreall (2009: 10) points out, "the core concept in incongruity theories is based on the fact that human experience works with learned patterns. What we have experienced prepares us to deal with what we will experience ". In addi-

tion to that, the list of potential humorous incongruities is limitless, since "wherever there is a principle to be violated or regularity to be upset, there is room for incongruity and so for humour" (Morreall 1983: 82).

Kant (1790 [2012]: I, I, 54) described incongruity, or rather ambiguity, in the following way: "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." Schopenhauer (1818, I, Sec. 13) argues that humour arises from a failure of a concept to account for an object of thought. When the particular outstrips the general, we are faced with incongruity. Schopenhauer also emphasizes the element of surprise, saying that "the greater and more unexpected [. . .] this incongruity is, the more violent will be his laughter".

To illustrate the concept of incongruity, we may use some memes, featuring the famous philosophers (Illustration 1). When they wrote about incongruity, little did they know that some anonymous memer in the 21st century would use their pictures and names to try to create a humorous effect, sharing it globally. The incongruity in these examples is related to anachronism, and the unexpectedness of finding someone involved in philosophy and deep thinking in reference to some superfluous spelling errors or rather wordplay. In addition to this, these memes represent a good insight into the issues that will be discussed in more details in this book, such as creative language play, using different cultural aspects and elements from different languages to enhance the humorous effect, etc.

In addition to that, these memes show that incongruity, which is in the essence of the humorous mechanism, relies on opposing different elements and semiotic modes (in memes only the visual), creating juxtaposition of different conceptual domains, learned patterns, or rather the interplay of linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge.
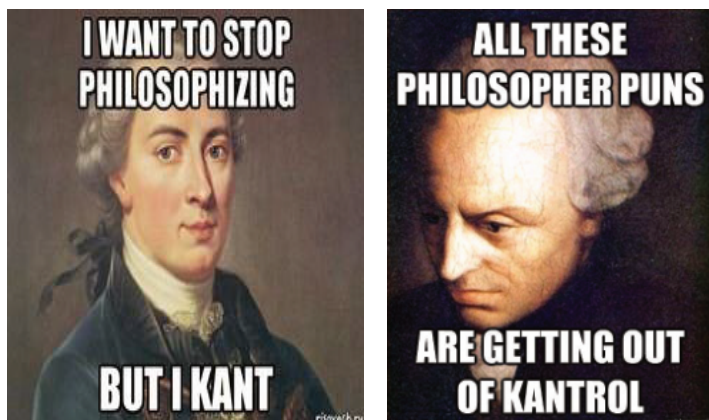
Illustration 1: *Philosopher memes*
(source: https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/1731-you-can-run-but-you-kant-hide;)

Humour then results from the sudden and unexpected resolution of this incongruity. In reference to incongruity and humour, Oring (2003: 1) highlights the need to relate humour to the perception of "an appropriate incongruity", i.e. "the perception of an appropriate relationship between categories that would ordinarily be regarded as incongruous". Dynel (2009, 2013) argues that the main feature of humorous incongruity is surprise and novelty and defines incongruity as "a cognitive state caused by a surprising/unexpected stimulus which diverts from the cognitive model of reference" (2013: 27). Dynel (2013) defines cognitive model of reference following Forabosco (1992, 2008), as something capturing any conceptual abstraction, and as a more general concept that includes concepts such as scripts, schemata, frames in cognitive linguistic approaches. We will come back to this concept in the chapters that follow.

Nevertheless, for humour appreciation and/or laughter to occur, this incongruity has to be resolved in a safe and nonthreatening way (McGhee 1979: 10), otherwise it verges on horror. The concept of incongruity was taken over by linguists (Raskin 1985, Attrado and Raskin 1991, Attardo 2001), who tried to create a formal theory of verbal humour which revolved around it, renaming it into **script opposition**. In GTVH, script opposition is the first and indispensable requirement, out of six, or the so-called **knowledge resource**

(KR) (Raskin 1985, Attardo 2001). Attardo (2001: 1-28) argues that this opposition, or incongruity on the cognitive level is expressed on the semantic or pragmatic level and results in verbal humour. This will be discussed in more details in the next sections, but before we do that and provide more definitions of humour, it is important to note that humour and laughter are often used interchangeably, especially in philosophy.

In fact, as Morreall (2020) points out, "the word humour was not used in its current sense of funniness until 18th century," and most philosophers used the word **laughter** to refer to the concept of humour, as it is used today in Humour Studies. Also, words such as **comic** or **joke** have been used in reference to humour in general. For example, Freud, who wrote about jokes and comic in his seminal book, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905 [1963]) used jokes, comic and humour in reference to emotions, without insisting on semantic precision, reflecting to some extent this usage as it is found in folk taxonomy.

Moreover, laughter and humour are often used synonymously and sometimes even interchangeably. Trouvain and Truong (2017: 340) state that "humorous action can lead to laughter (and smiling), however, not every jocular remark is marked by laughter by either recipient or the speaker." Laughter, as a visual and acoustic expression of mirth, or of sense of something ludicrous (Glenn 2003) can be a sign of different states and/or emotions, nervousness, surprise, or some maliciousness, typically expressed through some physical expression. Laughter usually occurs spontaneously, yet, it does not have to be associated with humour, nor does the lack of it necessarily indicate lack of recognition of the humorous intent. In some cases, laughter is (almost) the only indicator of humour, for instance in computer-mediated communication, indicated by some (laughing) emojis or a graphic representation of laughter. In the context of this book, laughter in interaction will be regarded as an indicator of a playful frame, or a criterion for distinguishing a humorous from an unhumorous utterance. This role of laughter is more relevant here than its role as appraisal of something funny, since sometimes, laughter is not only associated with mirth and amusement, but with aggression as well.

Bergson (1900 [2005]) was the first philosopher who devoted an entire book to the attempt to define the comic and outline the fact

that it is easier to laugh collectively (and more contagious), which was later proved true by psychological experiments (cf. Snyder 1974). According to Bergson, a human being does not only possess the ability to laugh, but also to be a source of laughter. This point has become the basis of the Superiority Theory of Humour (cf. Morreall 1987, Attardo 1994 for detailed accounts), which was succinctly summarised by Gruner (1997), who metaphorically depicted humour as a kind of game in which the players can be either the winners (those who laugh) or the losers (those that are laughed at). Hence, whenever humour is directed towards a butt, or a target of humour, there is some sort of derision involved, and some implicit comparison in which the producer of humour expresses his perceived superiority based on derogation of someone's character, behaviour, ethnic background, etc. This is quite frequent in any social group and represents the essence of ethnic humour. In a way, this view is in accordance with the cultural conceptualisation of laughter in many speech communities, which associate laughter not only with **mirth** and **joy**, but expression of power and hostility. For instance, there is a famous proverb in many languages, originating from the Bible that relates laughter with the feeling of power and dominance:

    (1) He who laughs last laughs the longest.
    (2) Serb. Ko se poslednji smeje, najslađe se smeje (He
           who has a last laugh, laughs the longest).

Since laughter, as well as humour, involves "the loss of self-control and the breaking of social rules, it is not surprising that most societies have been suspicious of them and have often rejected them" (Morreall 2009: 4).

      In this book, laughter will be considered as a phenomenon distinct from humour, characterised by a complex relationship, not pure co-existence of a stimulus and response, but not necessarily as a criterion to define humour. Namely, appreciating humour does not necessarily result in laughter and there are also many forms of laughter that are not necessarily responses to humour. As Ruch (1998: 6) has it, the **comic** is the faculty to be able to make one laugh, particularly as defined in the field of aesthetics within philosophy and psychology. And "humour is simply one element of

comic, as are wit, fun, nonsense, sarcasm, ridicule, satire or irony" (Ruch 1998: 6). To that end the meaning of humour is best explained if we view it in the complex net of terms used in the folk taxonomy.

Comparing these concepts that are often used in folk taxonomy in English, it is useful to distinguish them, even though there are no clear-cut boundaries among these categories. **Wit**[1] denotes the ability to relate seemingly disparate things, to illuminate or amuse, and it may also refer to clever or apt humour. As opposed to wit, which is tied to the cognitive or intellectual aspects of humour, **ridicule** and **mockery** have a social element added to it, since ridicule denotes the act of making fun of someone, and mockery or **derision** the use of ridicule or scorn to show contempt, or an object of ridicule or scorn.

2.1. Definitions of humour

Notwithstanding the fact that in layman's terms, people usually do not have any problems with recognizing and, accordingly, (de)appreciating any humorous form in everyday language use, in scholarly approaches this elusive phenomenon presents a real challenge. It is paradoxical also that scholarly explorations of humour often spoil all humour and amusement, which might be explained by the fact that any analysis ruins the surprising moment associated with humour. Also, researchers probably lack sense of humour, and even if this were not the case, they certainly lack spontaneity and ease with which they might create the right frame of mind to interpret humorous mechanisms.

As a multifaceted, trickster-like phenomenon, humour has resisted precise definitions, rigid theoretical frameworks and played with scholarly attempts to be described using one discipline – hence the difficulty in pigeonholing it into a single definition. As stated in the Merriam Webster's dictionary, **humour** refers to

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[1] Mark Twain, the famous American writer, is said to provide the following definition of wit and humour: "Wit and humor - if any difference, it is in duration - lightning and electric light. Same material, apparently; but one is vivid, and can do damage - the other fools along and enjoys elaboration."

1. that quality which appeals to a sense of the ludicrous or absurdly incongruous: a funny or amusing quality;
2. the mental faculty of discovering, expressing, or appreciating the ludicrous or absurdly incongruous: the ability to be funny or to be amused by things that are funny;
3. something that is or is designed to be comical or amusing.

It is interesting that etymologically, the lexeme "humour" was derived from the Latin word (Lat. *humor)* and denoted bodily fluids, something elusive, yet central to the functioning of the body. The use of this lexeme nowadays reflects to some extent the original meaning: we cannot function without it, yet we cannot easily grasp it.

Definitions of humour vary depending on the approach and level of generality. For instance, Long and Graesser (1988: 4) and Ross (Ross 1998: 1) adopt a wide perspective and claim that the term humour can be used to denote anything that can make someone laugh. Holmes (2000) defines humour as utterances intended to be amusing which contain linguistic and contextual clues to support this interpretation. Hay (2001: 56) distinguishes between humour production and humour comprehension, whereas Martin and Ford (2018: 16) try to encompass both of these aspects, and for them humour "represents anything that people say or do that others perceive as funny and that tends to make them laugh, as well as the mental processes that go into both creating and perceiving such an amusing stimulus, and also the emotional response of mirth involved in the enjoyment of it".

In addition to this, Martin (2007) highlighted four aspects relevant for humour, that is, a social context, a cognitive-perceptual process, an emotional response, and the vocal-behavioural expression of laughter. In essence, it has to be pointed out that humour reflects the interrelationship of these aspects: as human beings, we inherently possess cognitive mechanisms that enable us to create humour, to recognise and appreciate it, but fundamentally humour is a form of social play in the sense that other people create and provide the context in which we experience humour (Martin and Ford 2018). Of course, we are here primarily interested in the use of language in this process.

Within linguistic approaches to humour, Attrado (2003: 1287) states that **verbal humour** always implies a semantic-pragmatic

process activated by a (fragment of a) text and a violation of Grice's maxims of the principles of cooperation. The text of a joke is always fully or in part compatible with two distinct scripts and the two scripts are opposed to each other in a special way (Attardo and Raskin 1991: 308). Prior to defining the concept of a script opposition in the next section, we will use some examples to illustrate these definitions. For instance, the following joke (3) would be an example of verbal humour:

> (3) One of the oddities of Wall Street is that it is the dealer and not the customer who is called broker.

The beginning of the joke foregrounds the script we have about Wall Street, which stands metonymically for the New York Stock Exchange and the activities that are tied to a Stock Exchange. Moreover, that script entails different roles and events involved with selling and buying on the financial market. The punch line, the final part of the joke, in which the script opposition is "resolved" is based on wordplay related to the existing lexeme 'broker' and a non-existing one, which jokingly is derived from the adjective '(be) broke'. Hence, in verbal humour the script opposition is always resolved by linguistic means (Attardo 2017: 96).

If verbal humour is spoken, then paralinguistic choices made by the speakers must also be considered. These paralinguistic choices can range from the pitch and volume with which the syllables are uttered to the font choice of the text if it is in the written form. If the joke in the example (3) given above would be uttered, then all paralinguistic features, such as, for instance, a short pause before the punch line or changing the word stress and intonation, would add to the overall humorous effect. These paralinguistic elements can be used also to signal that someone intends to tell a joke or say something funny, and in that way represent a part of the humorous key, which will be discussed later.

On the other hand, **nonverbal humour** includes script opposition implied by a gesture, movement, situation, or any other semiotic mode (Norrick 2004: 402), as in the example (Illustration 2), which is a photograph of the widely famous British comedian, Rowan Atkinson, aka Mr Bean, striking an absurd pose on the top of his car. As he is well known for his comic behaviour based on

some sort of inverse logic, this photograph depicts the absurdity of the situation.

Also, for instance, slapstick humour is a typical representative of non-verbal humour: exemplified by brilliant performances of Charlie Chaplin, one of the most famous comedians of all time. All humour he created was through acting in silent feature films.

Illustration 2: *Non-verbal humour – Mr Bean*
(source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/paul-drummond/3946893897;)

Multimodal humour refers to humour which is based on more than one semiotic mode involved in the creation of script opposition and consequently humorous effect which results from resolving this opposition. Integrating different "semiotic resources" (Kress and van Leeuwen 2010: 79) increases "the opportunity for creativity at the level of representation", as El Refaie (2015: 15) argues, since multimodality exploits the distinct characteristics and meaning potentials of the various modes and their combinations. Since communication typically involves not just language, but facial expressions and gestures, gaze, and their interplay, in essence, most of our daily interactions are multimodal in nature. Information is then provided by different modes and "the overall effect is more than the sum of the parts since communication is achieved through all modes interacting both separately and simultaneously" (Pinar Sans 2015: 1). For instance, memes and comics are based on the textual and visual, whereas films and gifs, involve sound as well. All these modalities are involved in creating a humorous effect are ex-

amples of multimodal humour, as illustrated in the example (Illustration 3) given below.

In these multimodal forms, incongruity stems typically from the opposition of the visual and the textual (in the given example, there is some indication that the famous cartoon character, Sponge Bob is feeling ill, judging by his posture, facial expression, and clothes he is wearing, which stands in stark contrast to the text, i.e., the discourse formula typically used in emails). In a way, it is assumed that the textual element represents someone's utterance, and hence not just the visual element of the text. These forms of humour are readily and easily shared in computer-mediated communication (CMC) as they can be embedded in different kinds of context, or transformed to fit specific context, mainly because their schematic structure leaves enough room for adding specific details in the surrounding text. Perhaps a better example of multimodal humour would be some humorous exchange featured in a video clip that contains spoken interaction (involving both linguistic, paralinguistic and

Illustration 3: *Multimodal humour – I hope the email finds you well*
(source: https://ahseeit.com/?qa=126603/i-hope-this-email-finds-you-well-meme;)

nonverbal elements), music and visuals. For instance, a case in point would be one of the short videos taken from the BBC documentary "Cunk on Earth"[2] (2022), created by Charlie Brooker. In this documentary, or rather mocumentary, Philomena Cunk, a fake journalist, asks eminent scientists different questions related to the history of humanity and civilisation. The interviews take place in a library, the whole setting is very serious and academic, and the interviewer asks questions in a very serious tone. In one of these episodes, Cunk talks to Shirley Thomson, a composer about Beethoven (the video can be found on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/shorts/4g3D-GBXb34). Part of the interview is given in the example (4):

(4) Cunk: Is it true that in the final years of his working life, Beethoven was dead?
Thompson: (a long pause; her facial expression indicates confusion). Well, he was deaf for most of his life.
Cunk: No. Dead?
Thomson: No. Dead, no.
Cunk: The producer wrote it in the notes (looks at her notes), it's definitely here, it says "in his later years Beethoven was profoundly dead".
Thomson: Profoundly deaf. (spells the word D-E-A-F).
Cunk: Obviously he went deaf when he died, but was he deaf when he was still alive?
Thomson: Yes, he was profoundly.
Cunk: But not dead? He was not dead when he was alive?
Thomson: No, not.
Cunk: So, how did he write music when he was dead?

As it was mentioned above, this example illustrates multimodal humour since this conversation involves more than just the verbal aspect of the exchanged utterances. A very important role is played by silence and nonverbal elements of communication. Of course, visual elements are also foregrounded, especially when it comes to the focus on the facial expressions of both the interviewer and the interviewee at specific moments. In that way, visual elements highlight

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the element of surprise and absurdity, on which this conversation revolves. The incongruity in this example is based on the opposed concepts of 'being deaf' and 'dead', triggered by these near homophones, but also on the opposition of what the composer expects to hear in an interview and the absurdity of the interviewer's lack of knowledge and literacy.

Nevertheless, pertaining to the theoretical challenges of defining humour and incongruity, it has to be mentioned that the main problem with these definitions is related to the fact that many of them are circular and they rely on the concept of script opposition or incongruity which is also not easy to define. For example, Ritchie (2004: 48-49) questions the very concept of incongruity or script opposition as defined in linguistic theories of humour and argues that two kinds of incongruity can be distinguished. Hence, incongruity can be static and monetary, i.e., it may refer to the features of a certain situation or configuration of elements, or it can be dynamic. Dynamic incongruity refers to the order of ideas or images and in that way disturbs the expected sequence and causes incongruity, as it clashes with the expectations of the viewer / listener, as was illustrated in Illustration 3.

Also, all these definitions are based on humour production, which is, of course, of primary interest in linguistics. However, for instance, when it comes to humour translation, humour reception plays a very important role in the process of rendering an utterance from one language in the other, since the translator needs to keep the same meaning and the perlocutionary effect in the target language. Since this represents quite a challenge, a translator would benefit a lot from linguistic studies of humour as they might provide a set of criteria that can be used for identifying humorous attempts in the source language in the first place and then strategies for translating them. In the next section, we will summarise the most important contributions of formal linguistic theories of humour, which explain the concept of script opposition in reference to humour and which list some useful criteria that may be used for identifying various instances of humour.

2.2. Linguistic theories of humour

The linguistic studies of verbal humour owe a great deal to Raskin's (1985) and Attardo's (Attardo and Raskin 1991, Attardo 2001) attempts to explain the humorous mechanism from the semantic (Raskin 1985), and then later on the semantic-pragmatic perspective as well (Attardo and Raskin, 1991; Attardo 1994, 2001). Raskin's (1985: 59) aim was "to develop a formal semantic analysis in terms of which each joke-carrying text would be identified as possessing a certain semantic property such that the presence of this property would render any text humorous". His main hypothesis was that this humorous element is the result of a partial overlap of two or more different and in a sense opposite scripts which are all compatible (fully or partially) with the text carrying this element. In essence, Raskin's (1985) aim was to develop a theory, *Script-based Semantic Theory of Humour (SSTH)*, which would be general, formal, and valid to account for the humorous effect that was created by combining different elements in the given text. And if we can identify a sufficient number of semantic primes or primitives, then we would be able to generate humour even using artificial intelligence.

The starting point in the theory was the intuition of the (ideal) native speaker, who should be able to detect a joke when s/he hears it in their mother tongue. Attardo (1994: 197) described the ideal native speaker in the following way: "the idealized native speaker is not affected by any bias, racial, gender or any other, he should not be bored at the moment of reading or hearing the joke and he should react to it in a kind of well-balanced way, in order to be able to understand it." Without going into these specific premises on which this concept is based, particularly the quality of being unbiased in any way, it has to be mentioned that Raskin and Attardo aimed for a universal theory that would account for all types of humour.

Raskin (1985: 80-85) used the concept of a **script**, a cognitive structure that includes semantic data and extralinguistic knowledge related to the given lexeme to define **script opposition** in a text that results in humour. According to Raskin (1985: 117), some lexemes in the text serve as triggers that activate a specific script in the process of text interpretation and comprehension. Hence, a script is a part of linguistic meaning related to a lexeme, even though Raskin (1985:

81) states that scripts related to the same lexeme may differ even when it comes to native speakers in reference to specific elements they might entail. It has to be mentioned here that neither Raskin (1985) nor Attardo (2001) delve into cultural elements nor imply cognitive or cultural scripts as defined in Cognitive and Cultural Linguistics. First of all, their object of study is a canned joke, which is a kind of de-contextualised form of "prototypical humour", as they have it, and their main aim is to identify and describe the necessary conditions that need to be satisfied in order to produce humour.

The main postulate of the *SSTH* is the following: "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 (…). The two scripts with which some text is compatible are said to fully or in part overlap in this text" (Raskin 1985: 99). In other words, a joke can be related to two or more scripts that are implied by the meaning of the joke and the scripts need to be opposed. The resolution of this opposition results in humour. Typical kinds of script oppositions are real/unreal, normal/abnormal, possible/impossible.

This theory was really a breakthrough in linguistic approaches to studying humour, because it initiated Humour Studies and a plethora of empirical studies and research that tried to test the theory on a whole range of humorous data. The main problem in application of SSTH to data other than canned jokes is its reliance on semantics, and ambiguity that is tied only to lexical meaning. In that sense, it could not explain jokes that were based on pragmatic ambiguity for instance, as in the case of non-observance of Grice's CP (Prodanović Stankić 2014, 2015), even though Raskin (1985: 101) differentiates between *bona-fide* mode of communication and *non-bona-fide* mode. *Bona-fide* mode of communication, as opposed to *non-bona-fide*, leaves no room for irony, humour or lying, or any violation or flouting of Grice's maxims. Interlocutors are typically well aware of the switch between two modes, as it is often indicated albeit socially acceptable in the case of joking. Raskin (1985: 103) suggests the introduction of maxims that would account for non-bona-fide mode of communication, but these maxims cannot explain all violations of CP.

Trying to improve the deficiencies of the *SSTH*, Attardo and Raskin collaborated and extended SSTH into the *General Theory of Verbal Humour* (Attardo and Raskin 1991, Attardo 2001, Raskin 2008). Within the *GTVH*, verbal humour is defined in the sense that it always implies "a semantic-pragmatic process activated by a (fragment of a) text and a violation of Grice's maxims of the principle of cooperation." (Attardo 2003: 1287). The text of a joke is always fully or in part compatible with two distinct scripts and the two scripts are opposed to each other in a special way" (Attardo and Raskin 1991: 308). First of all, the *GTVH* was developed so as to include pragmatics, discourse analysis and text linguistics, because the authors felt that it was insufficient to resort only to semantics to account for all instances of verbal humour. Furthermore, while the *SSTH* used a joke as a basic analytical unit, in the case of the *GTVH* it was the punch line, not the whole joke-carrying text. Initially, the theory was also based on canned jokes, as prototypical form of humour at that time, though Attardo (2001) applied it to the analysis of humorous texts of different kinds.

Nevertheless, moving away from the concept of a script and script opposition as the only mechanism on which verbal humour is based, Attardo and Raskin (1991: 297-303) define a list of different parameters, called *Knowledge Resources* (see also Attardo 2001: 29) that affect the humorous effect. In order to analyse any instance of verbal humour, Attardo (2001: 1-28) suggests that this hierarchical list of six parameters be used, each of which contributes to the humorous effect:

1. *Script opposition* (SO): the central requirement for humour production that accounts for the opposition between different and opposed scripts;
2. *Logical mechanism* (LM): accounts for the resolution of the incongruity caused by SO; it can be of different kinds (e.g., figure-ground reversal, juxtaposition, parallelism, etc. see Attardo et al. 2002, p. 18);
3. *Situation* (SI): includes characters, objects, places, etc. presented in the humorous text;
4. *Target* (TA): the aim of the humour; a person, people, institutions ridiculed by a particular instance of humour;

5. *Narrative structure* (NS): genre and/or text organisation;

6. *Language* (LA): the verbalization of the given text (word choice, placement of functional elements, etc;

As in the SSTH, humour is seen as the result of script opposition (SO), either fully or partially (which means that there are degrees of opposition). However, SO is not the only requirement which leads to humorous effect. The incongruity related to SO needs to be resolved by the so-called *Logical Mechanism* (LM), which operates across script representations. Sometimes more than one SO can be activated at the same moment, which results in hyper-determination of humour (Attardo 2001: 100-101). For that reason, these two parameters are crucial for humour production, while the remaining parameters are more related to textual properties. Attardo et al. (2002) have listed 27 LMs so far, claiming that the list is still incomplete. In essence, LMs represent the function of SO, as Hempelmann (2004: 382) points out, and also the most enigmatic and probably most problematic part of this theory. In Table 1, the list of LMs that have been defined (Attardo 1991: 307, Attardo et al. 2002: 4) so far is given. As can be seen, the list seems to be very detailed, yet many of the items overlap and can be both of logical and/or rhetorical nature.

To illustrate some of the LMs, Attardo and Raskin (1991: 206) provide the following jokes (example 5):

(5) *Juxtaposition:*
Who supports Gorbachev?
Oh, nobody. He is still able to walk on his own.
Figure ground reversal:
How many Poles does it take to screw a light bulb?
Five.
One to hold the light bulb and four to turn the table he's standing on.

Logical Mechanism (LM)		
Role reversal	Role exchanges	Potency mapping
Vacous reversal	Juxtaposition	Chiasmus
Garden-path	Figure-ground reversal	Faulty reasoning
Almost situations	Analogy	Self-undermining
Inferring consequences	Reasoning	Missing link
Coincidence	Parallelism	Implicit parallelism
Proportion	Ignoring the obvious	False analogy
Exaggeration	Field restriction	Cratylism
Meta-humour	Vicious circle	Referential ambiguity

Table 1: *List of possible Logical mechanisms*
(source: Attardo et al. (2002: 18))

The critics of the GTVH aimed their criticism mostly at LMs, arguing that it is not clear how the LM contributes to the humorous effect (Ritchie 2004).

Nevertheless, the parameters were also applied in some empirical studies (Attardo 2001; Paolillo 1998, Tsakona 2009) to different kind of data. For instance, Paolillo applied the GTVH to the analysis of comics (see Illustration 4, in which the humorous effect relies on LM Role exchange), and Tsakona (2009) to cartoons. Her (Tsakona 2009) findings indicate that when a particular cartoon is based only on text, it is straightforward to apply KRs and use the GTVH. However, if the humour in the punch line depends on the interplay of the verbal and the visual, then the GTVH is not sufficient to account for it. For that reason, Tsakona (2009) suggested expanding the parameter Language (LA) to include any semiotic sign, be it text or image.

Illustration 4: *LM Role Exchange*
(source https://www.irancartoon.com/site/artists/gary-larson#&gid=1&pid=6)
https://www.thefarside.com/;)

As it was mentioned above, both SSVH and GTVH were set on canned jokes, small units of text usually not dependant directly on the context. Formally, jokes consist of a set-up, which introduces the characters, the setting, and the script opposition, which is then resolved in the punch line. In that context, the application of GTVH on the analysis of jokes is very feasible. However, longer texts, and different forms of humour, represent a challenge for the GTVH to some extent. Attardo (2001: 128-134) applied the GTVH on longer texts, which lead him to distinguish between 1) macro-narrative, which represents a longer unit that contains several jab-lines, and 2) micro-narrative structures. These texts contain jab lines, a sort of a punch line found anywhere in the text but at the end, where the punch line belongs. He uses these concepts to account for humour that can be found in sitcoms for instance, in which humour results not only from a single punch line but the whole situation, characters, context and paralinguistic elements. Still, he admits that the GTVH needs to be developed in order to explain all these examples.

For instance, the application of the GTVH to telecinematic discourse (Prodanović Stankić 2016) showed that the GTVH is use-

ful when it comes to data selection and analysis, but only in the case of typical examples of verbal humour, such as wordplay, or detecting the target. However, humour based on metaphors, metonymies or the interplay of language and culture that results in many culture-specific references cannot be explained by the application of KRs. For that reason, it seems that the GTVH can be used to identify humorous elements which sometimes need to be accounted for resorting to Cognitive or Cultural Linguistic analytical tools.

2.3. Cognitive linguistic approaches to the study of humour

Moving away from the strictly formal and algorithmic way of tackling the phenomenon of humour, as in the SSVH and GTVH, cognitive linguistic approach to studying humour entails several theoretical constructs that can be used to account for different instances of humour (cf. Brône et al. 2006, 2015). On the one hand, it can be claimed that the formal linguistic and cognitive approaches have the script as the common starting point, however, they differ significantly in their scope and perspective they take in reference to the elaboration of this concept and the humorous phenomenon in general.

It was mentioned above that the concept of (semantic) script in SSTH refers to cognitive structures representing speakers' knowledge of specific aspects of the world, rooted in experience (Raskin 1985: 81), and script opposition to denote incongruity. In that sense, it is to some extent comparable to the concept of frames (Fillmore 1982/2006, 1985), or conceptual domains as defined in Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987) and Idealized Cognitive Models in Lakoff's (1987) terminology (cf. Kövecses 2006 on the difference between script, scenario, domain, and frame). These concepts underlie the most important cognitive linguistic models of semantics, grammar, and discourse, such as CMT, blending and mental spaces theory, construction grammar, etc.

In that sense, according to the Cognitive Linguistic view of language, which posits that the language faculty is not a separate one in

the human cognitive system, but rather reflects and shares other cognitive mechanisms (Evans and Green 2006, Radden and Dirven 2007), humour is just another example of creative language use which can be studied using the construals applicable to other examples of language use. As Brône et al. (2015: 2) argue, "there is no automatic process in language that, with sufficient cleverness, humour cannot force us to de-automatize. Humour can wrest control back from the most autonomous of linguistic processes and force these processes to bring arbitrary aspects of world knowledge or the vagaries of a specific context to bear on their otherwise scripted behaviours".

Still, in the field of Cognitive Linguistics, the study of humour and other specific phenomena such as irony, sarcasm, and/or figurative language may provide new insights into the main postulates and theories developed in this field. This is particularly evident in case of dynamic meaning construction, as explained by Coulson's (2001) frame-shifting process and online processing of language in use (Langacker 2009), or the process of conceptual blending (Fauconnier and Turner 2002).

For example, Veale (2015: 77) has a point arguing that examples such as (6), a witticism attributed to Zsa Zsa Gabor, a serial divorcee, cannot be accounted for by resorting to the GTVH, but rather using Fauconnier and Turner's (1998, 2002) theory of blended concepts.

> (6) Darling, actually I am an excellent housekeeper. Whenever I leave a man, I keep the house!

Namely, in this example it becomes evident that some meanings are not necessarily directly derived from their individual morphological parts. Rather, the integrated concept of a "housekeeper" in the given context, with all elements of extralinguistic knowledge a listener has in reference to Zsa Zsa Gabor occupies its own blended space, in which the recruitment of additional concepts and a process of gradual elaboration can occur. To get to the humorous effect, the listener needs to unpack the blend, so that it may be reconstructed devoid of these layers of recruited and elaborated meaning. In the GTVH, this example would be accounted for LMs called juxtaposition, which would not really capture its humorous potential and linguistic realisation.

Hence, the application of general models of meaning construction as defined in Cognitive Linguistics may be quite applicable to explaining humour, particularly if humour is based on metaphors or metonymy, figure-ground reversal, or conceptual blending. Many studies based on empirical research explore such underpinnings of humour (cf. Bergen and Binested 2003, Brône and Feyaerts 2003, Vaid et al. 2003, Ritchie 2006, Brône, Feyaerts and Veale 2015, Prodanović Stankić 2013, 2014, 2016). For example, a creative marketing campaign for a company that advertised its products worldwide, produced a humorous advertisement based on a conceptual blend (Illustration 5), which draws on both verbal and visual input spaces.

Illustration 5: *Some would say I'm a party animal*
(source: https://www.marketingmag.com.au/news/ikea-toys-tell-eco-friendly-family-histories-in-new-campaign/;)

The introductory sentence of the textual caption in the advertisement ("My mother was a straw and father a party cup") foregrounds the elements that can be related to the materials used for making stuffed animals, additionally activating extralinguistic knowledge an average customer has in reference to the eco-friendly policy of the famous company. The highlighted part, or rather the punchline, is based on the literal meaning of the idiomatic phrase in English ('a party animal'), typically used for people and based on the conceptual metaphor PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS. In this case, the idiom is to be read literally, which is foregrounded with the visual element, a dol-

phin toy. This unexpected literal meaning that is foregrounded, and in a way suggested in the lead-in, if we connect straws and plastic cups with parties and plastic waste polluting oceans, results in humorous reading.

Fauconnier (1997: 125) states that errors, jokes, literary effects, and atypical expressions use the same cognitive operations as everyday language, but in ways that highlight them and make more salient. Giora (2003) argues that all these examples, including humour, irony and metaphors can be explained by a model called graded salience hypothesis. Even though some authors object to Giora's model being classified as cognitive (cf. Attardo 2021: 359), she (Giora 2003) uses this hypothesis to explain complex meaning construction in "atypical expressions" or creative language use in Fauconnier's (1997) sense. Her model is related to the meaning we associate with lexemes and lexical units in the mental lexicon and the fact that some meanings are more salient than the others and hence, are more easily and faster activated, regardless of the context. This hypothesis can explain many jokes based on polysemy, such as the exampled offered by Giora (2003: 169):

> (7) Do you believe in clubs for young people? Only when kindness fails.

The punch line activates a less salient meaning in the given context, that of a wooden stick instead of a society for a specific activity, resulting in an element of surprise and humorous effect. Salient meanings are never static, quite the opposite, and they may change over the course of time. This dynamic quality of salient meanings is related to the search for optimal innovation and most pleasurable readings and interpretations in Giora's (2003, 2004) view. Hence, pleasure and innovation are closely tied to humour and if the speaker can use any linguistic or other means to create this kind of novel and surprising interpretation, there is a need to do that, which Giora et al (2003, 2004) proved in many psycholinguistic experiments. Also, their research findings (Giora et al. 2004: 117) show that an innovative utterance implies a conceptually different meaning not immediately associated with its salient meaning. The degree of pleasure resulting from the innovative element is closely tied to

the possibility of activating the salient meaning, which is in line with Attardo's (2001) view that people tend to appreciate humour that involves some sort of cognitive glitch that needs to be resolved.

It seems, however, that the main challenge that Cognitive Linguistic approaches to humour need to deal with is culture. When it comes to the individual level of cognition, and verbal or multimodal production of humour that results from it, all the construals and theories developed in Cognitive Linguistics are applicable and can explain various examples. However, when we move from the strictly individual level and encounter examples that rely on cultural cognition or depend on some conceptualisation shared by the members of a speech community, it seems that Cultural Linguistics might serve a better purpose in accounting for such examples.

2.4. Humorous genres

It was mentioned at the beginning that humour is a kind of trickster-like, elusive, and subversive phenomenon that resists rigid classifications, yet surfaces in different forms in all its glory. For that reason, as much as it is difficult to define humour precisely, it is as challenging to categorize it into well-established traditional genres and forms. To be precise, identifying humorous genres is closely related to the surrounding context in which humour is found, underlined with humorous frame. Within the GTVH (Attardo 2001), genre is accounted for in one of the knowledge resources that Attardo (2001: 137-138) defines as *narrative strategy*. Kotthoff (2007) argues that humour calls for a flexible concept of genre, not only because it is trans-genre by nature, but also because of the high degree of creativity, emergent construction, and artistry of humour. It can be spontaneously created in any communicative event, or carefully planned and constructed to achieve a specific perlocutionary effect. As Laineste (2016) has it, humour challenges genre rules through parody and other subversive practices and, also, as she remarks, genre rules have an influence on humorous discourse, but they get distorted in the process (Laineste 2016: 7).

To begin with the concept of genre: genre is viewed as a stage, goal-oriented purposeful activity in which speakers or readers engage as member of the given culture (cf. Martin 1985, Swales 1990,

Günthner and Knoblauch 1995), following more or less rigid patterns of communicative processes. Miller (1984: 157-158) describes genre as a social construct and social action, providing the writer or the speaker with a socially recognizable way to make his or her intentions known. In the theoretical framework of Cultural Linguistics, we may view the concept of genre as a cultural schema, since it provides the speakers of the given language with a way of thinking about how language depends on context. In the next Chapter we will deal more extensively with cultural schemas, but for now, suffice to say that genre as a cultural schema entails elements of discourse-related knowledge concerning the functions and use of humour in the given social interaction. Even though speakers/writers may opt for modifying typical patterns of communicative behaviour, regardless of the form of this production, spoken or written, it is the knowledge of pattern, or the structure itself that enables them to play creatively with it for different purposes. This cultural linguistic view on genre becomes even more relevant if we take into consideration the fact that different speech communities express marked preference with regard to the choice of genres and types of discourse in which humour may or should not be found.

This view on genre can also be related to the ethnography of communication in Hyme's (1972, 1974) terms, and the knowledge the interlocutors need to have in order to communicate appropriately in different social contexts. Namely, in this model, genre is just one of the elements of knowledge the interlocutor has in reference to a given communicative event. Other elements include the scene and setting, participants, ends, act sequence, instrumentalities and norms. When these parameters are applied in any pragmatic, goal-oriented situation, it is quite feasible to examine various instances of humour. In order to achieve a humorous perlocutionary effect as an end, the interlocutors may play with all of these elements. For instance, we may take an example of a university lecture (genre), given in the institutional setting of a formal institution (scene and setting) by the speaker, let us say a renowned professor to the students (the participants). In the lecture, the professor is supposed to explain (end) a law in physics in order to help the students learn and understand that law. According to their previous experience, the students expect formal language (norm, key) and the sequence of

events (act sequence) that are typically used in a lecture, such as a kind of outline and introduction, main elements, argumentation, specific examples and some conclusions. They would also expect the lecture to be given orally, in the language they know, in a standard variety (instrumentalities).

As a result, in all probability, playing with any of these elements by the speaker, most notably with genre, note, key and instrumentalities would result in humour. So, for example, in order to play with the expectations of the students (and maybe to prevent them from dozing off), the professor might use some seemingly unrelated photographs in his presentation, to illustrate the points, or even start with a self-deprecating personal anecdote to change the order of the sequence. Or, he or she might change the code, inserting some slang, dialect, or even another language to disrupt the audiences' expectations and play with language. In their analysis of self-deprecating humour in the classroom, Bakar and Kumar (2019: 18) give the following example of a chemistry professor, Karen, who referred to such an anecdote (8):

> (8) Karen: There is probably a specific liquid …
> Students: [Laughing]
> Karen: … that you had a bad experience with. Maybe an alcoholic liquid that you have drunk lots, perhaps you got sick afterwards or the next day, or the next two days, you remember that you do not want to drink that liquid anymore. Most people have particular alcohol or a mixture that they have with the alcohol [pointing at self] vodka and orange juice.
> Students: [Laughing]

Given the above, it is important to mention that humour in such cases is produced and perceived in relation to the norm or cultural schema that is shared by the speakers. Kotthoff (2007: 266) rightly points out that "the fact that communicative activities violate the norms of their genres does not mean that those genres necessarily disappear," and it could be added that quite the opposite is the case: their well-established structure makes room for creative transformation and subversion or reframing of genres strategically for specific purposes.

Genre theorists and classical rhetoricians have mostly been preoccupied with written texts and accordingly neat classifications based on form and/or content. For instance, in literature, there is the traditional division into poetry, prose and drama, and then drama is subdivided in tragedy and comedy. Frye (1957) applied the concept of archetypes on genre theory, arguing that some genres are universal and not culture-bound, such as comedy, tragedy, romance and irony. On the other hand, contemporary media genres resort more to describing specific forms than to the universals of tragedy and comedy. Hence, in comedies, if we refer to films, or 'sitcoms' and 'game shows', if television genres are concerned, one expects to find humour, and that has profound effect on the perception and appreciation of humour.

Tsakona (2021: 70-78) proposes a very useful, though not exclusively universal genre classification, as she notes, since different socio-cultural communities may resort to different ones. The main criteria she (Tsakona 2021: 70) applied in this taxonomy are speakers' metapragmatic stereotypes related to the use of humour in different communicative interactions and types of discourse. In other words, the starting point in this taxonomy are speakers' practices concerning the use of specific genres as regards their perception in terms of (in)appropriateness of humour in the given communicative event, or its (un)expectedness in the given genre.

The first group contains genres that are produced primarily for the creation of the humorous effect, and which would not exist without humour as its main component. This group includes types such as (canned) jokes, comedies (films or plays), cartoons, sitcoms, TV satire, stand-up comedy, and internet memes. Within each of these genres, certain subgenres may be further classified: for example, jokes can be divided into narrative jokes, riddles, one-liners, and howlers (despite the fact that howlers result from unintended humour).

The second group includes genres that may contain some form of humour. For instance, conversational narratives, most kinds of literary texts (novels, short stories, poems, etc.), animation films, aphorisms, epigrams, online posts and interactions, proverbs, advertisements, birthday cards, graffiti, and bumper stickers. As Tsakona (2021: 72) highlights, the presence of humour is not obligatory in this group.

In the third group of genres, humour may occur occasionally, though it is normally not expected to be found there. Such genres include business negotiations, service encounters, news reports, newspaper articles, political speeches, parliamentary debates, school textbooks and classroom interactions. Tsakona (2021: 75) mentions the example of sports reporting, which Chovanec (2012) explored, arguing that even though this genre is not by definition associated with humour, humour is often used in it for different functions, but most notably to entertain and engage the listeners/the viewers. In the second part of this book, we will try to show how humour is used in education and argue that the stereotypical metapragmatic perceptions of speakers in general are changing.

Finally, the fourth group contains genres in which humour never occurs, or hardly ever: these would be religious genres, funeral speeches, laws, and court decisions. Of course, some exceptions may be found, even though these represent really rare cases. For instance, Bell, Crossley and Hempelmann (2011) analysed church marquees in the USA, whose content may be humorous in some instances, probably to appeal to potential members of their communities. However, in some traditional religions it would be prohibited to use humour when referring to liturgies, sermons, the Bible or any part of the ceremony.

Bell and Pomerantz (2016: 27) classify humour by type or form, providing a taxonomy that is often used, given in the Table 2. Many of these forms can be further divided into additional subcategories, yet all of these may blend and overlap.

Canned Jokes	*Irony*	*Mockery*
Narratives or anecdotes	**Banter**	**Double entendre**
Puns	**One-liners**	**Wordplay**
Riddles	**Self-deprecation**	**Teases**
Satire	**Hyperbole**	**Parody**

Table 2: *Taxonomy of humorous forms*
(source Bell and Pomerantz (2016: 27))

As much as this classification has its limitations, it might very useful particularly in the field of translation. Namely, determining the genre, text type and the function of the source text represents one of the essential strategies any translator undertakes when analysing the source text. Knowing that a specific genre or text type has to contain humour, or may contain it will affect decision-making and problem-solving processes during translating, while the translator deals with specific instances of humour. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. However, it must be stressed that genre is not a static category and may involve many hybrid forms.

As Laineste (2016: 8) argues, any of these primarily humorous genres – but also initially non-humorous forms of folklore expression – may cause amusement only when presented in a context that favours the humorous mode. Humorous discourse turns the attention of the audience from the serious content to the entertainment value of the message. In her account of oral genres of humour, Kotthoff (2007) discusses jokes, teasing activities, humorous stories, joint fantasizing, humorous gossip, and counselling to discover the creative potentials that rely on genre knowledge. Similarly, conversational humour, relevantly interwoven into conversation, can be regarded as an umbrella term that covers a whole range of various specific humorous forms that can be found in a conversation, such as banters, witticisms, puns, wordplays, allusions, jokes, etc.

Jokes used to be regarded as a prototypical form of humour, described as autonomous textual entities with a similar sequential organization (i.e., introduction, text, reaction) and structured so as to lead up to a punch line and which are not necessarily dependent on contextual factors (cf. Attardo 1994: 296-311). This specific form and their popularity led to humour scholars to use them as the basic analytical unit in establishing formal theories of humour (cf. Raskin 1995, Attardo 2001), however, CMC and changes in the way we communicate globally have given rise to new genres and forms of humour that can be easily shared, either related to a given context or without it. Once widespread and popular, oral joke-telling has shifted now to the new media, the Internet, which easily crosses geographical, cultural and linguistic barriers (Ellis 2001). Laineste (2016: 12) rightfully points out that jokes or other hybrid forms of

humour on the Internet reflect generic adjustments and the new so-
cial reality, expressing opinions, emotions, and views anonymously.

For instance, popular types of Internet humour are the so-
called demotivators, which rely on the visual image and text that
accompany it, typically creating a sort of parody. In a demotivator,
as can be seen in Illustration 6, a poster or a picture set against dark
background is followed by a short caption and a title explaining,
defining or commenting on the picture. The visual and textual co-
create the script opposition which is ironic. In the examples given
in Illustration 6, the concept of teamwork is defined in the caption
and explained by using different images (which are not expected in
the given context), highlighting various aspects of the (shared)
knowledge we have about teamwork.

Illustration 6: *Demotivators "Teamwork"*
(sources: https://www.hiveworkshop.com/media/mouse-team-work-demotiva-
tional-poster.13810/; https://memebase.cheezburger.com/verydemotivational/
tag/teamwork;)

Without going into the taxonomy of different humorous forms (which can be found in Chiaro 1992, Ross 1998, Attardo 1994, 2001, Dynel 2009) and genres, we will follow Chłopicki and Brzozowska (2017) who suggest viewing humour as a type of discourse. Basing their views on sociological and philosophical understanding of discourse (Foucault 1972, 1984) and Fairclough's (2003: 124) use of the term 'discourse' both in the abstract sense for 'the domain of statements', and concretely as a 'count' noun for groups of statements or for the 'regulated practice' (the rules) which govern such a group of statements, in this book we will imply that humorous discourse is a concept that entails humorous genres as specific patterns that channel humorous discourses. If genre offers a set of rules or a cultural schema that includes the intention suited to the given context, humorous discourse will often deconstruct and restructure these patterns. As Fairclough (2003: 124) argues, "discourses constitute part of the resources which people deploy in relating to one another – keeping separate from one another, cooperating, competing, dominating – and in seeking to change the ways in which they relate to one another", which is applicable to humorous discourse to a great extent.

In addition to that, as Laineste (2016: 9) has it, "the various humorous discourses are described and explicated, showing that humorous discourse is not dependent so much on the form or genre of the text (whether it is a joke or, say, a song, picture, or legend), but instead on the context it is embedded in". Humorous discourse is shaped by both immediate and wider social and cultural context and the "analysing humorous discourse must take all of these aspects into account, simultaneously accepting that humorous discourse is not genre-specific, nor a stable or fixed phenomenon" (Laineste 2016: 15). In that sense, humorous discourse entails all specific forms, regardless of modality, channel, and genre, which have the function of creating humorous effects by different means.

2.5. Functions of humour in discourse

Humour may have different functions in communication and social interactions as it surfaces in various types of genres and discourses, and as expected, its functions are closely tied to functions of lan-

guage in general. If we start from Jakobson's[3] (1966) classification of language functions, and apply them to humour, we may say that the poetic function is the essential function of humour, or in other words, expression of linguistic creativity and playing with language for the purpose of amusement. People use humour to have fun and enjoy the emotional response of experiencing mirth (Martin and Rod 2018: 16), but also to pursue other goals. Martin (2007) grouped these functions into three categories:

1) humour for stress relief and coping;
2) humour for establishing and maintaining social bonds due to the positive emotions it evokes;
3) humour for prompting social action and exerting influence over others.

It goes without saying that play is older than culture and language for that matter (cf. Huizinga 1949/2002) and it represents a characterizing feature of *homo ludens*. For that reason, people have a universal and innate tendency to play with language and adopt a nonserious and playful attitude for the sake of play and amusement. As Crystal (1998: 9) succinctly observes, everyone does it, people from all walks of life, amateurs, and professionals, often without any other agenda in mind.

Language play is based on ambiguity that can be realised and linguistically expressed in all levels of the language structure, phonological/graphological, morphological, semantic, and pragmatic. Ross (1998: 8) distinguishes between two kinds of intentional creation of the humorous effect based on two types of ambiguity: one is structural and expressed in playing with all levels of language, but pragmatics. The second revolves around pragmatic ambiguity: it represents a separate group as it refers to the ambiguous use of deixis or violating Grice's Cooperative Principle. Native speakers' language competence implies that they know the structure of the language system, as well as the scope of variability in the language, and in that context, wordplay may be viewed as a test of that scope of variability.

A prototypical type of wordplay in English is pun, which represents intentional arrangement of linguistic units in such a way that

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[3] It must be mentioned that Jakobson (1966) did not include explicitly playing with language for amusement in his taxonomy.

two or more distinct senses associated with these units are evoked almost simultaneously, as is illustrated in the examples given below (9, 10):

> (9) I love white boards: They're re-markable.
> (10) You can't trust atoms; they make up everything.

Some other forms of lexical wordplay include spoonerisms, which are based on metathesis or a "wrong" order of initial phonemes in a word, or malapropisms (a use of a similar lexeme with a different meaning), as exemplified in many verses written by Ogden Nesh (1902-1971), a prolific American poet of humorous verses, who was said to have admonished a lazy student once with the following:

> (11) You have tasted a whole worm. Leave by the next town drain.

Without going into details regarding different taxonomies and classifications of wordplay and ambiguity (cf. Chiaro 1992, Attardo 1994, Ross 1998, Alexander 1997; and Giora 2003 on processing lexical ambiguity), it has to be mentioned that some of these types of wordplay tend to be more or less popular in some languages. For example, a contrastive analysis of verbal humour expressed in telecinematic discourse in English (including both British and American variant) and Serbian indicated that punning and wordplay is far more used in British sitcoms and comedies than in Serbian or American ones (Prodanović Stankić 2016).

What also must be mentioned is the fact that this type of linguistic creativity is not only restricted to great wits, specifically writers and poets, but it is also a part of the public sphere and is expressed by anonymous creators in all types of humour shared on the Internet:

> (12) I am on a seafood diet: I see food & eat it.
> (13) What would a cat order in a Mexican restaurant? A purr-rito!
> (14) What do you call an alligator in a vest? An investigator.

In Serbian, Bugarski (2019, 2021) and Lalić-Krstin (2008, 2015) discuss a plethora of these examples in everyday language use as well as in public discourse. For example, the very title of Bugarski's book (2021) features two creative and humorous neologisms, as can be seen in below (15):

(15) Sarmagedon u mesopotamiji
Sarma (a cabbage roll) + (-ma)gedon (truncated and adapted from the ancient Greek Armageddon, name of a place in the Bible, and a metaphorical representation of some climax or end-of-the-world scenario); as a blend it denotes eating too many cabbage rolls, a kind of traditional dish eaten in Serbia, which inevitably leads to poor digestion;

Mesopotamanija (a blend which is used as a name of a restaurant that serves barbecue: it can be analysed as meso (meat) + potamaniti (to wolf down) + Mesopotamija (Mesopotamia, the name of the historical region));

When considering the social and psychological aspects of humour and the effects it may produce, in-group affiliation and solidarity building (Attardo 2015: 169) represent the most typical ones. Chovanec and Tsakona (2018: 6) list the following, as the most prominent functions of humour: creating solidarity and bonding through shared values, reinforcing intimacy and contributing to a pleasant atmosphere, expressing criticism and mitigating aggressive or face-threatening acts, disparaging the "other", breaking social relationships, attracting the attention of the audience, enhancing the popularity of the humourist, contributing to building specific social identities (e.g. gender, ethnic, political ones). All in all, it serves a plethora of rhetoric, social and psychological functions, but it is "never innocent and devoid of emotional impact and social consequences, whether positive or negative ones" (Chovanec and Tsakona 2018: 6).

When you laugh when someone has done or said something humorous, you show "a way of like-mindedness" (Glenn 2003: 29-

30), which inevitably makes someone a member of a group, and strengthens boundaries and builds the group identity. Nevertheless, the multi-layered aspect of humour should be highlighted, as Haugh (2017) argues, since any type of humour may get a different function depending on the context and the intention of the humourist (Hugh 2016). For instance, Haugh (2017) discusses teasing as a case in point, which may be taken up as affiliative or disaffiliative to varying degrees, depending on the overall context.

Meyer (2000) lists all most important functions of humour in two groups. The first group includes the functions that connect and bond the interlocutors, while the second includes functions that lead to social polarisation of any kind. The second group can also be related to Attardo's (1994) Knowledge Resource called Target, which accounts for the object of derision or mockery, typically a person or a group. These functions can also be used to describe the so-called in- and out-group humour.

Many studies have shown (Gruner 1978, 1997), especially those that deal with workplace humour (Holmes 2000, Holmes and Marra 2002, Habib 2008), that speakers tend to establish their credibility by using humour to identify themselves with their listeners. In that way they also create a more cohesive group. Sometimes the speaker resorts to self-deprecating humour, indicating his/her vulnerability and providing some potential space for the listeners to feel more superior for a brief period.

Nevertheless, it seems that the second group of functions, those that highlight social polarisation, is more readily exploited. As Ford et al. (2017) report, humour that disparages a social group or its representatives is pervasive and readily available, nowadays even more than ever: a random Google search they conducted yielded several millions hits for "racist jokes" (4,240,000) and more than ten million (10,400,000) hits for "sexist jokes." As they argue (Ford et al. 2017), humour tends to trivialise its topic, and invites people "to think about it playfully and non-seriously, affording it in that way the appearance of social acceptability disguised in a cloak of fun and frivolity. Because of its disguise of social acceptability, disparagement humour serves unique paradoxical functions in intergroup settings. It can function as a social "lubricant" and as a social "abrasive." When directed at others, out-of-group, it threatens the

social identity of members of the targeted group, by transmitting, intensifying, and fostering negative stereotypes and prejudice. In most situations, producers of such humour rely on some universal scripts, such as stupidity, sexuality (Raskin 1985), or ethnicity (cf. Davies 1997 on ethnic jokes around the world).

In other words, as Lainesete (2016: 8) has it, humour is used for various purposes, some of which may at first seem contradictory: to create social cohesion, but also to function as an effective tool for excluding others, to signal resistance to rules, but also to exercises control over certain social behaviour, to express agreement and solidarity, but also to reinforce power hierarchies.

In addition to this, humour is sometimes used by members of the oppressed groups to subvert the prejudice, provided audiences understand and appreciate the subversive intent. For instance, a case in point is the so-called survival or trickster humour which is a common and culture-specific feature of Native American tribes (cf. Vizenor 1990, Deloria 2001, Gross 2002). As Prodanović Stankić and Izgarjan (2018) show in their analysis of Native American humour in the novel written by Erdrich (2012), such humour is used to resist the stereotypes about Native Americans, especially that of the tragic Indian, while juxtaposing conflicting cultural codes, Native American and Anglo-American. In that way, humour influences social norms by creating new and unusual perspectives on the object and thereby communicates sovereignty, creative power, and the freedom to intervene in the world. A good illustration is the following example (16):

> (16) Just yesterday a white guy asked me if I was a real Indian.
> No, I said, Columbus goofed up.
> The real Indians are in India. I'm a genuine Chippewa.
> Chip-a-what? How come you got no braids?
> They got chipped off, I told him.
> The old word for us is Anishinabe, you know.
> (taken from Erdrich 2012: 273)

This example, a kind of humorous narrative in which the speaker retells a conversation he had, starts with a one-liner, and then ends

with a pun based on phonological level of the language structure (Chippewa vs. chip-a-what) as a lead in for the punch line (they got chipped off). However, in the given context (it is retold during the powwow weekend ceremony, in the Anishinaabe reservation) the character puns on the stereotypical image of an Indian with braids, but also addresses the force administered in creation of that image (braids chipped off). Also, since he is ironic, his witticism seems to contain a subversive act of the Anishinaabe who reject the stereotype and reconfigure their image by chipping off their braids.

Some authors (Gruner 1978) argue that humour is always used in accordance with the Superiority Theory, and as Gruner (1997: 83) notes, every instance of humour implies a "winner and a loser" in the humorous play. Veatch (1998) claims different functions of humour are highly dependent on the given context and situation. In order to perceive the given instance of humour, the interlocutors need to be aware of the prototypical situation that is tied to the given context, as well as of all disruptions related to that communicative event, and of course, that disruption, or incongruity, leads to the intended humorous effect. This is in line with the Cultural Linguistic approach, since this kind of knowledge is part of the cultural schema a speech community shares, and which serves as a background against which certain incongruity may be interpreted as humorous.

On the other hand, Ziv (2010) argues that any interpretation of the humorous function needs to be divided into two planes of analysis: one plane should entail the relations of an individual within a group, while the other entails the relations of the whole group towards other groups. This approach is applicable to the analysis of telecinematic discourse as specific humorous genre, for instance sitcoms. This kind of discourse has been written, performed and produced for the purpose of entertaining a large number of viewers, but so as to resemble authentic and natural spoken interactions. Namely, it is not the same if a particular humorous utterance is viewed and interpreted from the position of the other character in the scripted dialogue or the viewer who is outside that frame of reference (cf. Dynel 2011, Panić-Kavgić 2019), which certainly affects the way humour itself is perceived and appreciated.

These two planes of analyses, or in other words, distinguishing between the identity of the group and personal identity as a ref-

erence point is also highly relevant in the context of ethnic humour. Namely, ethnic humour is also based on these planes, or the relation and boundaries that exist between one and the other ethnic identity. In that context, humour may highlight and foreground these boundaries.

Ethnic humour is defined as a specific type of humour that is created for amusement, but which foregrounds a specific way of behaviour, customs or characteristics of a group or an individual tied to a specific social and cultural identity. As Davis (1990: 1) points out, in the context of Humour Studies, the term "ethnic" is used in its most general sense and refers to a group that perceives itself as different from other groups or which is perceived by others as a separate group, with a common culture, tradition, origin and identity. In the SSTH Raskin (1985: 180) argues that ethnic humour is always based on script opposition that includes scripts related to extralinguistic knowledge. In other words, these scripts are not based on the semantic meaning. These scripts usually include stereotypes common in the given culture, and they can be reduced to simple binary oppositions of the type: good – bad, intelligent – stupid, normal – abnormal (Raskin 185: 143-144).

Using Raskin's (1985) theory as a starting point, and his definition of a script, Davies (1982, 1987, 1990) explored ethnic jokes targets among various ethnic groups in Anglo-American culture and found several patterns that are repeatedly used in this type of humour. One of the most frequently used patterns is spatial schema that is realized along the line: the centre vs periphery. In other words that means that regardless of the country or the ethnic community, it is always the ones in the centre who direct their jokes at the ones in the periphery, as the typical targets of humour. We could add that this is in accordance with the cultural conceptualisation, specifically cultural schemas and cultural categorisation. The members of speech and ethnic communities share these conceptualisations as common knowledge, and accordingly abide to it while producing and interpreting humour (Prodanović Stankić 2020).

In addition to that, Davies (2002: 17-76) argues that ethnic humour is almost invariably based on the function of derision and exclusion of the other, as well as it is related to criticising the other's behaviour, and it is never used to laugh at one one's expanse. Simi-

lar research in the field of ethnic humour, using other languages as examples, corroborated these findings (Ljuboja 2000, Laineste 2005, Trifunović 2009, Filipović 2012, Takovski 2015). For instance, as Laineste (2005: 9) shows, in every culture and country, there are certain targets of humour, which are always made fun of in jokes, and these are the members of ethnic groups that live on the fringes in the geographical and cultural sense.

The problem with ethnic humour activated by the means of creative linguistic resources is closely related to the fact that the cognitive effort involved in "deciphering" or "unpacking" the ambiguity may gaslight more or less hidden ideological assumptions of the message itself. So, we are all led (up the garden path) to laugh, only to realize that this humorous utterance may be offensive or discriminatory. In that way discriminatory language becomes in a way acceptable through the seemingly playful and creative language use.

Of course, making other ethnic groups targets through humour is just one of many functions humour can take. Since it can take diverse functions in conversation and different types of discourses, it is important to analyse what is said, how it is said and what effect it has on the people involved. Oring (2003: 145) also stresses that humour is a species of expressive play, and while play may sometimes be aggressive, it is much else besides, and all its functions can only be interpreted in the given context. The context includes the experiences and knowledge, both linguistic and extralinguistic that an individual brings to the humour that he or she hears or performs, the social interaction in which humorous performances are embedded; the social and historical conditions under which jokes arise, proliferate, and disappear; the cultural knowledge upon which humour depends and with which it plays; and the range of expressions, both within and beyond a society's boundaries, with which localised humorous performances. All these elements can be included in cultural conceptualisations and cultural cognition that underlie the use of humour.

3. CULTURAL CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF HUMOUR

This chapter reviews the theory and empirical research relating to cultural approaches to humour, and its interrelationship with language and cognition. Cultural Linguistic view on humour starts from the cognitive foundations, schematisation and categorisation, and integrates the shared cultural conceptualisations underlying different forms of humour in the elaboration. At the beginning of this chapter, we will give a brief outline of the most relevant theoretical concepts related to theoretical and analytical tools of Cultural Linguistics and then we will apply them to some specific examples, arguing that cultural aspects need to be included in the analysis of both verbal and multimodal humour in order to account for humour production and reception across different cultures and languages. Deconstructing creative use of language and humour from a cultural perspective might represent an important step towards a more holistically oriented analysis of humour.

3.1. Cultural linguistic perspectives on humour

As it has been repeatedly mentioned in this book, humour, as a complex phenomenon, gets its full potential unlocked in language use, and embedded in real context and social interactions of different kinds. On the one hand, humour represents creative violations of logic and/or language as a system, including information that is received via different semiotic modes when multimodal humour is concerned. On the other hand, it still needs to be approved of and reacted upon, and ideally, appreciated as positive by the recipients in the given context. This socio-cultural dimension, alongside with the cognitive and linguistic one implies that an interdisciplinary ap-

proach is required to get a deeper insight into this complexity. In light of accounting for the ways these cultural concepts are embedded in language use, we need to move beyond the strictly linguistic properties and mechanisms and employ a cultural linguistic approach. This appears to be a suitable backdrop against which humour can be explored, even though it represents just a new potential direction in Humour Studies, yet to be critically examined and supported by different empirical studies.

Cultural Linguistics was developed on the foundations of Cognitive Linguistics, with a focus on examining the interface of language, culture, and cognition. It can be traced back to Palmer's (1996: 3) attempt to relate language, creativity and culture, and the idea that language is "the play of verbal symbols that are based in imagery". This imagery is culturally constructed, and in Palmer's view (Palmer 1996: 66), it is based on and results from imagined schemas of intermediate abstractions (situated between mental images and abstract propositions) that are clearly related to physical (embodied) or social experiences. Cultural Linguistics draws on the cognitive foundation to a great extent, particularly the principles of embodiment and the experiential basis of meaning and dynamic meaning construction (cf. Evans and Green 2006), whereby Cultural Linguistics regards these meaning conceptualisations as being predominantly culturally constructed.

In addition to that, while discussing the role of culture in describing grammar from a Cognitive Linguistic perspective, Langacker (1994: 31) maintains that "the advent of cognitive linguistics can be heralded as a return to cultural linguistics. Cognitive Linguistic theories recognise cultural knowledge as the foundation not just of lexicon, but central facets of grammar as well". Furthermore, he (Langacker 2014: 27) argues that "while meaning is identified as conceptualisation, cognition at all levels is both embodied and culturally embedded".

As it is, within the Cognitive Linguistic approach, the interface of language and culture, as well as the influence of culture as a system of conceptualisations on all levels of language structure has not been systematically dealt with. The few exceptions are mainly cross-cultural studies on variations of metaphors (Kövecses 2005) and embodiment (Yu 2009, 2015). In reference to Humour Studies, Cognitive Linguis-

tics dealt with some specific aspects, mostly related to humour process-
ing and comprehension (cf. frame shifting (Coulson 2001), figure-
ground reversals (Brône, Feyaerts and Veale 2006, Brône, Feyaerts and
Veale 2015), metonymic reference-point structures (Brône and
Feyaerts 2004), salience (Giora 2003) and blending (Coulson 2001)).
However, what seems to be missing in the application of Cognitive Lin-
guistic framework to instances of creative language use are more flexi-
ble tools that account for the group cultural cognition in the process of
dynamic meaning construction that is typical of humour and inevitable
in establishing cultural nature of meaning.

Cultural Linguistics appears to be a useful tool for exploring
both verbal and multimodal humour along with their intra-group
and inter-group cultural instantiations, since it shifted the focus
from the relationship of individual cognition and language as high-
lighted in the cognitive approaches to language, to the relationship
between language, conceptualisation, and culture (Sharifian 2011:
3). In that sense, Cultural Linguistics may explain the ways people
use humour in communication and their interactions, not only in
terms of playing with the language as a system, but also mirroring
the shared beliefs and culture common to the speakers of a given
language, their communicative practices and style.

Culture will be defined here following Holland and Quinn
(1987: vii) as "shared presuppositions about the world familiar to
the given community", or as a "set of shared understandings that
characterise smaller or larger groups of people" Kövecses (2005: 1).
However, culture is a dynamic concept, it serves both as a repository
of knowledge and a tool, since it represents "a socially constituted
set of various kinds of knowledge structures that individuals turn to
as relevant situations permit, enable, and usually encourage", as
Kecskés (2013, 2015) points out. In addition to that, it is a shared
system of "beliefs, norms, values, customs, behaviours, and arte-
facts that the members of society use to cope with their world and
with one another" (Bates and Plog 1980: 6).

The concept of cultural cognition is central to the theoretical
framework of Cultural Linguistics. It integrates a joint understand-
ing of the concepts of cognition and culture as they relate to lan-
guage (Sharifian 2009, 2011). As Frank (2015: 494) puts it, cultural
cognition is "a form of cognition that […] is not represented simply

as some sort of abstract disembodied 'between the ears' entity". It is a form of "enactive cognition" that results from social and linguistic interactions between individuals across time and space. The elements of cultural cognition may not be equally shared by all members of the speech community; rather, it represents a form of (heterogeneously) distributed group-level cognition (Sharifian 2009: 2, 2017: 23). In other words, it differs from the individual cognition, as dealt with within Cognitive Linguistics, in the sense that it represents a property of a group: a sort of dynamic "collective memory bank" (cf. Sharifian 2009). The locus of cognition and conceptualisations may be the individual, but a large part of these conceptualisations are ultimately spread and shared across a given cultural group.

Cultural cognition is entailed in cultural conceptualisations, which are distributed among group members and emerge from their interactions. What is also important to stress is the fact that they are constantly being negotiated and renegotiated across generations and through contact between speech communities. As Sharifian (2003: 190) notes, "the basic principle of distributed representations is that the representational interactions among the units can produce emergent group properties that cannot be reduced to the properties of the individual units." In addition to that, different cultural groups and speech communities may develop more or less similar, same, or completely different group-level cognition. Moreover, the interactions of different cultural groups and speech communities may result in some new blended cultural cognition. For these reasons, cultural cognition has gestalt properties since the sum of its parts cannot be reduced to the cognition of a single individual. In a similar vein, while describing culture Kecskés (2015: 114) points out that "not all the members of a given social and/or cultural group adopt, live, or reflect their relatively common culture in a similar way in every moment and every life circumstance, nor do all members of the same social and/or cultural group demonstrate the same feeling of identification".

Cultural Linguistics maintains that "language is a cultural form, and that conceptualisations underlying language and language use are largely formed by cultural systems" (Yu 2007: 65). Also, language, as a central aspect of cultural cognition serves as a "col-

lective memory bank" of a speech community and as a fluid vehicle used for the (re-) transmission of cultural cognition (Sharifian 2017a: 2). Thus, Cultural Linguistics, as a sub-discipline of linguistics, aims at uncovering how language as a subsystem of culture transformatively interacts with cognition and how cognition at the cultural level is manifested in language (Palmer 1996, Sharifian 2011, 2017b). In other words, Cultural Linguistics explores conceptualisations that have a cultural basis and are encoded in and communicated through features of human languages, as can be illustrated in Illustration 7.
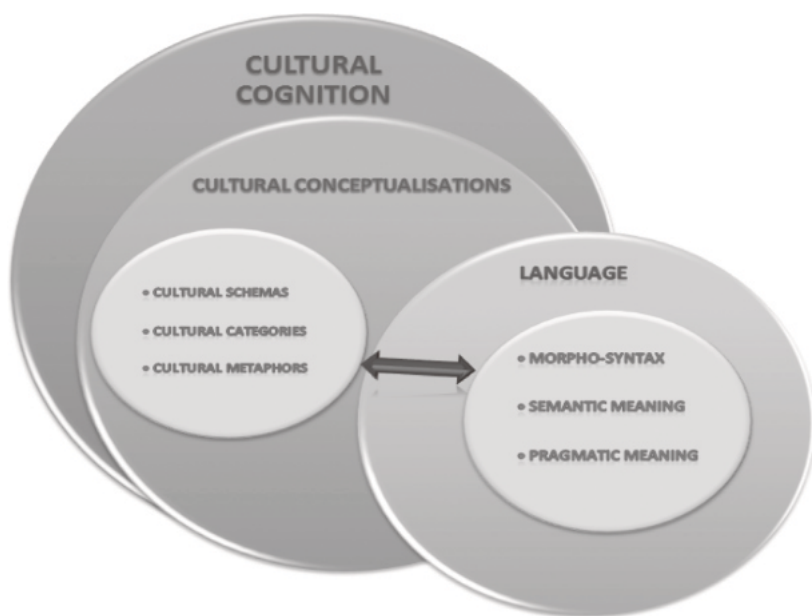
Illustration 7: *The theoretical and analytical frameworks of Cultural Linguistics*
(source: Sharifian (2017a: 6))

Cultural conceptualisations represent and express cultural cognition in language, or typical patterns of distributed knowledge shared across a cultural group as they embody group-level cognitive systems such as worldview (Sharifian 2003: 190) and show a cultural group's beliefs and idea. Also, many features of a language are entrenched in them. At the same time they represent both theoretical and analytical tools for analysing the interface of language, culture

and cognition. The recurrent cultural conceptualisations are cultural schemas, cultural categories and cultural metaphors/metonymies as cross or intra-domain conceptualisations. All of them have primarily cognitive and cultural basis. Thus, for instance, cultural categories result from the intrinsic human cognitive process of categorisation, and essentially they represent a type of cognitive categories as defined by Rosch (1978): showing prototype effects (Rosch 1978) and other features of cognitive categories (Lakoff 1987: 50ff). However, they are inseparable from language and culture in the sense that we learn how to store and activate certain knowledge under the influence of the experience we have gained in the social world we live in.

Cultural metaphors and metonymies are also regarded as conceptual phenomena in the first place, following the basic tenets of Cognitive Linguistics (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). However, Sharifian (2017: 51) argues that along with their cognitive underpinning they have roots in the given culture, "cultural traditions such as folk medicine, ancient religions/worldviews" and they are often culturally sensitive. In that way they can account for cross-linguistic and cross cultural variations (Kövecses 2005). Even though cultural metonymies were not initially included in this list (Sharifian 2011, 2015), later on it was proved that metonymies play an important role in cultural cognition (cf. Frank 2015).

Sharifian (2015: 477) states that language plays a dual role in relation to cultural conceptualisations. On the one hand, linguistic interactions are crucial to the development of cultural conceptualisations, as they provide space for speakers to (co-) construct meanings about their experiences. On the other hand, many aspects of both language structure and language use draw on and reflect cultural conceptualisations. In that way language represents an insight, though not the only one, in our cultural conceptualisations and, ultimately, in cultural cognition associated with languages and language varieties. At the same time, it represents one of the tools for maintaining cultural conceptualisations through time.

Since humour is deeply embedded in culture, and different types of cultural presuppositions are needed in understanding humorous discourse (Prodanović Stankić 2016), we will use cultural conceptualisations, specifically cultural schemas, cultural categories and cultural metaphors/metonymies as analytical tools to ar-

gue that both humour production and recognition are dependent on them, regardless of the humorous genre or semiotic mode(s) it is based upon. In other words, in order to understand a particular joke, one needs to know both the language and the cultural conceptualisations to which the particular joke refer. This is in line with Kecskés' (2015: 114) statement that among the members of one linguistic community, there are preferred ways of saying things, or, taking humour into consideration, it is evident that there are preferred ways of joking or sharing a laugh (in the sense of what is humorous inside a certain culture (Antonopoulou 2004: 224). The same applies to categorisation of humorous forms and genres, both in terms of metalinguistic and folk definitions (for example, what would be considered as teasing or banter in one speech community and what in another), pragmatic functions of humorous forms (cf. Goddard 2018, Mullan and Béal 2018, Goddard and Mullan 2020, Stwora 2020) and cultural practice related to joking.

For example, some corpus-based studies (Prodanović Stankić 2016, 2017) into various forms of humour in scripted telecinematic discourse in English (including British and American English varieties) and Serbian have shown that scriptwriters of comedies and sitcoms produced and written in the UK and Serbia used playing with language more often than other means. On the other hand, resorting to extralinguistic means to create humorous effect (such as the use of culture-specific references, but those that refer to elements of popular (global) culture) was more typical of the USA comedies. Of course, this can also be explained by the motivation behind Hollywood production itself that aims at the global market, and the audience that is perceived as a heterogeneous group, in the most general sense. Good reception is inevitably closely related to understanding what the humour in the film is about, and probably that is the main reason why comedies made in the USA contain less wordplay. Consequently, these comedies contain humour that can be translated faster and more successfully to reach a wider range of target viewers, as translation of verbally expressed humour presents quite a challenge for this industry, regardless of the language pair.

In the sections that follow, we will use some specific examples to elaborate on cultural conceptualisations that underlie different kinds of verbal and multimodal humour. Typically, humour is

based on a combination of conceptualisations, which are jointly activated and then expressed through language or images, thus we will discuss them together.

3.2. The analytical framework

Starting from the argument that cultural linguistic concepts represent analytical tools for analysing the relationship between language and specific cultural conceptualisations (Sharifian 2017: 3), we will examine some specific linguistic features in order to determine how they are related to cultural cognition.

Cultural conceptualisations are defined as conceptual structures such as 'schemas', 'categories', and 'metaphors and metonymies', which are initiated at the individual level of cognition but which are spread and renegotiated through generations of speakers within a cultural group, across time and space (Sharifian 2015, 2017). They facilitate the process of storing and activating knowledge about the world and guide understanding and behaving of the cultural group that shares these conceptualisations. Language use represents a reflection of these conceptualisations and whenever the experiential basis of linguistic interaction is cultural, these conceptualisations are formed. According to this view, language is encoded in culture.

In Cultural Linguistic view, conceptualisations are the result of schematisation and categorisation. Schematisation, or abstracting conceptual structures from experience, is defined in cognitive linguistics as "a process that involves the systematic selection of certain aspects of a referent scene to present the whole, disregarding the remaining aspects" (Talmy 1983: 225). Moreover, categorisation, or assigning experiences of various kinds to pre-established categories in prototypical structures, is also viewed in cognitive terms, as in terms of Rosch (1978) and Lakoff (1987). These cognitive processes lead to the development of schemas and categories, and consequently, metaphors and metonymies.

Cultural schemas are patterns or templates that capture a group's knowledge, beliefs, norms, rules, expectations and values in reference to various aspects and components of experience. They represent cognitive structures of some generic nature, containing slots that can be filled with specific information. They are defined

similarly to cultural models in Holland and Quinn's (1987: 4) elaboration:

> [Cultural models are] presupposed, taken-for-granted models of the world that are widely shared (although not necessarily to the exclusion of other, alternative models) by the members of a society and that play an enormous role in their understanding of that world and their behaviour in it.

Cultural schemas can also be related to Fillmore's (1976, 2009) or Barsalou's (1992) frames, since frames help interpret meanings in reference to scenes or specific situations based on our prior experience, or scripts in terms of Schank and Abelson (1977: 41), who define scripts as "a predetermined stereotyped sequences of actions that define a well known situation".

Schank and Abelson's view on scripts in cognitive psychology was the building block of Raskin's (1985) *Semantic-script theory of Verbal Humour*. Raskin (1985: 180) describes scripts as simplistic, schematic structures, highly conventional, but also fictional and even mythological. Whenever there is some kind of distortion or opposition related to a script, it results in humour, according to Raskin (1985). A case in point is ethnic or sexual humour, based on some universal scripts, such as possible/impossible, actual/non-actual, normal/abnormal, or good/bad. Using the example of ethnic humour, for example, Raskin and Attardo (1991) use the script opposition possible/impossible and normal/abnormal to account for the plethora of ethnic jokes in which the Poles living in the USA are targets, as in:

> (17) How many Poles does it take to screw in a light bulb? 5. One to hold the light bulb and four to turn the table he is standing on.

Therefore, in jokes, for instance, one can keep the same script and just change the specific elements that are used to fill the slots and get a new joke.

Nevertheless, in theoretical sense, it seems that the use of this concept functions well when applied to protypical examples such as canned jokes, which are based on punch lines revolving on polysemy, or any other semantic mechanism. Yet, when applied to conversational humour, for instance, which is typically created jointly by the interlocutors, or rather co-created in terms of sequences, interactions, and meanings, this two-dimensional view often fails to account for production, recognition and finally (in)appreciation.

Namely, conversational humour typically activates much more than just one schema – it is rather different kinds of schemas that are at play (for example, event schemas, role schemas, image schemas), and the interlocutors may not necessarily share all elements of the given cultural schema, due to the fact that one becomes a member of a given cultural group based on the degree of how much an interlocutor draws on various cultural schemas. However, the interlocutors need to share the assumptions, context and cultural conceptualisations in order to recognise the intended humorous effect. The same applies to the viewers (when they are non-participants in the communicative event, but represent the ultimate recipients of the message) of some conversation in telecinematic discourse, humorous sketch or in a stand-up comedian's performance. In that context they are the recipients of the conversation that is going on screen or they are addressed in the genre of stand-up comedy. They may expect to encounter humour in such genres but still, in order to identify, recognise and comprehend it, they need to activate different mechanism.

For example, in their analysis of Nigerian stand-up comedy, Sunday and Filani (2018: 98) show how joking with cultural beliefs and representations within the performance space mediates and negotiates what contemporary culture represents and which elements it values. Yet in that context, the viewers need to share the same extralinguistic and linguistic knowledge in order to recognise the humorous intent in the first place, and then react accordingly. In Serbian comedy TV shows or talk shows humour is typically produced by activating schemas, categories, metaphors and metonymies that are related to elements of traditional culture, history, and ethnic groups (Prodanović Stankić 2020, 2021).

For the purpose of illustrating and explaining cultural schemas, a part of a conversation taken from a YouTube video ("A Montenegrin brakes up with his girl" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2wqq6lXA7A) will be used (18). The video was made and uploaded by *Dnvenjak*, a group of young people who create humorous content in Serbian, considered to be widely popular and funny, judging by YouTube statistics. The humorous content this group creates revolves around typical problems and situations young people in Serbia find themselves in. This specific example shows a young man (from Montenegro) (M) and a girl (G) sitting in a coffee shop, having the following conversation (17):

(18) *Crnogorac na dejtu*

Cronogorac (C): Alo konobar, oćemo li mi ođe još jednom da uđemo da bi nas ti uslužio što treba?

Konobar (K): Izvinite što ste čekali čitavih 30 sekundi. Izvolite.

C: Oćemo li polozu? (obraća se devojci)

Devojka (D): Šta ti znači to?

C: Rakija. Polozu ja popijem, polozu ti popiješ.

D: Čoveče! 8.15 je ujutro!

C: E to znači da je trebalo da popijemo pre 15 minuta. (obraća se konobaru)
Mene dojč, a njoj šećera i vode, dosta joj je.

D: Ne jedem šećer.

C: (obraća se konobaru) Donesi, donesi, nek se nađe, vjeruj mi, trebaće.
(obraća se devojci) Viđi. Nije mi bilo lako da donesem ovu odluku. Ali morao sam da presječem. Ti znaš kad ja nešto presječem, onda je to za vazda.

D: Šta da presečeš? Ne razumem. O čemu pričaš?

C: Ti da razumeš? Ti da išta razumiješ druga bi se ploča vrćela. Viđi ovamo. Sinoć smo sjeli svi u familiju, koji se nešto pitamo i znamo. I okušavali se, ređali, da se donese odluka šta da se čini dalje. Došao red i na najviđenije i na najpametnije, na oca, đeda i mene. I prvi se đed javi za riječ i kaže babi, Izađi na balkon, dok mi muški riješavamo ovo. I kad je baba izašla, đed kaže

da ti se da još jedna šansa, a da ja ipak odlučim kako će na kraju biti. Posle toga se otac javlja za riječ i viče mojoj majci, izađi na teracu, pridruži se babi da ne kisne sama. Stara žena nije u redu da kisne sama. Otac pali cigaru, gleda me i veli: Ti si domaćin, kod tebe je i pogača i nož. Svima dijeliš po zasluzi. I u pravu je čovjek.

D: Da nisi ti popio malo više tih poloza? Šta to pričaš, ne razumem o čemu se radi?

C: Ma radi se o tome da raskidamo. Gotovo je. *Game over*. *Game over*. Ja osjećam da ti sad misliš da me ne zaslužuješ, nisi me vrijedna. Vidi ja da sam na tvom mjestu, ja bih isto mislio da me ne zaslužujem.

D: Čoveče, deset dana smo u vezi, o čemu ti pričaš?

Title: *A Montenegrin on a date*[4]

Montenegrin (M): Hey waiter, shall we get in here once again so that you can serve us as you should?

Waiter (W): I apologize for having you left waiting for 30 seconds. How can I help you?

M: Let's have agrapebrandy! (He is addressing the girl)

Girl (G): What does that mean?

M: Grape brandy. I'll have one glass of brandy and you'll have one glass of brandy.

G: Man, it's 8.15 am!

M: Well that means then that we should have had one 15 minutes ago! (He is addressing the waiter). Fetch a "Deutsch" for me, and for her some water and sugar, it will suffice.

G: I don't eat sugar.

M: (He is addressing the waiter) Just fetch it, let it be ready, trust me, she'll need it. (He is addressing the girl) Look here. It wasn't easy for me to reach the decision, but I had to do it. And I had to cut all this off. And you know me, when I cut something off, then it is for good.

G: What did you need to cut off? I don't get it. What are you talking about?

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[4] All translations in the book are provided by the author

M: How can you get anything anyway? If you could get anything, we would be here on different terms. Look here. Last night we gathered all, the whole family, and sat down to talk, all of us who have a say and are in the loop. And we tried and analyzed everything in order to reach a decision about what to do next. Then it was my father's, my grandfather's and finally my turn to say something, as we are the most respectful and the cleverest in the family. And it was my grandfather who raised a hand first, and he said to the grandmother to go out on the balcony and leave us while we men discuss this. And when the grandmother went out, the grandfather said that we might consider giving you one more chance, however, that it was up to me to decide what to do in the end. After that, my father raised a hand and shouted to my mother to go out on the balcony as well, to join the grandmother, so that she would be not alone in rain outside. She is an old woman and it's not fair that she got wet in the rain all alone. Then my father lit a cigarette, looked at me and said: You are becoming the head of the family you keep the bread and the knife. You're righteous and ready to share fairly. And he has a point.

G: It seems you had too many glasses of this agrape-brandy. What are you talking about? I really don't understand what this is all about.

M: It's about our breakup. It's over. "*Game over. Game over*". I feel that you believe that you don't deserve me, that you're not worthy enough to be my girlfriend. Look, if I were in your shoes, I would also believe I did not deserve myself.

G: O man, we have been dating for ten days, what is this all about?

The very title of the video represents a lead-in for introducing incongruity, since it refers to a date, but essentially the conversation is about a breakup. The use of the anglicism 'dejt' (Engl. date) in Serbian activates the schema associated with romantic relationships that young people in Serbia have created under the influence of pop-

ular culture and Hollywood romantic comedies, which is different from some traditional views that are parodied to the extreme in the video. The cultural schema of ending a romantic relationship typically does not entail humour and is not expected to be a topic of a humorous sketch. In fact, in the sketch, the man foregrounds this conceptualisation, i.e., ENDING A RELATIONSHIP IS A LOSS indicating that the girl would need a drink and some water and sugar, as if she might feel unwell due to shock and bereavement. All this leads the viewers up the garden path, as it turns out that the girl must be very happy to have gotten rid of this overbearing man.

Additionally, the reference to a representative of an ethnic group (Montenegrin) in the title activates the ethnic element, which becomes foregrounded (metonymically) in the video by the character's way of speaking and reference to some culture-specific elements of knowledge related to the FAMILY schema, cultural categorization and beliefs that members of the given cultural group have.

Considering the lexical level of humour, it should be mentioned that the man speaks Montenegrin, once a variety of Serbo-Croatian, nowadays a separate language, and his language is used as a source of register and ethnic humour in the Serbian context. Montenegrin differs from standard Serbian just slightly, mostly in terms of pronunciation of some specific sounds, word stress, and few syntactic and lexical peculiarities, but it is still recognised as a variety of the same language. These differences are even additionally highlighted and exploited through the dialogue to create wordplay on the lexical level. For instance, in line (3) he suggests "polozu" for drinking, which is a grape brandy, but the girl initially fails to understand what he meant due to his specific pronunciation and stress placement. Also, his suggestion is not really in accordance with the universal cultural schema of appropriate drinks typically drank early in the morning, but it is in accordance with culture-specific schemas of people living in the mountainous regions in the Balkans, who maintain that drinking spirits early in the morning boosts metabolism and immunity. All of these elements of cultural knowledge are well known to viewers and get activated in the process of humour comprehension. In terms of playing with language, it turns out that his way of pronouncing a preposition (po) and a noun (lozu) as a single word ('polozu'), not separately as it should be, leads to a

different reading. In addition to brandy, he orders a cup of coffee using the local Montenegrin slang word "dojč", an unadapted germanism (a Serbian pronunciation of the German "Deutsch"), which is metaphorically and metonymically derived from the cost of one cup (which used to be one DM). For the speakers of Serbian, it represents a kind of surprising and unexpected way to refer to coffee and an element of knowledge not everyone is familiar with.

We will disregard specific violations of Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP) in this example, which also represent a source of humour in this conversation. Yet, it should be mentioned that the CP itself represents a kind of cultural schema, though a universal one in the great majority of speech communities all over the world (cf. Prodanović Stankić 2014), since the participants in any conversation expect that all interlocutors should rely on this principle and its maxims in light of communicating effectively. Accordingly, in the given interaction the speakers are supposed to adhere to the CP, as it is one of the essential preconditions for creating a common ground and carrying out a conversation successfully.

In the short narrative that he recounts as a kind of introduction into his announcement, he offers some glimpses of the traditional way of family life, which is a cultural event schema, well known to speakers of both Serbian and Montenegrin. Referring to some elements of this cultural schema, he provides an insight in the event schema related to decision making in a traditional (extended) family. This schema also involves cultural categorisation which indicates specific hierarchy and set roles in a traditional family or a clan. His grandmother and mother are sent out of the room, while the men in the family discuss important matters, implying the traditional order in which women have no say. In that order, the speaker is allowed to make his own decision, not because of the fact that it is about his romantic relationship and his girlfriend, but rather due to the fact that as the son of the family he is their heir – the one who "has the knife and the bread", as he has put it using a metonymic proverb and an image schema that stands for the ritual of cutting the (ceremonial) bread as the breadwinner of the family. In essence, the cultural schema is exploited here as a source of humour, since the traditional cultural schema is contrasted with the modern one, more common and typical (more on categorization and metaphorical rep-

resentations of women in the Western Balkans can be found in Bratić and Vuković Stamatović 2017, Piletić and Vuković Stamatović 2021; more on gender aspects of humorous discourse in popular culture can be found in Izgarjan, Prodanović Stankić, Markov 2014).

Of course, for the members of the given speech communities, no elaborations and explanations of these cultural schemas and categorisation are needed, as they immediately process this information in this short dialogue and are able to perceive and comprehend the incongruity of the use of these schemas in reference to the modern cultural schema of dating. Namely, young people today typically do not consult the whole family if they want to end a relationship that lasted ten days, as we learn in the dialogue. This incongruity in the video is even more highlighted by the main characters sudden switch to English, in which he repeats "game over" believing that the girl misunderstood his intentions, not his inappropriate conversational maxims. Of course, it seems that his switch to English is a conversational strategy to help his interlocutor understand better his message.

This is in line with Yus's (2004) argument that the use of multiple representations in humorous performances is made possible because people have the cognitive ability to have differing representations for the same referent. Yus (2004: 329) also stresses the fact that the relationship between these types of representation may range from a high degree of overlapping to a totally distinct quality. A person may be aware of what is believed in a culture without supporting these beliefs, and at the other end of the continuum, they can notice how his or her own beliefs are strengthened and reinforced by cultural similarity. In Cultural Linguistic terms, it means that a person may share some or many cultural conceptualisations with his or her speech community and cultural group, as these conceptualisations are heterogeneously distributed and also represent emergent structures (Sharifian 2017).

Given the above, in reference to ethnic humour, it has to be mentioned that it is a very common mechanism to create humorous effect in Serbian by the use of a certain language variety. This mechanism is over-exploited in sitcoms, comedies and media, as some previous research indicates (cf. Prodanović Stankić 2016, 2021), of-

ten representing the only source of verbally expressed humour on screen. Of course, this has some profound consequences for the overall social and cultural context, as media play a significant role in shaping language ideologies. The problem with ethnic humour is the fact that it is not always used as a benevolent criticism as in this example, but it is more often than not used negatively, since the targets of such humour are represented as inferior, due to their belonging to a certain ethnic group. Needless to say, the use of such humour in public discourse and especially in digital communication makes the process of sharing this content and reaching wider audience easier.

In these examples, the language variety metonymically stands for the speech community or the ethnic group that uses the variety in question. That is a cultural metonymy the USE OF LANGUAGE (VARIETY) FOR THE SPEAKERS OF THAT LANGUAGE, which is quite common and widespread among the speakers of Serbian. This example is no exception. The character's use of Montenegrin in the context in which the majority speaks Serbian, a different language or a variety[5], metonymically stands for all cultural conceptualisations the speakers of Serbian share about Montenegrins. The exaggerated use of salient features of the given variety by the character/speaker adds to the opposition that exists between what is expected (in terms of language use) and what is produced. The use of cultural metonymies in cultural categories is a common pattern of creating social stereotypes, as Jensen (2017) suggests, whereby a specific member of a category in the given cultural context becomes the representative of the entire category, or a specific feature of a social category becomes the defining feature of the entire category.

The characters become targets of humour, and their language use as "inappropriate" in the communicative situation and sociocultural frame. As expected, this often implies activation of stereotypes that exist in the society, which becomes easily noticeable in ethnic humour. By the widespread use of this mechanism in public

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[5] Officially, Montenegrin and Serbian nowadays represent two separate and distinct languages, yet they used to be two dialects of one language, Serbo-Croatian. Considering the fact that many inhabitants in Serbia originate from Montenegro and use Montenegrin as their mother tongue, and the fact that these languages are very similar and mutually easily understandable to the speakers of both languages, it seems more appropriate to refer to them as varieties.

discourse, the dominant language ideology enforces the beliefs that exist in the society. In that way, humorous discourse actually reinforces these beliefs instead of questioning them or offering a new critical perspective for dealing with some deeply rooted social inequalities.

Many empirical studies (Apte 1987, Davies 1987, Lainesete 2005) have shown that ethnic humour refers to some specific way of behaviour, customs or characteristics of some group related to their distinctive social and cultural identity (Apte 1987: 180) and the adjective 'ethnic' is used in that context in a very general sense. It could be added here, that these ethnic groups share cultural conceptualisations which would be reflected not only in their language, but also customs, rituals, folklore etc. In different contexts, an element (or more than one) of that extralinguistic knowledge can be foregrounded and used for mockery, either by the members of that group or outsiders, which is more often the case.

Davies (1982, 1987, 1990) explored jokes told by various ethnic groups all over the world and found some typical patterns that can be identified in this type of humour. The most typical pattern is the spatial schema centre-periphery. Those living in the centre of a country or in/around the capital are regarded as superior in comparison to the ones living further away from the centre. Also, the language variety they speak is considered to be more similar to the standard (or it represents the standard itself), and in that sense a reflection of higher education, more power and higher social status. For these reasons, those from the centre usually tell jokes in which those who are in the periphery represent targets. It is very interesting that most speakers worldwide share this schema and belief when it comes to humour production, but also comprehension.

Furthermore, research has shown that ethnic humour is almost always invariably used as a sort of social criticism, laughing at the expense of others, in light of indicating in- and out-group boundaries. Very rarely ethnic humour entails self-mockery in terms of a group (Davies 2002: 17-76). Similar studies done in other languages corroborated these findings (Ljuboja 2000, Laineste 2005, Trifunović 2009, Filipović 2012, Takovski 2015, Prodanović Stankić 2020). Sadly as it is, in many societies the use of dialects, especially in the media or in public discourse is regarded as lack of

education, manners and intelligence, which only supports the already deeply rooted stereotypes and social stratification (Mugglestone 2003, Archakis et al. 2014, Martina 2019), especially when used and shared through humorous discourse.

Typical patterns of the use of humour in the given context as well as preferred mechanisms of humour used by the speech community reflect and demonstrate how language, culture and context are closely intertwined. For instance, in her research on the Muhammad cartoon controversy, Kuipers (2008: 8) states that "every group or society has its (mostly implicit) rules and agreements about what can be joked about. People within such community generally abide by such rules, even if they do not agree with them", which is in line with cultural linguistic account of cultural practice and cultural even schemas. These unwritten rules about the propriety of some jokes and who and what can represent the target of derision is in fact also a part of a cultural schema related to cultural practice.

Cultural conceptualisations are culture and language specific, even though some may be universal, shared globally, or even blended under the influence of another language, as it will be argued in the next section. Overall, these "preferred ways" reflect the ways of thinking of speech community members about the world, their environment and their contexts, as Kecskés (2015: 112) has it. In intercultural interactions they might represent stumbling blocks, as they extend beyond language use and affect comprehension. Accordingly, knowledge of the preferred ways of saying things and preferred ways of organising it determines native-like knowledge of a language (Kecskés 2014). Since language is rooted in culture, they both represent 'carriers' of culture and both reflect culture but in a different way.

Last but not least, it has to be mentioned with regard to cultural schemas and ethnic humour that cultural cognition underlies what is regarded as funny in the given speech community. Depending on which view the recipient takes in reference to the target and the given humorous utterance or form, recognition, evaluation, and finally, appreciation will vary. For instance, in reference to the example (18) given above, the whole view on and interpretation of the conversation depends on the cultural conceptualisations of the recipient: whether the recipient is the speaker of Montenegrin or stan-

dard Serbian, male or female. In other words, the recipient may re-act differently if they identify themselves with the humorist's, the target's or the non-participant's point of view. This is in line with Sinkeviciute's (2017) empirical research in the preferred reactions of non-participants' to funniness, based on qualitative interview data. In her research, which contrasted different ways of conceptu-alising funniness, she (Sinkeviciute 2017: 50) concludes that per-ceptions of funniness in potentially jocular interactions are not only dependent on what has been said in a particular context, but also on a perspective from which the utterance is evaluated. This is also in a way corroborated by Kuipers (2008) and Davies (2008) who dis-cuss the reactions to the worldwide upheaval about Muhammad car-toons and humour scandals, or preferences related to political hu-mour (cf. Vukić and Mišić Ilić 2019, Mišić Ilić 2021).

Davies (2008) argues that humour does not give offence but rather its recipients take offence, since the members of a group can choose "to avoid humour that they know might offend them or they seek it out and get angry. Taking offence at humour is not a simple in-dividual response but something socially constructed and used for a purpose". Still, this argument might be interpreted in different ways, as it is evident that cultural and social aspects have a great influence on both humour creation and reception, and even within humorous content certain elements can be foregrounded at the expense of oth-ers. When such content gets shared by millions of people online, the overall context changes and adds a different tone to the reception and consequently reactions to it. In the next section the focus will be put on the interplay of universal and culture-specific elements shared by the speakers of a language in reference to humour and the use of different cultural conceptualisations in this process.

Besides, it should be mentioned that research into cross-cul-tural workplace humour also provides a deep insight in universality and culture-specific elements of humour that are typical of a speech community and a cultural group. Even though this data is linked to a workplace context and business relationships that are based on power relations, it can offer a view on how humour is used in the given culture and what types of humour or joking behaviour are pre-ferred. For instance, Grindsted (1997) compared the joking behav-iour and attitudes towards humour of Danes and Spanish during

business negotiations, and found that the Spanish used a great deal more humour than the Danes. Some differences were also found in the preferred types of humour: while the Danes directed humour at themselves (self-denigrating humour), the Spanish tended to target others. Sometimes the power balance is crucial when it comes to the use of humour. Murata (2014) compared business meetings in New Zealand and Japan and found that in Japan, humour was always initiated by those in charge and then, it was accepted and elaborated by the subordinates. On the other hand, in New Zealand humour was initiated and then jointly constructed by any participant, regardless of its position in the workplace hierarchy.

3.3. Global and glocalised elements of humour

As it was discussed above, language is firmly grounded in group-level cognition that emerges from the interactions between the members of a cultural group and that is exactly why humour that is not purely language-based cannot function without the knowledge of cultural conceptualisations that are underlying it. Cultural conceptualisations may develop at various levels of a cultural group, as Sharifian (2003: 191) maintains, and there is no direct relationship between the size of a group and the coherence of their conceptualisations. In other words, the size of the group is not necessarily relevant for the network of sharing common cognition; rather this coherence depends on integrity and uniformity shared between the members of the group. Not all members of the given group may be familiar with or be aware of all elements related to the given cultural schema, categorisation, metaphors or metonymies: instead, cultural conceptualisations and specific elements related to them are distributed heterogeneously.

In addition to this, Sharifian (2011: 4) notes that physical proximity of individuals is not the only precondition for establishing cultural groups. To that end, relative participation of individuals in each other's conceptual world can be another determinant of cultural groups. In today's world, in which we spend a lot of time online, in virtual space, the distinction that separates global and local is often blurred. There are no clear-cut boundaries between cultural groups and their knowledge; rather they are fuzzy, especially when elements of popular global culture find their way through the Internet

and English as the international language. Due to the fact that the process of globalisation in the modern world is characterised by limitless exchange of information, typically by the means of the English language, Anglo-American cultural conceptualisations associated with popular and global culture have easily found their way among the speakers of other languages. In that context, new hybrid forms of humour shared in CMC typically contain English and global, rather than culture-specific or local elements. Those who understand and use English as the international language and the references to popular culture easily become members of the global cultural group and identify as in-group members in the metaphorical game of humour, in which those who know are winners (Gruner 1999).

To illustrate humour based on cultural conceptualisations shared globally, we will use memes as a prototypical form of Internet humour and show how cultural conceptualisations, particularly cultural metaphors and metonymies depend on the balance of culture-specific and global elements of knowledge. Their interplay adds to the creation of new hybrid humorous genres in which elements of popular culture erase the fuzzy boundary between the global and local. For example, the Illustration 8 shows how intertextuality with popular culture is used in the combination of visual and textual: in this example it is used to describe emotions and attitudes people had during the Covid-19 pandemic all over the world in a humorous way.

First of all, being familiar with genre conventions of memes and the humorous intention related to them invokes a humorous interpretation of the given image, regardless of the fact whether it is embedded in a specific context or not. Not all memes are necessarily intended to be humorous, but their humorous potential is one of the most important factors that influence its popularity and circulation. Their adaptability is also very important, since they can be easily transformed to suit any kind of context. This feature depends on their clarity and simplicity, and their participatory nature, i.e., its re-contextualisation and appropriation (Shifman 2014).

Drawing on the classification of two types of incongruity proposed by Yus (2016, 2021), a discourse-centred resolution (which is the result of manipulating some of the hearer's inferential strategies) and frame-based incongruity, it seems that most memes combine both of these, particularly if they are effectively embedded in

the given context. If we view just the meme itself, as in the example given in Illustration 8, without the surrounding context of a CMC in which it might be shared, it becomes evident that the initial construction of the whole situation becomes reframed, or rather reconstructed to change the viewpoint and perspective that we use to infer the message.

This meme in Illustration 8 represents a collage of video and film stills, accompanied by textual messages that in fact depict different aspects of our lives affected by the Covid-19 pandemics and the corresponding emotional reactions to them. The actors depicted in the images, or rather the characters they represent, may or may not be familiar to everyone globally, which depends on generational and cultural factors, yet the way they are foregrounded triggers a humorous interpretation.
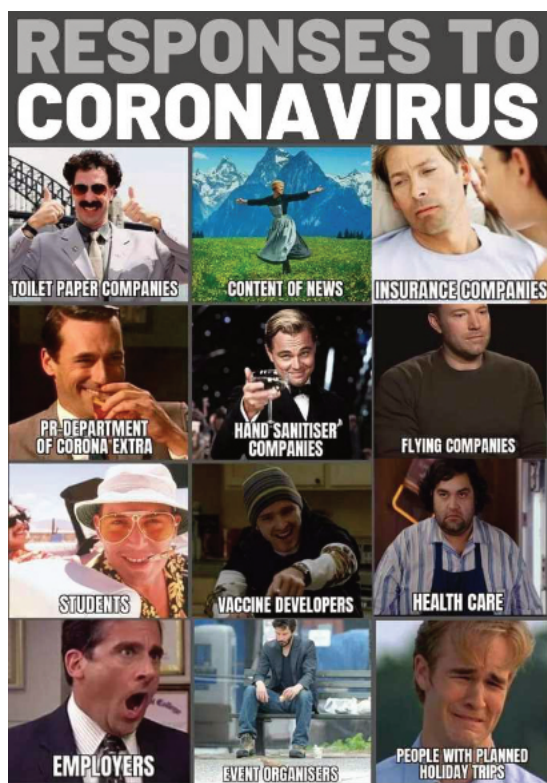

Illustration 8: *Responses to Coronavirus*
(source: https://kingmess.blogspot.com/2021/03/memes-about-coronavirus.html)

For instance, despite the fact that not all countries in the world had problems with toilet paper stocks in shops or the fact that people behaved irrationally while oversupplying it, this fact has been shared globally via news and it is known worldwide. Also, not all generations may be familiar with *Borat! Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazahstan* (2006) or Julie Andrews' singing in *The Sound of Music* (1965), but in the creation of a new meme, their images become a macro which gets its meaning in the overall context of the meme.

What creates humour in such an arrangement is the change of the viewpoint and figure-ground reversal, so the toilet paper becomes the top-priority in the emergency survival kit, but again, not in the sense of the final consumers who tried to stock it feverishly, but rather the companies that produce it and earn extra profit. Hence, the image and the message are combined to create the same effect, they are not opposed in this case. However, the viewpoint and the perspective are changed, and the whole situation is viewed and interpreted from a macro-level. Also, it becomes obvious that when different points of view get intersected we come to realize that the whole situation might be quite beneficial, despite the overall gloomy outlook. In addition to that, those recipients that recognise Borat (played by Sacha Baron Cohen) and the intertextuality with the mocumentary/black comedy in which this character made a parody of popular and Western culture in the USA get additional elements of knowledge activated in the process of recognising the humorous intention and getting a laugh.

This is in line with Yus's (2021: 132) "make-sense-frame" of what is going on in the meme, or in a joke, in which the initial interpretation and construction of meaning gets invalidated. Inference itself depends on selecting the foregrounded and salient elements and comprehending them against the backdrop of cultural conceptualisations that contain extralinguistic knowledge about the given concepts. As Sharifian (2017: 5) argues, this process represents reconceptualisation of cultural conceptualisations that leads to the process of globalisation and in this context it is a result of it, as the distinction between global and culture-specific becomes erased.

Memes are prototypical representatives of humorous forms transmitted and shared in computer-mediated communication,

along with short videos and gifs. They are constructed using at least two semiotic modes, visual and verbal to create the intended humorous effect. An Internet meme is a piece of culture, typically a joke, which gains influence through online transmission, integrating the visual part with or without a verbal message, as Davidson (2009: 122) has it. Shifman (2014: 14) describes them as digital items sharing common characteristics of content, form, and/or stance, which were created with awareness of each other, and were circulated, imitated, and/or, transformed via the Internet by anonymous users. Memes are extremely popular in the virtual space and in particular among the users of social networks as they can be easily created and used to distribute cultural information. They can take numerous forms, such as videos or edited images that have been taken from any element of popular culture or anything else that has certain meaning or value for the given cultural group. Laineste and Voolaid (2017: 27) use also the terms cultural item and cultural text to denote memes, or as they call them, folkloric objects on the internet. Grundlingh (2018) argues that memes can be regarded as speech acts as the internet users create them for different purposes.

Etymologically, meme is derived from the Ancient Greek word *mṆmṅma* which means "something imitated." According to Davidson (2009: 121), the term was coined in 1979 by Dawkins (1989) who used it in reference to the distinction between genes and nongenetic behaviour. In this book, a meme will be regarded as a cultural item that underlies a specific cultural conceptualisation of the speech community that shares it in order to achieve a specific perlocutionary effect, i.e., to make the recipient laugh.

According to Knobel and Lankshear (2007), the anomalous juxtapositions or incongruity is the main reason contributing to memes' circulation. This incongruity may lead to humour and represent some sort of incompatibility that the recipient will find as cognitively interesting and worth sharing. Yus (2020: 13) classifies this incongruity as second-order since it refers to "images taken from films or TV programmes (e.g. stills) that are later re-used (and hence re-contextualised) in the meme." Incongruity is not the only factor adding to their popularity. The fact that they exhibit playfulness, through the creative re-contextualisation and use of image macros (in terms of Dynel 2016), invites the recipients to be in-

volved in the game. Undoubtedly, this would turn out to be a futile feat if the recipients do not understand the language and the cultural context to which the meme refers.

To some extent, memes can be viewed as a specific type of image schemas in terms of Johnson (1987) and Lakoff (1987), as they often reflect some of these recurring experiential or grounded cognitive structures, such as container, part-whole, source-path-goal, attribute, process or force. In Cultural Linguistics, image schemas are also defined as cognitive structures or patterns of thought and understanding "that are readily imagined, perhaps as iconic images, and clearly related to physical (embodied) or social experiences" (Palmer 1996: 66). In her analysis of folk conceptualisations, Baranyiné Kóczy (2018: 16) describes emotion schemas as expressed in the form of image schemas, which are elemental in exploring folksongs, since, as she argues "these culturally imprinted scenarios certainly affect how certain cultural groups represent emotions, what emotional language they use" (Baranyiné Kóczy 2018: 17). Considering that argument and the fact that emotions should be viewed not only as cognitive phenomena but also as social by nature (Lutz 1987), we will try to illustrate how memes, as a hybrid humorous form trigger an emotional response with the combination of the visual and often verbal element. This is quite evident in memes shared during the Covid-19 pandemic, when the whole world was filled with fear due to a specific, new and precarious situation, and readily shared memes as a kind of relief and coping mechanism.

When the northern part of Italy entered the first Covid-19 lockdown of the West, in February 2020, the international media coverage featured news related to the number of the infected and the death toll, not just in Europe but worldwide, adding to global feeling of terror and insecurity. The lockdowns that were later on imposed in most many countries, as well as the switch to remote working and schooling led to social media thriving with Covid-19 humour, as later on explored in many studies (cf. Kertcher and Turin 2020, Dynel 2021, Murru and Vicari 2021, Norstrom and Sarna 2021, Predojević 2021a, 2021b).

In her analysis of memes as speech acts, Grundlingh (2017) outlines some prototypical types of memes, among which are image macros that contain images of animals with an added text that rep-

resents an example of constatives or directives in Grundligh's (2017: 14) taxonomy. However, what is more relevant here are the cultural conceptualisations on which these memes are based and which trigger the interpretation. These conceptualisations serve as a background against which humour is created and consequently shared both globally and locally.

For instance, the meme given below in Illustration 9 shows one of the popular animal memes shared during the Covid-19 pandemics in 2020, representing the most important themes of the year 2020.
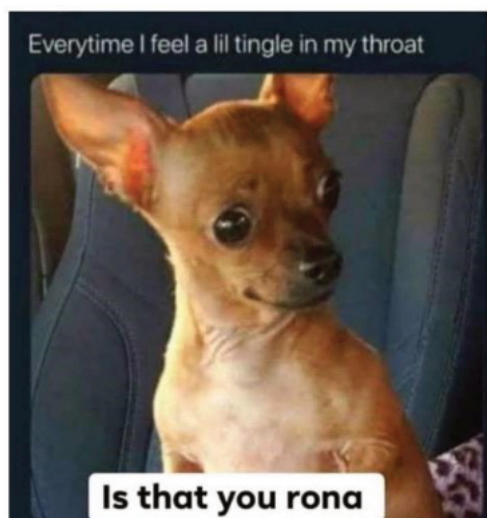
Illustration 9: *Is that you Rona?*

(source: https://shutupandtakemymoney.com/every-time-i-feel-a-little-tingle-in-my-throat-is-that-you-rona-coronavirus-meme/;)

In the first place, this example is based on the cultural metaphor PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS. This conceptual and cultural metaphor is derived from the cultural model The Great Chain of Being (as described in Lakoff and Turner 1989: 166-170) that concerns kinds of beings and their properties as well as their positions in a scale of forms. Certainly not a novelty, this cultural metaphor has been entailed in writings of classical authors such as Pluto and Aristotle, and later on it became a part of the Western culture worldview. Accordingly, humans are believed to be higher-order beings in comparison with animals, and for instance, dogs are higher-order beings in comparison with in-

sects. By the means of such cultural cognition, the recipient views the animal as a human being, metaphorically mapping the salient and foregrounded elements of the source domain onto the target.

If we apply cultural schema that accounts for the event schema related to being sick (contracting a disease, developing symptoms, feeling bad) using the triggers given in the text (some tingle in the throat), the meme given in the Illustration 9 features anxiety and fear felt by each person, especially at the onset of the pandemic when they searched for some specific symptoms they might have. The shortened form of the name "(Co)rona" metaphorically represents the person, leading to the interpretation of someone stealthily appearing. The incongruity in the meme is based on the subtly interwoven visual and textual modes, as if the frighten small pet was scanning its body for symptoms and then addressing Rona, as a person, and not uttering the taboo word. Metaphorically conceptualising Covid-19 as a person is very common in many languages and cultures in different types of discourse, as recent reearch indicates (COVID-19 AS AN ENEMY cf. Fotherby 2020, Semino 2021, Taylor and Kidgel 2021). This humorous effect may be explained by superiority and relief theories of humour: in the meme we may recognise our own behaviour, yet laugh at the fact that some are more scared and frightened than the others, and in that way give vent to our own anxiety.

Extending the global to include some local and culture-specific elements of knowledge, the American stand up comedian, Andrew Schultz, combined different types of verbal and multimodal humour in a short comedy series featured on Netflix, called *Shultz saves America: the pandemic unmasked our pitiful politicians* (2020). The episode deals with the ways the USA coped with the Covid-19 pandemic (global threat vs. specific reactions) and from the perspective of Cultural Linguistics it is interesting to see how the author combined global elements of knowledge well-known to everyone with some culture-specific elements related to popular culture in the USA. Some of these well-known elements that are entailed in the cultural conceptualisation shared globally are the measures taken to prevent the spread of the disease, the problems related to massive vaccination and the (un)successful interventions of politicans and authorities worldwide to cope with the pandemic.

Yet locally, in the USA, some specific elements tied to the pandemic are shared and known (and not necessarily outside the

USA) among cultural groups living there. and then Shultz uses these elements and recontextualises them to criticise and make fun of the USA political response to the outbreak of the pandemic, and the way it was handled. One of these elements is the information shared in the news in spring 2020 that Tom Hanks and his wife Rita Wilson were diagnosed with coronavirus (https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/11/entertainment/tom-hanks-rita-wilson-coronavirus/index.html), almost at the very onset of the pandemic and one of the first celebrities to go down with it. As much as this news was reported in other parts of the world, it was certainly immediately dismissed in the sea of other more relevant information. However, for Shultz and other anonymous meme creators, who relied on the fact that an average American will know Tom Hanks and the films in which he starred, intertextuality served as a source for creating different puns and wordplay (used in Shultz's comedy show) or as a visual background to enhance the humorous effect.

Similarly in the example given below (Illustration 10), the anonymous author draws on the assumed knowledge the recipient of the meme posses in reference to the plots and titles of films in which Tom Hanks starred.
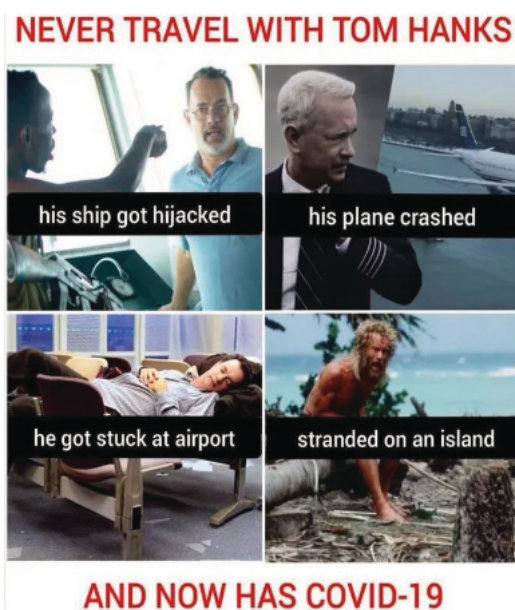

Illustration 10: *Never travel with Tom Hanks*
(source: https://knowyourmeme.com/photos/2065207-tom-hanks;)

Regardless of the origin, the humorous effect in memes is intended to be easily recognisable and appreciated, as Yus (2012: 271) argues in reference to jokes. For that reason, it is important that the creator of the meme relies on the prediction of interpretative strategies and inferential steps, which, in the account proposed by Yus (2012, 2016), are part of the hearer's/recipient's overall relevance-seeking strategy or mutual cognitive environment (Yus 2016: 157). It could be added that the relevance-seeking strategy is closely related to the interpretation in the given context, in terms of Tsakona's (2021) "contextualised" humour theory, but it is also related to the interpretation in terms of cultural conceptualisations shared by the cultural group and speech community. For that reason, the textual part of the meme usually contains text in English, and typically, as Dynel (2021) points out, the textual part contains grammatical/orthographic or spelling inconsistencies (as in the examples given above) reflecting colloquial language and world Englishes. The use of English in memes that are shared in other, non-English-speaking communities and cultural groups is a result of glocalisation (Sharifian 2010: 137) or appropriating and localising English in the given speech community. In that way a meme is intended to find its way and adds to spreading and localising global popular culture. As a result, online meme culture has become glocalised, allowing people to share a laugh and comment on local topics, but also universal themes reflecting at the same time global culture with all of its elements (Prodanović Stankić 2021: 296).

On the other hand, humorous genres and forms that are based on live performance rely more on culture-specific elements and universal humorous scripts, such as ethnic humour (as discussed above), politics, stupidity, sexuality, and male-female relationships. These genres are for example short videos, stand up comedy, humorous sketches and TV shows. For instance, when it comes to stand up comedians, they represent "individual performers who plant themselves in front of their listeners with their microphones by telling a succession of funny stories, one-liners or short jokes, and anecdotes which are often called 'bits', to make their audience laugh" Schwarz (2010: 17). They perform humour in local bars and other venues, typically combining local, culture specific elements with universal scripts in order to produce humour and have their au-

dience laugh. As Yus (2005: 317) plausibly argues, the audience is psychologically motivated to attend these performances as they know they will be about lifestyle issues in humorous terms and are ready to test their own view of the world against the comedian's. Also, "the ritualized activity of attending stand-up performances provides an effort-saving environment for the transmission of cultural representations" (Yus 2005: 317).

Even though Mintz (1985: 71) states that stand up comedy is the oldest, most universal, basic form of humour expression, in terms of performing in front of the audience, in many European countries this genre is not that that much popular and widespread. It seems rather that this genre is more typical in the English-speaking world than in, say, Serbia, which is even reflected in the fact that Serbian uses the English word to denote the genre (cf. Ljubić and Majer 2018, Vučić Đekić 2022 on stand up comedy in Croatia). In this monologic form that depends a lot on the reactions of the audience, the stand up comedian needs to use different triggers to activate underlying cultural conceptualisations that their audience shares in order to create the intended humorous effect. Of course, sometimes this represents a double-edged sword as comedians may "over-estimate the shareability of their idiosyncratic representation of a particular state of affairs and hence produce a message that is not interpretable within the shared background knowledge" (Lau et al. 2001: 361).

In order to illustrate the use of culture-specific elements in the process of drawing on the shared knowledge and common cultural conceptualisations of some speech communities, we will use some parts of the monologues performed by the brilliant Irish stand-up comedian, Dave Allen. In his shows, Dave Allen based his humour on humorous observations and comments on death, religion, relationships, and everyday life. The excerpts given below (example 19 and 20) are taken from his shows aired on BBC from 1971 to 1986, and nowadays they can easily be found on YouTube:

> (19) The English are the most illogical nation in the world. And you're guided by the most illogical notices in the world. For example, in this theatre here tonight, the audience that are here are informed by the management

that when you leave here, you must leave by the exit, only [audience laughs]. Now, I'm Irish, I don't have to be told that... [audience laughs] "The solid wall gap"... I go for the gap [audience laughs]. (...) I actually saw once a door which said "this door is not an exit" [mimics puzzlement] [audience laughs]. (...) I saw in Manchester, on the outside of a door, a notice which actually said "this door is neither an exit nor an entrance, and must be kept closed at all times" [audience laughs] Why don't you brick the bloody thing up and forget about it? [audience laughs]
(Taken from Dave Allen's BBC1 show, simply called 'Dave Allen' as broadcast in January 1990. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XBHkNV36Wbc).

(20) A very important part of the Irish way of life is death. See**,** if anybody else anywhere else in the world dies that's the end of it, they're dead**,** but in Ireland when somebody dies we lay them out and watch them for a couple of days [audience laughs]. It's called a wake. And it's great, it's a party, a send off. [audience laughs] The fella is laid out on the table and there's drinking and dancing and all the food you can eat and all of your friends come from all over the place and they all stand around the wake table looking at you with a glass in their hands looking at you and they say "Here's to your health". [audience laughs].
The terrible thing about dying over in Ireland is you miss your own wake. It's the best day of your life. [audience laughs] You've paid for everything and you can't join in. [audience laughs]
Mind you if you did you'd be drinking on your own.
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mt7h3CghJEg)
(performed on 'The Late Late Show', broadcast on 6 October 1979)

As much as these monologues are scripted, written and performed in advance with a specific aim to create a humorous effect, they also

resemble spontaneous language use in the way that they represent what is funny in the given speech community and which cultural elements are salient and foregrounded. In the given context humour is used to instantiate cultural conceptualisations of the speech community and it is a way to transmit and share cultural conceptualisations associated with the foregrounded elements in the performance. In the example (19) that is centred around absurdity, or rather stupidity, as reflected in the use of public signs and notes, which can be regarded as a kind of universal humorous script, the comedian uses humour to differentiate between the Irish and British, despite the implication that by using the same language they are equal. Simultaneously, he plays with the audience creating in- and out-group humour by distinguishing himself out of the group of people who just follow irrational directions.

In a similar vein, in the example (20), which classifies as dark humour, typically preferred in English (cf. Bucaria 2008), Allen creates a paradox from the very beginning ("A very important part of the Irish way of life is death"), opposing cultural schemas related to celebrations and death and mourning, and then resolving this opposition in a twist ("It's the best day of your life: You've paid for everything and you can't join in"). In fact, he uses the traditional cultural schema and reconceptualises it turning it into a creative metaphor by presenting a wake as a party. By talking about a traditional cultural practice with mockery, he satirizes death and the way it is treated in the given culture.

In the example (21), a famous Serbian actor and comedian, Dragoljub Lubičić Mićko, relies more on linguistic mechanisms to activate associations, cultural metaphors and categorization that are specific for this speech community. In this example, his performance is based on the impersonation of the Serbian Crown Prince, the last heir-presumptive to the defunct throne of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. As a claimant to the abolished throne, the Crown Prince came back to Serbia from exile, hoping to re-create a constitutional monarchy and re-establish traditional and national values and customs. The comedian brilliantly impersonates the broken Serbian the Prince speaks, and in essence, his errors with grammatical gender, pronunciation, word stress and word choice are used to play with different meanings these choices trigger. Of course, these errors are

exaggerated so as to foreground associations related to taboo words, topical political affairs and social problems. The translation given below the transcript in Serbian represents a free translation of the content, so that the reader just gets a rough idea about the meaning of the text, even though many elements of word play are lost.

(21) Dobro veče. Ja sam došla danas da kažem vam koliko važno je da je dobro prošla pica tekst, piza, piza test, koja daje podatke o tome kakvi su đakovi u školama. I važno je da je gospodin ministarstvo Kvarcović bio vrlo hepi, vrlo zadovoljan, što znači da je sve u redu je mnogo odlično sa znanjem koje imaju đakovi i mučenici. To znači da sistem obrezivanja u Srbiji je dobar je. Srbja uvek je bila prvo brmvrm mnogo usmena zemlja sa desetercom, a tek je to posle postala je i pismena zemlja kad je došao Dositej Obradović Boško i Vuk Stefanović Jeremić. Ja dugo sam živela napolju i tamo se pravil mnogo da se služim sa jezikom sa srpskim. Ali mene nije me mrzilo da svaki dan puno radim, da to bude još bolje, da ubodem ponekad, da znam sve promena po mladežima, da zanm šta je gramatematika i šta je palatalapalalatizacija. Kad me žena me probudi u pola ponoći da preslišava me ja mogu da ispričam celu fejsbuk ovaj azbuku. ABVGDĐ, ABĐ, ABVGNJ, ABKNJ, ma sve od slova A do V eto. Zato hoćem da pozdravim naše prosvetljene radnike, zato što uče decama da budu opismenjena, da budu f, funk, funkcio, fujkujnomcionalno, to zanči da mogu pravo iz škole da idu na neku funkicu. Je l se kaže funkica?

(21) Good evening. I came a lot here, I came here to tell you how important it is that the pizza test went very well, pizza text, Pisa test that gives insight into our disciples' performance in schools. And it is of utmost importance that Mr Ministry Kvarcović was happy-go-lucky and very pleased, which means that everything is perfectly fine with the knowledgement of our primary school disciples and martyrs. That indictes a very knowledgable circumcisional system in Serbia. Serbia has always been

a very equivocal, colloquail, oral state with oral tradi-
tion, and later it became a-literate, a-cultured country. I
lived abroad for a long period of time and there I as-
sumed fluency in Serbian as a father tongue. However,
I was never fed up with working diligently to do
progress and strive to perform better, so that I dab and
get it right, all case infections, all grammarians, allitera-
tions and transformations. When my wife wakes me up
in the middle of the night, I am capable of retelling the
whole Facebook and letter ABC book. ABCD, ABCG,
ABCU, every sinlge letter from A to X. For that reason,
I would like to praise all educatorians, for they educate
our children and discipline them to be f, funk, function-
ally literate, which means they can get a party function
the moment they leave school.

These performances and sketches discussed above represent
creative manipulations of language use and social practices, to
ridicule and mock common beliefs, values and norms, shedding a
different light on them. In that sense they do not represent staple
strategies found in conventional jokes, but rather clever observa-
tions that are easily recognised by the audience, as many people
have probably shared the same ideas or views, but were not able to
vocalise them in such a creative way. Using that method, the come-
dians draw on the well known and shared beliefs and add a new per-
spective to everything. Still, as much as they undermine or criticise
some of the practices or behaviours, these cultural elements remain
relatively stable (for instance, the practice surrounding death in Ire-
land or the importance of language for a national or cultural identity
in Serbian). In the next section, we will try to show to which extent
these relatively stable elements are transformed in multilingual in-
teractions or in blending more languages and cultures.

3.4. Code switching in humour

The aim of this section is to explore code-switching in the process of
creating humour in inter- and intracultural interactions. The use of

more than one language in any type of humorous discourse has not received much of scholarly attention (Woolard 1988, McClure and McClure 1988, Stølen 1992, Siegel 1995, Delabastita 2002, 2005, Aranda 2014, Beers Fägersten 2017, Dore 2019, Salem, E., Jarrah, M., & Alrashdan, I. 2020, Zabalbeascoa 2021), despite the fact that in most multilingual and multicultural contemporary societies it represents a frequent phenomenon: in real face-to-face interactions, CMC, and in the scripted dialogues used in telecinematic discourse. Moreover, humour is often created and (mis)understood in conversations among language learners or non-native speakers and native speakers, due to the lack of adequate fluency and good command of the language (Davies 2003, Bell 2007), but we will leave this discussion for Chapter 5, in which humour will be analysed in the context of education. Here the focus is on the use of another language, mostly intentionally, to create humour or invoke a humorous frame.

If we start from the premise that in any communicative interaction there is a high expectation that all interlocutors will keep using one language, mutually understandable to each participant in the communicative event, then it is worth exploring what kind of consequences the violation of this expectation has on communication and the social and cultural context surrounding it. Of course, in order to violate this norm and assign the intended meaning to the violation, violation has to be shared and recognised as such. Negotiating any kind of meaning is possible only if the given switches stand out in the language used. In the relevant literature on language contact, code-switching is often used alongside with the concepts of code-mixing and borrowing, analysed from various angles, however, the approach taken here will be mainly functionalist and in the context of synchronous humorous discourse. We will disregard here the diachronic perspective, which is more relevant to code-mixing and borrowing, as it leads to structural changes in a language.

Given the above, we need to focus on the motivation behind the use of more than one language intentionally and focus not only on the language as a system, but rather on the overall context and cultural cognition. Providing that the focus is solely on words, other textual features are often overlooked. When code-switching is used as a stylistic device or to create and/or enhance the intended humorous effect, then the assumptions related to the prospective recipient

of the message are put in focus, particularly in the instances of on-line sharing of digital humour. To illustrate bilingual puns and wordplay, we can use examples (22-24) given below:

> (22) No matter how kind you are, German children are kinder.
> (23) The Englishman who bought the German a bottle of wine and told him it was a gift. So he tipped it down the toilet.
> (24) We *kehr* for you (an advertisement of the Berlin's waste management company).

These examples are based on exploiting lexemes which have the same form, but different meaning in English and German ('gift/Gift'), or the same morphological form and different word class ('kind' vs. 'K/kinder'). Similar examples were used at the beginning of this book (Illustration 1: Philosopher's memes) in which word-play was based on proper nouns and their phonological similarity to other word class. Of course, this is possible due to the fact that Eng-lish and German contain words of the same origin, as they are fam-ily-related, so wordplay is 'recognisable' and can easily be traced back to their roots. On the other hand, the other example (24) seems to rely on the assumption that people living in Berlin (primarily German-speaking inhabitants, but also people of other linguistic backgrounds) will have sufficient knowledge of English to under-stand the message, and if they are not native speakers of German to be able to relate phonological similarity of the verb '*kehren*' (in Engl. 'sweep') and 'to care (about)'.

Code switching can be defined following Siegel (1995: 107), as "changing between two language varieties which are perceived by their speakers to be different languages or dialects." It is seen as a boundary-maintaining strategy, or a mechanism used for negotiat-ing and defining social roles and identities as well as role-relation-ships in terms of in-group and out-group humour. Needless to say, the interlocutors have to share the cultural conceptualisations that are associated with the linguistic resources used.

Eastman (1992: 2) views code-switching as a typical urban language contact phenomenon, since in urban settings people from

diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds regularly interact, and in the course of these interactions it is very likely that material from different languages will be embedded in these conversations. For that reason it is important to distinguish between the uses of mixed languages regularly from those uses that are occasional. In the first case code-switching represents a norm or an unmarked choice, to use the classification offered by Myers-Scotton (1983). On the other hand, when another language is invoked intentionally, it is often a sign that a certain position is negotiated, or that it serves a specific function. In these cases use of code-switching represents a marked choice with a phatic function.

Pragmatically, these instances of shifts from one into another language convey a certain "contextualisation cue" in Gumperz's terms (1982), or a framing device that enables certain implication of the message in the context of the communicative event. If we view this switch as a signal to interpret it as a signal that some jocular message is implied, then it represents a humorous key (Kotthoff 2006). In pragmatic humour research, humour itself is also viewed as violation of Grice's Cooperative Principle, though socially approved for the sake of amusement. Thanks to humorous key that signals this violation, the participants in the given communicative event interpret the message as humorous. In a similar vein, code switching may be regarded as a humorous key, but also as means of creating humour.

For example, Stølen (1992) explored code-switching used in Danish-American community and found that it is used as a contextualisation cue and humorous key that marks creative use of language and humour. In his study on code switching in Fijian, Siegel (1995) concludes that code switching has three functions: (1) it is used as a signal for joking, (2) the switching itself may be considered humorous and (3) the language or variety to which one switches may be used for humorous mockery or parody. Siegel (1995) describes the typical cultural schema in Fijian in which Hindu is used specifically for joking in conversations among family members or close friends. This research certainly stands out in terms of the language pair, since it seems that in all combinations, English as a lingua franca is typically present due to its spread through popular culture. For instance, Beers Fägersten (2017, 2020)

analysed a selection of Swedish comic strips in which the Swedish practice of swearing in English is frequently used. Her (Beers Fägersten 2017: 176) findings indicate that the use of swear word in English in the Swedish context invokes a playful frame and that English is the preferred language for such a choice. English is the preferred language of choice even in cultures and languages that do not belong to the same family, such as Jordanian, as Salem et al. show (2020). The findings of their research (Salem et al. 2020: 5) indicate that switching to English for humorous effects in the speech of young bilingual people in Jordan is based on (1) exploiting the elements of their native (Arabic) culture, (2) creating a stylistic effect by challenging the context-appropriate selection of the bilingual repertoire, and (3) creating a communicative strategy for establishing and maintaining solidarity among the participants.

Sometimes, it is not a different language that is used in code-switching, but rather a language variety, most notably a dialect. Apte (1985: 190) points out that in most societies there is a particular language which is considered to be "suitable" for parody, and it is often an informal or low variety. It can be added that this attributing a comical status to a given dialect becomes a kind of habit in the speech community and cultural group, leading to stereotypes and deeply entrenched cultural schemas and cultural categorisation that are then shared and spread by the speakers. For instance, many case studies show how media discourse prefers the use of the standard variety to a dialect, regardless of the content broadcast, and if a variety or dialects are used, it represents a stylistic and often humorous undertone (Archakis et al. 2014, Prodanović Stankić 2020, 2021).

In all of these examples, the use of a language variety or a different language metonymically stands for the speakers of that language and cultural conceptualisations associated with that speech community and cultural (and/or ethnic) group. As a metonymy, it either has a referential function or serves as a basis for further metaphorical extensions that activate the cultural conceptualisations. This mechanism is typically exploited in media and telecinematic discourse as it provides more resources to create humour, either by the very switch used as a signal, or the way the given variety or language is rendered.

One of the well known examples in English, is the British sit-com, *'Allo 'Allo!,* broadcast by BBC from 1982 to 1992[6]. Even though all characters speak English, the series is set in France during the World War 2, so their speech contains some idiosyncratic and specific features characterizing their nationalities (French, Italian or German). Each of them is easily recognisable and understandable to the target viewer (the British audience in the first place, even though the sitcom was enormously popular in Europe), since they create a benevolent parody of some well-known stereotypes using very creative puns, stylistic strategies and paralinguistic features that are accompanying their wordplay. Due to unique paralinguistic elements exploited for the sake of comedy, it is difficult to cite some examples, however, the famous "good moaning" which became the signature of the character officer Crabtree, or Herr Flick's pronunciation are still exploited in memes shared nowadays (Illustration 11).

Illustration 11: Herr Flick *'Allo 'Allo!*
(source: http://www.quickmeme.com/meme/3p564i;)

In essence, the scriptwriters, and then the actors played with cultural conceptualisations their speech community has in reference to the

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[6] https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0086659/. Almost all episodes can be found on YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OtQxugFYQqs)

given nationalities, rendering all that in a successful comedy. Linguistic mechanisms serve as triggers that activate cultural cognition used for interpreting these utterances. For instance, in the overall context of the series, the famous "good moaning" seems to be a mispronunciation, resembling the French pronunciation of vowels; however, in English it is a lexeme with a completely different meaning, semantically and pragmatically opposed to the expectation of the listener.

It has to be mentioned that this mechanism of creating humorous effect is not a new one, Delabastita (2002, 2005) discusses Shakespeare's use of different languages as means of humour production and comic relief through the exploitation of national and regional stereotypes or wordplay. The same applies to other forms of telecinematic discourse, e.g. popular sitcoms and comedies either in English (cf. *Only Fools and Horses* and Del Boy's use of French, or use of broken Hungarian or Slovene in Serbian comedies (Prodanović Stankić 2016). This mechanism should be a good source of inspiration for translators, as Zabalbeascoa (2021: 189) points out, in their attempts to find creative solutions, particularly in audiovisual translation, in which variations within verbal transposition may turn out to be quite successful in monolingual stylistic approach, and certainly an alternative to pure mechanical translation.

Even though translating humour will be elaborated on in Chapter 4 of this book in more detail, some issues relevant to multilingualism, humour and global and culture specific elements will be touched upon here, as they are important for the present discussion. Namely, in the attempt to mirror multilingualism and heterogeneity of the world we live in, and of course, reach wider audience, media and telecinematic discourse often reflect multilingualism and code-switching, which certainly represents quite a challenge for audiovisual translation. Traditional and new on-demand streaming platforms, such as Netflix, Hulu and others compete against each other while trying to win over as many viewers as possible, and in that context audiovisual translation (AVT) plays a significant role, regardless of the format. At the same time, telecinematic discourse presents a very powerful vehicle for spreading cultural cognition of the various speech communities.

In order to get a better insight into the ways multilingualism is rendered in different AVT formats, De Bonis (2015) analysed how

an originally bilingual film was translated into French, Italian and Spanish (dubbed versions) and English (subtitled translation). His (De Bonis 2015) research indicates that in telecinematic discourse multilingualism functions as 1) realistic rendering of the linguistic situation represented, 2) a source of conflict and 3) a means of creating confusion. These functions can be used in different genres, however, since creating confusion is a typical feature of comedies, (on condition that it is resolved amicably and with a comic relief), we will focus here only it.

Confusion in comedies is often found alongside some form of misunderstanding, and intercultural or interlingual barriers are typical sources of these misunderstandings. In many cultures there is a common belief that a person who does not speak the given language will understand it if the speaker raises his/her voice. Confusion typically results from the interactions of the characters and/or the viewer's perception of the plot (Wahl 2008, Bleichenbacher 2008). A good example for this is the USA film *Everything is Illuminated*[7] (directed by Liev Schreiber in 2005), which is set in Ukraine. The plot revolves around a young Jewish American man, Jonathan, who is on a quest for his personal history. An agency based in Odessa, which specializes in helping Jewish expats discover their past are trying to help him. The representatives of the agency, his guides in Ukraine, are the old man (Grandpa) who is the driver and his grandson, a fan of western pop culture (Alex) and a translator during the trip. For example, in one scene in the film, the three main characters are travelling through the countryside for hours and the following conversation takes place:

(25) Jonathan: Are we close?
Alex (is addressing the Granpa in Ukrainian) (subtitles in English): The Jew wants to know if we are close.
Grandpa (is talking to Alex in Ukrainian): Tell him to shut the hell up!
Alex to Jonathan: Grandfather says we are very proximal. He says it will not be long till we get to super way to Lutsk.
Jonathan: He's from there?

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[7] https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0404030/

Alex to Grandpa (in Ukrainian): Are you from Lutsk? (subtitles in English)
Grandpa (angrily in Ukrainian): Perhaps I can stop the car and you two can f…yourselves to Lutsk! (subtitles in English)
Jonathan to Alex: What did he say?
Alex: Grandfather says you should look out of the window at the primal countryside (in English)
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1S-FeGj8IQ)

Illustration 12: *A screenshot from "Everything is Illuminated" (2005)*
(source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1S-FeGj8IQ;)

English is the main narrative language in the film, while the secondary language is Ukrainian, most of the time used to mock the American man, so that he does not understand that he is the target. In these instances, he is laughed at since he is "a stupid, but rich" American, a foreigner. All of this ridicule and mocking is mistranslated, or rather corrected in Alex's translations into English, which he provides to Jonathan. At the same time, Alex is using a kind of broken English with unexpected word choices and pronunciation that sounds funny. The viewers are in a privileged position in the communicative event and the given context, having access to all information. They can hear the dialogues in English, and read the subtitles in which utterances in Ukrainian are translated into English. In that sense, both the Ukrainians and the viewers are in a superior po-

sition, since they know and understand all what is being said (sharing culture-specific conceptualisations), and hence, they can easily laugh at the ignorant target.

Last but not least, it should be mentioned that some conceptualisations one speech community has about different languages can also become the source of humour, or they can be blended in one hybrid form, leading to interplay of blended languages and cultures. This is illustrated using the threads taken from CMC shared on social media (Illustration 14), in which lack of knowledge, in this case French is an object of ridicule.

Illustration 13: *French is Spanish in cursive*
(source: https://www.buzzfeed.com/andyneuenschwander/memes-for-french-speakers;)

What all of these examples illustrate is that code-switching becomes an umbrella term for different kinds of language contact phenomena, as it surfaces in various formats, media, and/or interaction. There it reflects not just personal goals, intentions, or emotional stance of the participants in the communicative event, but also the larger social, cultural and political context in which these exchanges occur. For producers of humorous content in media industry or content creators, the use of different languages may represent a useful and creative strategy, and a way of a more realistic representation of

the multilingual and multicultural world we live in. It gives an additional impetus and more resources for creative language play, hopefully turning a source of misunderstanding into a common ground for sharing benevolent humour.

3.5. Blending languages and cultures in humour

Mixing and combining languages can be expressed not only on discourse and sentence level, but also on micro level of morphological, graphological and/or phonological structure. These playful combinations yield some blended, hybrid structures that can be traced back to disparate languages and cultures. As with other types of creating ambiguity and language play, the producer or creator of such blended form needs to assume the extent to which they can go in order to get a recognisable unit that will achieve the intended effect. Most commonly these blended units are found in written form, as this facilitates comprehension. Also, English, as the global lingua franca, represents a "communicative medium of choice" (Seidlhofer 2011: 7) that lends itself easily to being used in these blended units with another language.

Serbia is no exception in terms of the global influences of English. Within the highly influential three-circle model Kachru (1997) proposed, Serbia would be placed in the expanding circle of countries, since English has never had an administrative status, but it was an obligatory part of formal education, starting from primary school to higher education. Prćić (2014a, b) rightly argues that English is "*the* nativised foreign language in Serbia" with specific features that characterise its peculiar form and use. It has been written extensively about the influence of English on Serbian on the lexical and semantic level (Panić-Kavgić 2006, Filipović 2006, Prćić 2011), or the pragmatic one (Mišić-Ilić and Lopičić 2011, Kavgić 2013, Mišić-Ilić 2014, 2017). Yet, when we shift the focus from the strictly linguistic features of that influence, there is the question related to extralinguistic knowledge and cultural conceptualisations: which cultural elements do we associate with English as a lingua franca?

Sharifian and Sadeghpour (2021: 5-6) state that the widespread global influence of English has become localised, as certain cultural conceptualisations encoded in various features of the Eng-

lish language become reconceptualised and selectively adopted in the local contexts. Consequently, the glocalisation of English has impacted cultural conceptualisations of speakers of other languages. In this section we will discuss some examples that show how knowledge of English and familiarity with Anglophone and popular culture is included in general Serbian background knowledge and cultural cognition.

Blending of Serbian and English is often used for creative marketing and advertising purposes, particularly for names of shops, pubs, and restaurants. In order to stand out in the sea of similar names and target their products on younger buyers, shop owners frequently use (Rasulić 2008) blends, which, in this case combine two languages, two scripts or even more than one semiotic mode. For instance examples given below (26) illustrate such names:

(26) Bread i pita (a bakery) (in Engl. 'Bread and pie')
   Jадац – shop (a shop selling poultry products) (in Engl. 'A wishbone shop')
   McChevap (a grill restaurant selling kebabs)
   MekBurek (a bakery)

These examples show that as long as the blended input spaces and linguistic elements are recognisable and/or transparent enough for the recipient, they serve the purpose of creating a certain cognitive 'glitch' or incongruity with the overall context. For the sake of analysis, they can be deconstructed using the theoretical framework of Fauconnier and Turner (2002: 93-101) who describe the processes that lead to compression of input data and further recursion of blends that become new input spaces.

The input spaces in these examples are in two languages, with the aim of using the graphological representation to trigger the activation of extralinguistic knowledge related to it. For instance, in Serbian, the English prefix Mc, or to be more precise, etymologically, the Scottish or Irish patronymic, is typically associated with the internationally popular fast food restaurant. Hence its frequent occurrence in Serbian names in which this prefix is added either to a Serbian name of the local dish, as in the examples given above: 'burek' (in Engl. cheese pie), or 'chevap', which is a kind of international transcription of the local name for kebab (Serb. 'ćevap').

Sometimes these hybrid combinations result from more than one semiotic mode mapping their elements in the generic space and finally in the blend, adding to reconceptulisation of some concepts, or in case of humour, making fun of them. In the example discussed in Prodanović Stankić (2021: 306), given here in Illustration 15, it can be seen how the cultural schema related to celebrating Christmas in traditional Orthodox families is re-conceptualised and parodied.

Namely, this cultural schema entails brining a large branch of an oak tree in the house (instead of the typically western fir) on Christmas Eve. This old traditional element, which became promoted newly after the civil war in the 1990s and the rise of right-wing national political parties, is in this meme highlighted by the current Claimant to the abolished throne of the precursor Kingdom of Serbia.

The textual caption is an interlingual blend and contains an emergent blend that triggers a new re-conceptualisation. It illustrates his broken Serbian, which is publically laughed at. This poor command of Serbian is here opposed to some cultural metaphors and metonymy widespread in Serbia. Your mother tongue stands for your (national) identity and metaphorically speaking, language is conceptualised as foundation/construction (cf. Bogetić 2017, 2018, Filipović Kovačević 2021).

Illustration 14: *'Biče gud'*
(source: https://vukajlija.com/forum/teme/11282-groblje-postera?strana=10;)

This textual blend of English and Serbian slang can be understood by the speakers of Serbian, since they can easily recognise the words in English, even though they are misspelt, or rather, spelt in the way they are pronounced, according to the rules in Serbian. Opposing the local and global elements of culture and two languages is intended to create humorous effect and ridicule both the extreme national and traditional voices, but also the widespread use of English in the local context even in situations and contexts in which there is no need for it.

All of these examples indicate that humour shared online or in public sphere often represents an emergent glocalised and blended culture. Such humour contains either intertextual references to popular culture or exploits English as lingua franca, even when it is created and intended for the recipients who are not necessarily speakers of English. The use of English alongside with another language or within it typically serves as an efficient trigger for activating various cultural conceptualisations. These conceptualisations are either renegotiated or re-conceptualised so that the old local ones get blended or adapted to make space for global ones.

4. HUMOUR IN TRANSLATION

In this chapter we will deal with humour translation and its relevance for both Translation and Humour Studies. Starting first with the concept of translation equivalence, we will move on to a brief overview of the relevant literature and then to some practical considerations related to translation strategies and procedures used in humour translation. We will argue that cultural conceptualisations can serve as a tertium comparationis in translating humour and other types of language use that rely on the interplay of linguistic and cultural elements. We will illustrate this argument using a specific example of a satirical novel translated from German into English and Serbian.

4.1. Linguistic and cultural (un)translatability

Translation and technology represent indispensable tools to propel humour on its travels across the planet in different languages and cultures. Yet, in Translation Studies, there is a common belief that humour and translation are not on friendly terms (cf. Venuti 1995, Chiaro 2005; 2010) for some obvious reasons. A very illustrative example of the complex issue related to humour translation and the things that can go wrong in an intercultural and multilingual communicative event is a globally well known example of a failed joke, which can be seen on YouTube[8] (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlIrI80og8c). In essence, the video shows the Australian TV host starting an interview with Dalai Lama with a simple joke:

The Dalai Lama walks into a pizza shop. "Can you make me one with everything?"[9]

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[8] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlIrI80og8c

[9] The Dalai Lama walks into a pizza shop. "Can you make me one with everything?". The chef laughs, makes the pizza and serves it. "That will be $14.95". The Dalai Lama hands the man $20 and the cash register is slammed closed". "My change?", "Ah, change must come from within!"

While the interpreters were trying to translate the joke, it soon became evident in the video that the Dalai Lama did not understand it. The host also used gestures to indicate a circle and refer nonverbally to the ambiguity and the polysemous meaning of "one" in English, but then he burst out laughing (at his own expense), as he obviously realised that Dalai Lama, despite his evident cooperation did not get the joke. This failed attempt at joke telling can be attributed to several factors, which are all illustrative of the complexity of humour at work in a multilingual and multicultural situation.

Needless to say, the interpreters might be blamed in this situation for not being able to keep the referential ambiguity on which the joke is based in the target language and find an equivalent for "one", indicating both the number and a state of being in a kind of spiritual unison with some divinity. Considering the cognitive strain involved in simultaneous interpreting, and the need to provide a quick solution, this is no wonder. On the other hand, this particular joke would not work in written translation in many languages either, since it would be important to have morphological forms that are congruent (for example in German or Serbian in terms of gender, case and number):

*"Kannst du mir/mich eine/eins mit allem machen?"
*"Možete li mi napraviti jednu/ jedno sa svim?"

Another prominent issue involved here is the pragmatic dimension. It seems that the hearer also failed to get this joke due to pragmatic and culture-bound reasons. It may be perfectly acceptable for the Australian host to relax the atmosphere at the beginning of an interview with some humour, and to bond with the interlocutor and the audience that will view the interview on the screen. This can be attributed to a cultural schema common to Australian speakers of English. Obviously, the Dalai Lama did not expect humour in that communicative event. Even though humour is a universal phenomenon, there are significant cultural differences regarding the usage, appropriateness and expectations related to humour (Martin and Ford 2018: 30). Hence, the barriers in translation are not only linguistic, but social and cultural as well. In this chapter, we will try to

discuss these barriers in more detail in order to see how they can be overcome.

Yet, despite these barriers, people all over the world enjoy different forms and types of humour in translation: thanks to translation everyone can nowadays read Aristophanes' or Shakespeare's plays or laugh their heads off watching some modern-day comedies subtitled or dubbed, which more often than not remain box-office hits regardless of the target language. The same applies to new forms of (multimodal) humour typical of technology-mediated communication that often do not even need translation as they emerge mostly in English, the lingua franca, shared by recipients who interact and co-create these various forms of humour across traditional and new media, regardless of their cultural background. The question that in this context is pertinent to translation is which culture is associated with the use of English as a global language, and we will try to answer it below.

In any case, the widespread use of English as a global language does not affect the ever increasing demand for translation in any domain of human activity. To put it simply, translation can be defined as transferring 'information' represented in one (source) language into the other (target language) (Kučiš 2016: 106). Since this complex process of transferring includes handling not just two different languages, but cultures and cognitive elements as well, it is quite clear that when humour gets involved, everything becomes more complicated, even for the highly skilled translators.

For a very long period of time humour was perceived as an unruly child in Translation Studies, dealt with only rarely in academic research, when it could not be avoided. Humour was mostly covered in some specific studies, for instance, as a part of the analysis of the given author's novel or play. In essence, humour challenged the existing translation theories as much as humour translation did with formal linguistic theories of humour and that is certainly one of significant benefits of these explorations. In a similar vein, this neglect resulted in a widespread attitude that humour is mostly untranslatable, a futile feat.

Discussing the arguments whether humour is translatable, Chiaro (2005: 135) says

[H]umour discourse, which is naturally impeded by linguistic and social barriers, actually succeeds in crossing geographical frontiers. The translation of Verbally Expressed Humour (VEH) concerns one of the most complex types of language to translate owing to the fact that it needs to come to terms with the very tenets of translation theory, those of equivalence and (un)translatability (2005: 135).

To this end, the main goal of the process of translating humour would be transferring, or rather recreating in the target language and culture the same sense, effect, function and emotion humour has in the source language and culture. For that matter, humour translation is inseparable from the author's and translator's intentions, objectives and choices of the linguistic medium representing the cultural background. Needless to say, recognition and appreciation of the humorous effect in the target language and culture is on no account guaranteed.

The (un)translatability of humour is dependent on many variables, in the first place the type of humour, genre, medium, its function, the interrelationship of linguistic and culture-specific elements, and last but not the least, creativity and skill of the translator. Also, as Martínez Sierra and Zabalbeascoa Terran (2017: 12) state, any type of text can be translated and there may also be features of humour in practically any kind of text, including humour that may be perceived by certain interlocutors or users, but was unintended by the author. This leads us to the problem of humour recognition and identification as the first step in the process of translating humour.

In this chapter, all these variables will be addressed in the attempt to answer the underlying question: why is it (im)possible to translate humour, and assuming that it is possible, how it is done. In addition to that, it is important to discuss the challenges of humour translation as this may help rethink some of the theoretical models both in Humour and Translation Studies, as these two interdisciplinary disciplines can derive much benefit from each other by testing and recalibrating some existing theoretical models in each of them.

4.2. Translation equivalence in rendering humour

At the beginning of this book, while trying to define humour, it became evident that humour is an open concept or a cluster category in the sense described by Wittgenstein (1953), in his discussion on the concept of family resemblances pertaining to games and language.[10] Similarly, definitions of translation vary considerably since they typically refer to various aspects entailed in the very process and/or product of translation, or they reflect some major trends in Translation Studies. In essence, the very definition of translation, as well as translation quality assessment hinges on the concept of equivalence, a central issue in Translation Studies (cf. Pym 2010).

As an academic discipline that encompasses different theories and approaches dealing with systematic description and application of translation, Translation Studies were initiated under this name so as to include all disciplines involved in the process in a unifying attempt to tackle the problems related to the process and product of translation. As Tabakowska rightly observes, the main problem that the translation studies have had to solve was the question of equivalence (1993: 2), or rather "the illusion of equivalence" to cite Snell-Hornby (2006: 17ff). And while the translation theory of literary orientation tacitly assumed the existence of such a concept, those scholars who were of a linguistic orientation, explicitly acknowledged and defined the concept using formal linguistic models and theoretic frameworks.

If we start from the view that translation is "the replacement of textual material in source language by equivalent textual material in the target language" (Catford 1965: 20), we imply that for every linguistic unit in the SL there is an equivalent in the TL. Nida (1969) distinguished between two different types of equivalence, *formal equivalence* or *formal correspondence* and *dynamic equiva-*

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[10] (*"I am saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common which makes us use the same word for all, – but that they are related to one another in many different ways. And it is because of this relationship, or these relationships, that we call them all 'language'"* (*Philosophical Investigations* (*PI*) 1953: section 65, original emphasis). Wittgenstein indicates that a cluster concept such as game or language is comprised of *"a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail.... I can think of no better expression to characterise these similarities than 'family resemblances'"* (*PI* 1953, section 66-67).)

lence. According to Nida (Nida 1969: 45), formal correspondence 'focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content', as opposed to dynamic equivalence which is based upon 'the principle of equivalent effect' and centres on the translation of the message as a whole. For instance, Chiaro (2004: 37) argues that finding the same homophonous, homonymous or polysemous items upon which puns are usually created in two languages is almost impossible, which makes formal equivalence extremely difficult in the translation.

Since Translation Studies originated from linguistic approaches to text analysis (cf. Catford 1965) and meaning, many translation scholars consider language to be the raw material of translation (e.g. Baker 1992) and assume 'sound knowledge of the raw material with which they work: to understand what language is and how it comes to function for its users' (Baker 1992: 4) as essential and governing principles in translation (cf. Malmkjær 2012). In his seminal essay on *Linguistic Aspects of Translation* (1959), Roman Jakobson (1959/2004: 139) distinguishes three ways of interpreting a verbal sign, and accordingly, offers three definitions of this process:

> 1. Intralingual translation or rewording is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs in the same language.
> 2. Interlingual translation or translation proper is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language.
> 3. Intersemiotic translation or transmutation is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems.

This tripartite division has long been regarded as the cornerstone and main premise of translation and interlingual translation as "translation proper". When it comes to humour translation, this is also a prototypical scenario, which implies translating from one into another language, even though register humour is also quite frequent. Namely, Chiaro (2017: 416) rightfully brings the issue of language varieties and whether they would fall into first or second category and require an inter- or intra-lingual translation by using

African American Vernacular English or Cockney as examples of register humour. Of course, this is not restricted to English, as register humour is used in any language and culture, but mostly to activate the existing or create new ethnic stereotypes (cf. Prodanović Stankić 2020). In addition to that, as Dore (2020: 3) points out, in audio-visual translation (AVT) the term "mode" is used to refer to "all types of transfer of audiovisual texts between two languages and cultures (interlingual) or within the same language and culture (intralingual)" (Chaume 2013: 106), which can be subsumed under two "macro- modes" of AVT: revoicing and captioning (Zabalbeascoa et al. 2012: 18; Chaume 2013: 106–107). Each of these two macro-modes comprises other types or subtypes. Hence, when applied to humour translation, Jakobson's tripartite division does not have clear-cut boundaries as translation becomes viewed in the context of the 21st century.

The term itself, "translation proper", has become to some extent inappropriate in the global world in which translation is not limited to written texts or professional translators who do this activity, but rather includes spoken discourse (interpreting), audio-visual, electronic and digital media and language professionals who are involved in translation proper, but also transcreation and localisation. Technology has introduced different forms of machine translation and CAT tools, and very often, translation is done by non-professional enthusiasts, fan translators, who translate video games, comics and other kinds of multimedia content for other fans. If we disregard different modes for the time being and focus on the linguistic elements involved in the process of translation, it has to be mentioned that Jakobson's description represents a benchmark for theoretical attempts to translate verbal humour.

In addition to that, even though Jakobson focuses on linguistics and language structure, he argues that languages essentially differ in what they *must* convey and not in what they *may* convey (emphasis in the original, Jakobson 1959/2004: 236), opening space for variation in worldviews of specific speech communities. Later on, when the cultural turn in Translation Studies was propagated during the 1980s (Snell-Hornby 2006: 47), culture was integrated in this discipline in a more systematic way. For linguists and translation scholars, that meant understanding the overall context of the

text in question, as the original text (source) or the translated text (target) are not just sums of lexical and grammatical meaning, but rather that overall context included the implications, the voice of the author, target readers and many other elements. As Katan and Taibi (2021: 2)) explain it, 'cultural translation' involves analysing the dynamics of conflicting models of reality and how they affect or suffer change as a result of contact both at an individual level and at the level of communities. Also, it might be argued that both culture and translation revolve around difference (Katan 2012), since we require translation when difference affects communication. As a result, Katan (2012) suggests two approaches, based on how difference between self and other should be managed in translation:

> 1. "translating from cultures," , i.e. explaining differences
> 2. "translating for cultures," i.e. differences should either be reduced (domestication) or highlighted (foreignization).
> 3. "translating between cultures," gauges the likely tolerance for difference and attempts to mediate or reconcile differences, creating an interspace.

It is interesting that even within the given culture and speech community, there may be specific attitudes towards the process of translation and strategies adopted. As Venuti (2004: 20) argues, a foreignizing method has been specific to certain European countries at particular historical moments. This method, which is opposed to domestication, implies preserving the cultural values of the target text. Foreignizing strategy in translation was first formulated in the German culture during the classical and Romantic periods, perhaps most decisively by the philosopher and theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher (Baker 1998: 242), who advocated two options "either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him" (Venuti 2004: 19-20).

This gap created over different, and sometimes even totally opposed views on the most important concepts and strategies in

Translation Studies, resulted in a love-hate relationship between scholars of literary and linguistic orientation, as Rojo and Ibarretxe-Antuñano aptly name it (2013: 3), in which both sides were either attracted to each other, sharing a broad base of concepts and principles that were applicable in both disciplines, or the attraction turned into a mutual dislike, since both sides tended to regard the other discipline as inferior (cf. Izgarjan and Prodanović Stankić 2015).

One of the most influential translation theories is functionalist Skopos theory (Reiss and Vermeer 1984, Holz-Manttari 1984, Nord 2001), which in essence views translation as a communicative process that starts from *skopos*, or its purpose. Reiss and Vermeer (1984: 101) define 'Skopos rule' that guides and determines a translational action in which the end justifies the means. To some extent, this theory has been used in humour translation, even though it was created to account for non-literary texts and too oriented towards the ST. In general, when faced with a lexeme or a phrase in the ST, the translator is supposed to determine its function within the overall purpose (*skopos*) of the translation task (Reiss and Vermeer 1984) to find solutions they consider adequate.

4.3. Humour translation at work

As it was mentioned above, the issues related to translating humour have been conspicuously absent from both theoretical and practical approaches in Translation Studies for a long period of time. The first relevant studies were based on the analysis of Shakespeare's puns (Delabastita 1993, 1996). Later on these studies were extended first to the analyses of verbal humour in general (Vandaele 2002, Zabalbeascoa 2005, Chiaro 2005, 2017). Recently, this topic has started gaining ground particularly in the field of media (Chiaro 2010b), cinema and television, (Dore 2010, 2020) audiovisual translation (De Rosa et al. 204) and literature (Chiaro 2010a)

The reasons for the lack of empirical research in this field are manifold; however, they are mostly related to theoretical and practical problems involved in the very process of translation, and the fact that humour as a complex phenomenon is based on two overlapping, but opposing scripts (Attardo and Raskin 1991, Attardo 2001). Therefore, any translation or recreation of humour needs to recon-

struct this overlap using language (for verbal humour) or other modes (for multimodal humour) to keep the ambiguity and means of expressing it in the target language. At the same time, research methodology that examines this phenomenon needs to well suited and valid.

On the other hand, such an approach inevitably leads to the infeasibility of formal equivalence, since a perfect linguistic equivalent can hardly be found in two different languages and in essence undermines the concept of equivalence as defined in Translation Studies. Still, as Vandaele (2002: 150) argues, studying humour in translation may be very insightful for both Humour and Translation Studies, for it can help towards identifying and determining the conceptual complexity of humour and the ways in which it can be analysed and appreciated. Also, "it can help scholars and trainers alike (a) to see structures in effects that are fuzzy but still bear strong (meanings), (b) to understand the ways in which these effects are encoded in language (means), and finally to compare source and target texts with respect to (a) and (b)."

Following Chiaro's (2006) explanation that humour translation is at odds with the concept of equivalence – the main tenet of translation theories – Vandaele (2002: 151) argues that the functional and dynamic approach to defining translational equivalence needs to be adopted. Moreover, equivalence in essence should be conceived in cognitive terms, as "a relationship between two texts (source and target) capable of producing 'the same or a similar effect', as a result of the translator reconstructing the ST's intention and recoding it in the TT for the same intended effect". Thus, starting from the premise that the function of humour is to evoke funniness, then achieving the same effect (sometimes using different means) on the target recipients can be considered a good translation: of course, on condition that the recipients can perceive the humorous intent of the target humour.

As Chiaro (2010: 2) states, translational equivalence should be regarded in terms of degrees of equivalence rather than absoluteness, and "the more similar the translated humour is to the source humour, both in terms of form and function, the more successful it will be". This is in line with the application of the functionalist Skopos theory (Reiss and Vermeer 1984, Nord 2001) to the translation of humour (Chiaro 2006), since maintaining the intended function

of the text regardless of equivalence might solve the problem of un-translatability. In that process, the translator tries to maintain the perlocutionary effect, while finding ways to 'trigger the same emotional, physical and behavioural response in the translation' (Chiaro 2005: 136), which is essential, especially when it comes to humorous response, or achieving the same humorous effect. Vandaele (2002: 151) starts from the premise that humour can indeed be readily recast as a humorous effect appealing to the common sense and intuitive translator's 'humour feeling', as understood by folk conceptualisation, in order to move away from the strictly intentional and purposeful activity.

This concept of 'humour feeling' can indeed be related to 'sense of humour' (Ruch 1998), or personal ability to perceive, recognise and appreciate humour. In linguistics, the sense of humour is primarily tied to humour production and sometimes to the concept of the 'idealised native speaker' (Attardo 2001), who in a way represents a starting point in the formulation of a general formal theory of humour, since he/she has the potential and competencies to produce and interpret humorous texts. Linguistic theories of humour, both the SSTH and the GTVH, were developed as theories of competence, not performance, and in order to exclude humour reception from the attempts to account for humour production, such idealizations are justified. As much as personal sense of humour is marginalised in linguistic approaches to humour for a good reason, in humour translation it should have a different status.

In the first place, the translator represents a kind of mediator, trained to recognise and handle all instances of humour in the multitude of different forms, genres and modes in which they can appear and then recreate the same or similar humorous effect in the target language and culture, using the same or similar form. While translating, the translator by definition tries to remain faithful to the author, as much as possible; however, he or she also bears in mind the target recipient(s) of the message and lingua-cultural preferences, as Antonopoulou (2002: 197) calls them, for a specific type of humour that exist in the target culture. In order to create the same or similar emotional and cognitive response and appreciation of humour, the translator needs to take care of the reception as much as of humour production.

Trying to correlate individual and collective cultural conceptualisations and the use of language, Kianbakht (2020) proposes a new model of humour translation which is based on the application of Cultural Linguistics theoretical and analytical tools to Translation Studies. The starting point in the analysis should be the interaction between the text (textual, linguistic knowledge) and the cultural conceptualisations (extra-linguistic knowledge) of the text interpreter, whose task would be to project the source language cultural conceptualisations onto the target language linguistic elements that invoke a cultural conceptualisation which should be, as much as possible, semantically, pragmatically and stylistically equivalent to that activated by the source text elements (Kianbakht 2020a, b). As he points out, "only if the target-text-linguistic elements activate the relevant cultural conceptualisations for the interpretation of the text in the mind of the readers, will the target audience be able to draw the correct cultural-conceptual inferences on the basis of their system of cultural conceptualisations". This activation provides a way of bridging humour production and reception in source and target languages and cultures. Also, in that account, cultural conceptualisations become *tertium comparationis* in the process of translation (Heydon and Kianbakht 2020). Heydon and Kinabakht (2020: 7) argue that in that account, the translator mediates cultural conceptualisations from the source to the target language, choosing linguistic resources that would activate cultural conceptualisations "which should be, as much as possible, semantically, pragmatically and stylistically equivalent to that activated by the source text elements" in order to invoke the appropriate corresponding cultural contextual inferences on the basis of their system of cultural conceptualisations.

Before we move on to some specific examples that illustrate this model, we will present some specific strategies and procedures that may be applied in this process of humour translation. Even though translation scholars differentiate terminologically between strategies that are applied to the macro- or global level of the text and those that are applied locally, in this book translation strategy will be used as a kind of umbrella term following Scott-Tennent, Davies et al. (2000: 108) who state that translation strategies include "the steps, selected from a consciously known range of potential procedures, taken to solve a translation problem which has been consciously detected and resulting in a consciously applied solution."

4.4. Strategies used in translating humour

The scholarly interest in humour translation was initiated in the mid-nineties, with the advent of linguistic approaches to studying humour, and at that time, it reflected the interest in verbal humour and strictly linguistic aspects related to it (Chiaro 2005). Dealing with specific structural characteristics of source language wordplay in translation, Delabastita (1996: 128) defines it as "the general name for the various textual phenomena in which structural features of the language(s) used are exploited in order to bring about a communicatively significant confrontation of two (or more) linguistic structures with more or less similar forms and more or less different meanings". Basically, he (Delabastita 1994: 225) tries to answer the question related to the extent to which the translators are able to pin down the meaning of the source text and separate it from verbal formulation. As expected, structural and typological dissimilarity of source and target languages involved in translation increases the linguistic untranslatability of puns.

For instance, if we try to translate the following pun, created by the famous British lexicographer, writer and pun-lover, Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), from English into any other language, we would easily notice the potential problems Delabastita (1996) discusses, as it would be almost impossible to keep the form and meaning in the TL:

> "If I were punished for every pun I shed, there would not be left a puny shed of my punnish head."

A part of the solution may be found in viewing larger units and starting from the premise that puns are textual phenomena that require a textual solution, Delabastita (1996) argues that such view increases their translatability, which is in line with the methods he describes. Arguing that excellent translation solutions can be found for many puns, on condition that the translators use the full potential of the linguistic resources of the target language, he (Delabastita 1996: 128) suggests that the focus should be first on the linguistic and textual properties. This does not mean, of course, that in many cases formal equivalence will be sacrificed for the sake of dynamic equivalence.

Since his research centres on translating Shakespeare's puns, Delabastita (1996) divides them into four main categories, based on the level of similarity related to sounds and spelling: (i) 'homonymy' (identical sounds and spelling) (ii) 'homophony' (identical sounds but different spellings) (iii) 'homography' (different sounds but identical spellings) (iv) 'paronymy' (there are slight differences in both spelling and sound). Along these lines, he offers the following methods which can be adopted in the process of translation (Delabastita 1996: 134):

1. pun > pun: the source-text pun is translated by a target-language pun;
2. pun > non-pun: the pun is rendered by a non-punning phrase which may salvage both senses of the wordplay but in a non-punning conjunction, or select one of the senses at the cost of suppressing the other;
3. pun > related rhetorical device: the pun is replaced by some wordplay-related rhetorical device (repetition, alliteration, rhyme, referential vagueness, irony, paradox etc.);
4. pun > zero: the portion of text containing the pun is simply omitted;
5. pun ST = pun TT: the translator reproduces the source-text pun [. . .] in its original formulation, i.e. without actually 'translating' it;
6. non-pun > pun: the translator introduces a pun [. . .] to make up for source-text puns lost elsewhere, or for any other reason;
7. zero > pun: totally new material is added;
8. editorial techniques: explanatory footnotes or endnotes, comments etc.

As can be seen in this classification of translation methods used to handle puns, all theoretical possibilities are accounted for, leaving the final one as a kind of last resort in situations in which the translator needs to explain his/her solution in the very text. Also, sometimes the loss in SL may be substituted by a gain in TL. Overall, these methods are very useful in the sense that they can serve as a kind of reminder in the very process of decision-making and/or finding a creative solution. Before we illustrate them all fully (in the

next section), we will briefly summarise Chiaro's (2006) and Za-balbescoa's (1996; 2005) strategies, who readjusted and calibrated Delabastita's methods to make it more suitable for the so-called "screen translation", or in other words, translations of films, TV se-ries and other multimodal forms of humour and translations of it.

Moving away from strictly verbal to multimodal humour makes the whole process of translation more complicated. Multi-modal humour, which is often found not just on screen (in come-dies, sitcoms, TV shows, advertisements, video games.), but in the-atre, comics and other forms, typically depends on two scripts that are activated by different semiotic modes, and in essence more than one mode is used to create or enhance humorous effect. Dore (2020: 3) points out that in audio-visual translation (AVT) the term "mode" is used to refer to "all types of transfer of audiovisual texts between two languages and cultures (interlingual) or within the same lan-guage and culture (intralingual)" (Chaume 2013: 106), which can be subsumed under two "macro-modes" of AVT: revoicing and cap-tioning (Zabalbeascoa et al. 2012: 18; Chaume 2013: 106–107). Each of these two macro-modes comprises other types or subtypes.

It goes without saying that when so many modes get into an interrelationship, transferring meaning from one language to the other gets even more complicated, even without humour. Still, the globalisation of the market and the demand to sell a product world-wide has given a strong impetus for finding better methods and more creative solutions. This has also resulted in a plethora of aca-demic studies that deal with translating humour in AVT (Chiaro 2010, De Rosa et al. 2014, Bucaria 2017, Dore 2020)

Starting from Toury's (1995) Descriptive Translation Studies and his (Toury 1995: 249) argument that the context framing a trans-lation is that of the target culture, Chiaro (2006) analyses verbal hu-mour in translation of several immensely popular comedies and sit-coms. In terms of translation strategies, she identifies three options for dubbing verbal humour that tend towards the pole of acceptability:

1) The substitution of verbal humour in the SL with an exam-ple of verbal humour in the TL;
2) The replacement of the SL verbal humour with an id-iomatic expression in the TL;

3) The replacement of the SL verbal humour with an example of compensatory verbal humour elsewhere in the TL text.

The first strategy would imply finding corresponding ambiguous words that would create more or less the same humorous effect. Sometimes the translator will opt for another lexeme with slightly different meaning, but in the same semantic filed, if humour is based on playing with lexicon, which might lead to a new wordplay (of the same or different category) and a (slightly) different meaning. In essence, the lack of a formal correspondent implies looking for some new solutions that will either keep the form or meaning.

To illustrate these procedures, we will use a book written for children, with illustrations, and not an example of AVT for practical reasons. For example, in the famous children's books series, *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney that have been immensely popular worldwide, the author often exploits creative wordplay and expressive language for different purposes (Prodanović Stankić and Begonja, in press). These bestselling books are written for children aged 9–12 and they are very amusing, which is one of the keys of their global success. The text itself represents a kind of a hybrid multimodal form because it is accompanied by illustrations in the form of comics with speech balloons, sound effects and similar. In one of the books from the series, *Cabin Fever* (Kinney 2011), the main character's brother has a teenage band called *Löded Diper*. In German translation, the name is 'Folle Vindl', in Croatian 'Püne peline' and in Serbian 'Pütni plen'.

Illustration 15: *Löded Diper*
(source: Kinney 2011: 140)

Linguistically, the name of the band represents an example of wordplay that results from playing with the graphological, phonological, and at the same time semantic level. In addition to that, the name is actually found as a part of the picture in the book. The analysis of translations into German, Serbian and Croatian indicates that the translators in fact used a substitute in TL that was meant to keep the same humorous effect (Prodanović Stankić and Begonja, in press). They kept the same elements that could lead to correct semantic reading, yet manipulated graphologically with scripts and languages (using the German grapheme 'ü' in Croatian and in Serbian in line with the interlingual amalgam of the original) and spelling. In the German translation only the noun is misspelt (*Vindl vs die Windel), however, it is still recognisable, similarly to the original adjective 'Löded'. In the Croatian translation it can be noticed that the translator manipulated both words in the name, keeping the non-existent diacritic sign as in the SL and using it with an formal correspondent for 'loaded' and changing the spelling of the noun (*peline vs pelene). Recently Kinney (2022) published the seventeenth novel in the series, *Diper Överlöde*, the title of which follows the pattern of creative wordplay (Illustration 17).

On the other hand, the Serbian translation plays also with the form, however, meaning is not related to the original scatological humour, which children enjoy generally speaking (van der Geest 2016), but rather represents an attempt at metaphoric meaning, as the overall context allowed such interpretation. In that sense, the Serbian translation can be used as an example of the second group, the one in which an instance of humour in SL is replaced by idiomatic meaning in TL.

Illustration 16: the advertisement for the novel *Diper Överlöde*
(source: https://wimpykid.com/books/diary-of-a-wimpy-kid-book-17/;)

Even though Chiaro (2006) does not mention metaphors, it seems that any type of fixed phrase or metaphors and metonymies, similes etc. may be used in this case, as the point is in activating additional meanings using some lexical trigger. This idea underlies the third procedure as well, since sometimes keeping the overall humorous framing in the translation compensates single instances of humour, unless, of course, they are separated by canned laughter, as in some American sitcoms. In that case the viewers are left with confusion rather than amusement.

Considering the fact that most of AVT is done from English into other languages, as empirical research in this field shows (cf. Dore 2020), and as is indicated by the number of USA produced films imported all over the world, there is also another possibility: to use the English lexeme as an anglicism in the TL, if the TL does use it and associates the same cultural conceptualisations with it. Still, the use of multiligualism in humour has not been explored systematically in scholarly work, as most guidelines for translation are traditionally tied to the use of one language and one register in canonical or serious writings.

Later on, Chiaro (2010: 11–12) rightfully included the fourth one, which in essence can be derived from the third, and that is ignoring the source of humour altogether. The reasons for this omission can be related to the specific technical requirements of AVT, such as condensation in subtitling and lip synchronisation in dubbing (cf. Dore 2020), but also to the sheer fact that the translators did not recognise the humorous intent of the scriptwriter.

In light of adopting a more systematic approach to the application of different strategies used in humour translation, Zabalbeascoa (1997) advocates considering the priorities and restrictions of translation in the overall context. Accordingly, they should be taken care of before the application of specific translation methods. Establishing priorities and visualising them on a vertical scale of importance makes it "possible to monitor the consistency with which solutions respond to higher order priorities first" (Zabalbeascoa 1997: 331), and then, accordingly to lower order ones. For example, in such a way it can be accounted for situations in which the humorous utterance in a dubbed film deviates from perfect lip synchronisation or accuracy of meaning. Of course, balance between the structure of

the script, plot, and other elements on the one hand, and comic effect on the other, needs to be found, so as not to cause negative reactions of the viewers. Zabelbascoa (1997: 336) offers a list of possible priorities for translating television situational comedies:

- do well in popularity ratings,
- be funny,
- aim for immediate response,
- elicit laughter,
- integrate the words of the translation with the other constituent parts of the AVT text (both verbal and nonverbal),
- use language and structures (including both verbal and nonverbal) appropriate to the channel of communication.

Similarly to priorities, if restrictions are imposed in the process of translation (by the broadcaster or other stakeholders), they constrain the whole process, as certain words or phrases need to be avoided (for instance slang, or taboo lexemes, etc.). Some of the typical restrictive factors would be political and management policies (Zabalbeascoa 1997: 36), association and allusions between one programme or another, market economy and popularity ratings, and advertising.

What is closely related to restrictions is the assumed extralinguistic knowledge of the viewers who watch the program in the TL. On condition that source and target language viewers share the same knowledge pertinent to the program, values and tastes necessary to perceive and recognise some instance of humour, then this humour is in essence unrestricted. Hence, some specific instances of such humour, say jokes, or one-liners can be translated literally without any loss in meaning or pragmatic force. The opposite applies as well: if the target viewer's perception of humour is restricted by certain values, preferences in humour styles, extralinguistic knowledge or degree of familiarity with some references or concepts, even genre and type of humour, then some jokes and other types of humour may be restricted.

In essence, these restrictions can be related to the concept of cultural conceptualisations as defined in Cultural Linguistics (Sharifian 2017). This interface of language use, culture and cognition at

work relates correspondence between SL and TL viewer's cultural conceptualisations. The degree to which they correspond can then be expressed through the use of the same or similar forms of humour.

In order to illustrate theoretical and practical considerations discussed above, we will use a satirical novel, *Er ist wieder da* (Vermes 2012), and its translations into English and Serbian, as a case study. The focus here will be on cultural conceptualisations underlying humour and the ways it is rendered in the source text and then in the translation. Humour is a constitutive element of this text and it is derived from situations, characters, irony, intertextual references, and, of course, language. We will illustrate humour translation strategies using paratextual elements of the book, as well as few representative examples that focus on the interplay of language and culture, following the translation strategies suggested by Chiaro (2006).

As soon as it was published in 2012, the novel topped the bestselling charts (https://www.spiegel.de/kultur/bestseller-buecher-belletristik-sachbuch-auf-spiegel-liste-a-458623.html) and remained there until 2016. It has been sold in almost four million copies worldwide and in 2015 a film was released, originally in German, directed by David Wnendt (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4176826/). Judging by the reviews on some websites[11] that use viewers' ratings, the film was a huge success as well. The analysis that follows will be based on the examples taken from the book.

In the novel, the writer, Timur Vermes, uses Germany's complex relationship to its National Socialist past and the process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with their past) to humorously frame the whole novel. The plot is constructed around Adolf Hitler, who wakes up in modern-day Berlin, at the site of his former bunker, in full military attire. While he tries to find his whereabouts in half-familiar surroundings, he is mistaken for a comedian and soon becomes a media phenomenon. In terms of genre, this novel is a satire with elements of dark humour. In this context, dark humour refers to a "more or less explicit and sacrilegious representation of humour that has as its aim that of making fun of situ-

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[11]   https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4176826/,   https://www.filmstarts.de/kritiken/225657/kritik.html, https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/look_whos_back_2015

ations usually regarded as tragic, such as death, sickness, disability, and extreme violence, or of the people involved or subject to them (Bucaria 2008: 218-219)".

In addition to that, a lot of humour in the book stems from absurdity, anachronism and a kind of mistaken identity, which are exploited for the purpose of laughing at the present day contemporary life in Germany and the political situation, media and entertainment industry. Also, in that modern-day context, the novel is a humorous cultural representation of Hitler that challenges the presentation of the national history and the Third Reich at a critical distance that pervaded in the post-war period. However, the 1st person narrative leaves the reader in a kind of ambivalent position, since they are confused whether they should feel sympathy for the main character or perceive him within the real historical context. In that way, *Er ist wieder da* proves that sometimes it is very difficult to distinguish the point at which political humour is a means of deconstruction and criticism or rather it represent reestablishment of deeply-rooted beliefs.

Following the immense success of the novel in Germany, it has been translated in around 50 languages so far, and in most of the target cultures it achieved the same popularity. Interestingly, however, many leading publishing houses in the USA passed on the book, and only after its release in the UK (2015) was it published in the USA. The reasons for this are probably closely related to the restrictions Zabalbeascoa (1997) describes and a sort of risk resulting from fear of that kind of black comedy being misunderstood and rejected by the prospective readers in the target culture.

That potential problem of failing to render the text as a satire in the respective target languages and fear of challenges related to the reception in the languages and countries that were among the Allied countries is closely tied to the fact that some traumatic events from the relatively recent past such as the Holocaust and others are no laughing matter and the fact that in some cultures people have different preferences related to humorous types and genres. For instance, in her analysis of dubbing dark humour from English into Italian, Bucaria (2008: 216) argues that in Anglo-American culture there is indeed "an increased tolerance for humour addressing sensitive issues, among which we find death, disease and disability" as

well as a commercial trend aimed at revitalizing traditional TV and film comedy by adding "the shock value of dark/black humour". According to her analysis, quite the opposite is true in Italy, in which "contemporary mainstream comedy privileges feel-good/family-oriented entertainment or, alternatively, the erotic comedy genre, and in which the very mention of death might still trigger superstitious reactions" (Bucaria 2008: 216). The same is applicable to Serbia: dark humour might be appreciated, as can be seen in some of the most popular Serbian comedies (cf. Kovačević 1972), yet, only in the family-oriented context, not related to the painful memory of the World War 2. *Er ist wieder da* was translated and published in Serbia in 2014, yet, the novel was published just in 300 copies and beside the marketing promotion of the publisher, no other mention of it is to be found on the Internet, which probably indicates that its reception was rather weak.

On the other hand, when it comes to the reception in the UK, the translator, Jamie Bulloch, described in an interview (Langton 2017) (https://www.new-books-in-german.com/translating-german-humour/) that he had some other issues to deal with in terms of cultural conceptualisations. Namely, there is a common belief in the British culture that the Germans are humourless; either when it comes to everyday life or fiction, and in that sense many would be reluctant to give the book a chance, as they would consider it boring. Additionally, the challenge was to deal with Germaness in the framework of the British history and culture that prides itself on fighting the Nazi in the World War 2. However, as Bulloch stated in the interview (Langton 2017), the opportunity to participate in an event organised by the publisher, together with the writer and a group of other translators, helped him a lot in overcoming these potential problems. All this resulted in more than 250 000 copies sold just a year after its release in the UK (cf. Freeth 2021).

In terms of paratextual elements, which certainly play a significant role in the commercial success of a book, this novel relies on multimodal humorous framing, which combines visual and textual elements to introduce the main theme and its genre. The book cover features a monochromatic outline of the side-parted hair-style and moustache, by which the main character is easily recognizable, as can be seen in Illustration 18. According to Nord (1995: pp273),

in the functionalist approach to translation, titles have several functions: (a) an informative/referential function, so that the recipient comprehends the information in the title easily; (b) the phatic function, which implies that title should be short and memorable and (c) the appellative, to invite or rather entice the prospective readers into reading and interpreting the whole text in the given way.

Illustration 17: *Book covers in Serbian and German*
(sources:https://www.laguna.rs/n2347_knjiga_opet_on_laguna.html;
https://www.amazon.de/Er-ist-wieder-Timur-Vermes/dp/3847905171;)

The visual layout of the title in the ST, positioned in the place of the infamous moustache, highlights the third person singular and the verb in a bigger font (Table 3) The translator of the Serbian text, Slobodan Damnjanović, followed this pattern, however, reversing the word order and omitting the verb, which is grammatically correct in Serbian and in terms of meaning, implies a kind of irritation with the person referred to.

Title		
ST German	TT English	TT Serbian
ER IST WIEDER DA	LOOK who's back	OPET ON

Table 3: *Title of the novel in the ST and TTs*

The title in English, however, is formally different. The translator decided to omit the finite sentence and replace it by a conversational catchphrase "Guess/look who's back?". Similarly to the title in Serbian, the English indicates an element of surprise and slight annoyance with the object.

Furthermore, in terms of humorous framing, the blurb of the UK edition displays a pun "He's back and he's führious". The translator creatively played with the German noun *der Führer* and the English adjective 'furious', creating a non-existent neologism, however, its elements can be easily retraced and understood, considering the fact that *der Führer* is a noun well known to native speakers of English. This wordplay helps the readers to frame the book as humorous and laugh at the main character rather than with him. Except the creative wordplay in the blurb, the English translation contains another interesting element: the Translator's Note. This section extends over six pages and provides a sort of an amusing index of historical and cultural references mentioned in the book, which might be unfamiliar to the reader. The translator opted for providing the explanations at the end, probably not to disturb the reader's attention by giving the explanations in footnotes. However, albeit the informative function, the notes also contain some humorous elements as the translator described the historical figures in a kind of amusing and funny way, and then occasionally used this information in the main text support his own attempt at humour production.

For instance, in the Translator's Note, the translator provides the following description of Herman Göring, which would exploited in the main text to create humour:

> "One of the great ironies of the Third Reich
> was that neither its Führer nor his three

leading henchmen were the embodiment of the Aryan ideal as propagated by National Socialism. Hermann Göring (1893–1946), the portly, arrogant head of the Luftwaffe – one of his many roles – was addicted to morphine as well as fine clothes. Sentenced to death at Nuremberg, he cheated the hangman by swallowing cyanide on the eve of his execution" (Vermes 2014a: 257).

If Attardo's (2001) Knowledge Resources are applied to the paragraph in the ST, given below in the Table 4, the beginning and the end of this paragraph can be annotated as containing script opposition and hence verbal humour. The last sentence serves also as a kind of punch line.

Source text	Target text in English	Target text in Serbian
Politiker beim Sport, das ist fast immer eine **Zumutung** für die **Bevölkerung. Ich habe meine Betätigung hierin dann auch direkt nach der Machtergreifung eingestellt.** Ein Fußballspieler, ein Tänzer, die können das, das sehen die Leute jeden Tag in Vollendung, das kann sogar große Kunst sein. In der Leichtathletik etwa, ein vollendeter Speerwurf, das ist etwas Herrliches.	**Having to watch politicians engage in sports** is **little more than an embarrassment** for the **Volk. My sporting activities were brought to swift conclusion after my takeover of power.** Football players, dancers – they are the ones people want to see, executing their moves to perfection. Their disciplines may even rise to the height of great art. In athletics, for example, a	Političar koji se bavi sportom? To narodu siguno izgleda vrlo neobično. **Ja sam u tom pogledu svoju delatnost ograničio strogo na osvajanje vlasti i ostanak na njoj.** Sportom mogu da se bave fudbaleri i drugi igrači, je im to ide od ruke. Ljudi to svaki dan gledaju, i te stvari mogu čak da postanu i velika veština. U lakoj atletici, na primer, bacanje koplja može da pruži izuzetan prizor.

Source text	Target text in English	Target text in Serbian
Aber man denke sich, dann käme jemand wie Göring oder diese Kanzlermatrone, die ihm wie aus dem Gewicht geschnitten ist. Wer will das sehen? Das kann keine guten Bilder geben. (Vermes 2012: 197)	consummate javelin throw is a magnificent sight to behold. **But then imagine that someone like Göring comes along, or that matron chancellor. Who would want to watch either of those two whales attempt the sprint hurdles?** It would not be a pretty sight. (Vermes 2014a: 178)	**Ali na šta će to da liči ako Gering pokuša da baci koplje? Ili ona kancelarka koja ga šije u težini? Ko to želi da vidi? To ne može da pruži lepu sliku.** (Vermes 2014b: 179)

Table 4: „Politiker beim Sport"

In terms of humour translation strategies, it can be noticed that the first sentence contains only verbal humour based on irony and the description of a funny situation, yet, the target texts either keep the irony (in English), or downplays it by changing slightly the original semantic meaning (in Serbian). In the second sentence, the English text contains a kind of ironic self-deprecating humour that gets reversed as the narrator mentions the aim of his ambition, which is the acquisition of power. In the English text the translator omits it, probably due to structural reasons, while in the Serbian translation the translator keeps this idea of gaining more political power as the aim of sport activities.

However, in the last two sentences, it can be noticed that in the English translation, an additional element is added, which does not exist in the ST, in order to create humorous effect. The translator elaborated the scenario adding an animal metaphor comparing the unsightly politicans to whales. Namely, apart from doing sports, politicians worldwide tend to pose affectionately feeding the ani-

mals or caressing them,[12] while posing for front pages, and the translator used this extralinguistic knowledge the British readers have, being exposed to yellow press photographs of that kind on a daily basis.

This intertextual reference to British press, as a sort of localisation of the text can be noticed in the following paragraph, given in the Table 5. It is interesting how the first reference to the famous German daily newspaper is kept in the original in English, however, the reference to another one (*der Speigel*) is translated, playing with the name of the British one (*the (Daily) Mirror*), activating in such a way all the elements of cultural knowledge the speakers of English have with that paper. The translator in Serbian simply transcribed the names of the newspapers, as there was no potential in Serbian to exploit these titles for creating additional humorous effect.

On the other hand, the Serbian translation of the given paragraph elaborates more on the meaningless rhetorical mode of the National Socialist Party media propaganda given in the contemporary review of the main character's TV appearance, adding even the metaphoric image of Potemkin's village, which is not mentioned in the ST, to highlight the meaninglessness of that style. However, what this TT is missing, though, is another creative wordplay in the English TT.

This comes as no surprise in the first place because there is no morphological wordplay in the ST, and secondly, the speakers of Serbian do not seem to be particularly prone to play with language (Bugarski 2021: 22), at least not at the morphological level (cf. Lalić-Krstin 2018).

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[12] https://media-cldnry.s-nbcnews.com/image/upload/t_fit-1120w,f_auto,q_auto: best/streams/2012/May/120531/395702-pb-120531-shark-da-01.jpg, https:// www.today.com/pets/pets/angela-merkel-pecked-parrot-visit-german-bird-park-rcna2263

Source Text	Target text in English	Target text in Serbian
Die „**Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung**" begrüßt die „**stupende Aufbereitung systemimmanenter** Paradoxa im Schafspelz des nationalistischen Wolfs". Und der Wortspielbetrieb von „**Spiegel Online**" nannte mich den „**fremden Führer**", was zweifellos wohlwollend gemeint war. (Vermes 2012: 294)	The ***Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*** welcomed the "**superb manipulation** of **inherent** paradoxes in the sheep's clothing of the nationalist wolf". And the ***Mirror Online*** word-games section referred to my causing a "**Führer-ore**", which no doubt was meant well. (Vermes 2014a: 270)	Tako je *Zi dojče cajtung* hvalio „potemkinovsku retrospektivu", iza čijih se „prisvisno neofašističkih monostruktura može naslutiti strasan pledoaje za pluralističke, odnosno bazično demokratkse procesne varijante". *Franfurter algemajne cajtung* pozdravio je „zapanjujuću destilaciju sistemu imanentnih paradoksa, prisutnih u jagnjećoj koži nacionalističkog vuka". A *Špigl* je o meni pisao kao o „neobičnom fireru", što je nesumnjivo bilo rečeno u dobronamernom kontekstu. (Vermes 2014b: 272)

Table 5: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

While the pun "der fremden Führer" in German is based on playing with the semantic level, reflecting also the well known element of cultural knowledge, the famous poem written by Karl Valentin (1882-1948) (*"Fremd ist der Fremde nur in der Fremde"*), the English translator created a bilingual lexical blend "Führer-ore" (Führer (German) + furore (English) creating a morphological, as well as phonological/graphological pun, which has a new meaning.

4.5. Multilingual humour in translation

As the example with the use of the German noun *der Führer* in the English translation shows, using a widely known foreign word or phrase can serve as an additional trigger for creating humorous effect by activating cultural conceptualisations associated with that word. Generally speaking, it is typically the English language that is exploited in other languages for that purpose, however, sometimes as the translation of *Er ist wieder da* in English shows, it can also be the use of German in English.

   In the translation of this novel, at the very beginning, the translator used the German noun *das Volk*, together with the explanation of its meaning that could be derived from the context, in case some speakers of English might not understand it:

> (27) It was probably the German people, the Volk, which surprised me most of all. I did really everything humanly possible to destroy the foundations for a future existence on this soil, this soil which the enemy had desecrated. (Vermes 2012: 2)
> (Das Volk hat mich wohl am meisten überrascht. Nun habe ich ja wirklich
> das Menschenmögliche getan, um auf diesem vom Feinde entweihten
> Boden die Grundlagen für eine Fortexistenz zu zerstören)

This strategic move enabled him to refer to this German concept whenever the original contained any of the semantically similar nouns in German, morphologically derived from the same root, which would be impossible to translate into English keeping the same root. Such is the example given above, in Table 4, where the German *die Bevölkerung* (in Engl. population) in the ST is rendered as the Volk in the TT.

   When it comes to Serbian TT, these examples are quite rare, as the translator did not opt for the strategy to activate the original German concepts in the TT, even in the case of the noun *der Führer,* which was not used in the original, but transcribed in Serbian as

firer, following phonological rules. For instance, as in the following example, when the main character is addressed by the secretary:

> (28) „Pa dobro, moj fireru, kako ste proveli noć?" (Vermes 2014b: 35)
> (Well, my *Führer*, how did you sleep?")

However, when the German text plays with English, the translator did not have any other way but to use the German spelling in combination with the English, as can be seen in the following example. After having a web page created and published, the narrator, Adolf Hilter gets a chance to receive messages and chat with people, and as expected receives all sorts of messages and comments, though mostly positive. The example can be seen in Table 6:

Source Text	Target text in English	Target text in Serbian
Ebenfalls erfreulich war die Mitteilung »Führer rulez«. Man konnte wohl davon ausgehen, dass ich inzwischen auch Anhänger in Frankreich besaß, sofern es sich nicht um einen Tippfehler handelte, denn ich bekam auch die Eintragung »Fuehrer RULZ!« – möglicherweise versuchte sich hier ein Herr Rulz auf meine Kosten etwas Prominenz zu verschaffen. (Vermes 2012: 196)	Equally pleasing was the message "Führer rulz". This implied that I now had followers in France too, unless this was a typographical error, for I also saw the comment "Fuehrer RULZ!" but maybe a certain Herr Rulz was trying to achieve prominence at my expense. (Vermes 2014a: 159)	Posebno me je obradovla poruka „Firer rulz". Iza toga se može zaključiti da sam i u Francuskoj stekao pristalice; osim ako se ne radi o grešci u kucanju, jer sam dobio poruku Führer RULZ. Možda je neki gospodin Rulc hteo sebi da na moj račun pribavi određenu važnost. (Vermes 2014b: 222)

Table 6: "Führer rulez"

Humour in this paragraph stems from the character's non-observance of Grice's Cooperative Principle, as he violates maxims of

quality and manner, interpreting the message "Fuehrer RULZ" as the name of a sympathiser from France, in a way to feed his own ego. Still, considering cognitive approaches to non-observance of Grice's CP in humorous conversations (Prodanović Stankić 2014: 450), it is also true that this humour is intended for the reader, who has different knowledge and conceptualisations and is in that way in a sort of a privileged position. Considering the fact that verbal humour is typically associated with finding sense in nonsense, as Freud (1905/1963: 112) has put it, it is obvious that the humorous discourse challenges the rational and logical that are in the very essence of the CP and Grice's whole philosophical framework, particularly in reference to his view on communication (cf. Grice 1975). Specifically, the problem is how to account for situations in which the speaker fails to observe the CP deliberately in order to make the hearer laugh, given the assumption that in a prototypical humorous interaction, the hearer goes from recognising and understanding a particular utterance that contains an instance of humour to appreciating and finally agreeing to it during humorous conversations, in accordance with Hay's (2001: 67) entailments regarding the process of humour comprehension. Hence, the reader might be familiar with the reform of the German orthography that happened at the turn of the century as well as the omnipresence of anglicism and the catch phrase "somebody/something rules" (or typically spelt as 'rulz'), to recognise that the reader is praising Hitler and not referring to some (French) name.

Generally speaking, there is a tendency in many kinds of humorous discourse (e.g. memes, stand-up comedy etc.) to use English in another language for several reasons, but most often to tackle some highly sensitive or taboo topics, to increase the intended humorous effect or to trigger a process of reconstructing and reconceptualising the original, local cultural cognition, which results in new blended schemas that emerge (cf. Prodanović Stankić 2021). In this way, the speech community renegotiates the existing schemas and adapts to the influence of new, global ones, and the use of English in another language is a sure indicator of the emergent blended culture.

A good illustration for this is the following example given in the Table 7, where it can be seen how the interlocutors play with the consequences of globalisation and the concept of linguistic purism, which was a characteristics of the National Socialist ideology in between two wars. In essence, the whole wordplay is based on the literal interpreta-

tion of the anglicism 'homepage' and the cultural cognition related to the concept of 'home' vs. 'Heimat' in National Socialist ideology.

Source Text	Target text in English	Target text in Serbian
Das Erste, was ich sah, war ein großer Schriftzug in **fraktur-geschriebenen Buchstaben**, man las das Wort **„Heimsei-te"**. Ich griff sofort zum Telefon und rief Sawatzki an. „Und? Schon gesehen?", fragt er. Und ohne eine Antwort abzuwarten, jubelte er: „Ist gut geworden, was?" **„Heimseite? "**, fragte ich**. „Was soll das denn sein? Um welches Heim** handelt es sich?" **Sawatzki verstummte in der Leitung**. „Na, wir können doch Ihre Seite nicht „**Homepage**" nenn…" „So?", fragte ich. „Wieso denn nicht?" „Der Führer kann doch keine **Fremdworte**…" Ich schüttelte energisch den Kopf: „Sawatzki, Sawatzki, was wissen Sie denn vom Führer? Dieses verkrampfte Deutschtum ist das Schlimmste, was man tun kann. Sie dürfen **Blutreinheit** nicht mit **mentaler Abschottung** verwechseln. **Ein Homepage** ist natürlich ein Homepage, machen Sie sich nicht lächerlich! Man nennt einen **Tank** doch auch nicht **fahrbares Kettengeschütz**, nur weil's die Engländer erfunden haben." „**Eine Homepage**", verbesserte mich Sawatzki, „ist ja gut. Ich kümmere mich drum. Wie gefällt's Ihnen denn sonst?" (Vermes 2012: 240)	The first thing I saw was large lettering **in the Gothic script.** The word on screen was "**Heimatseite**". At once I picked up the telephone and called Sawatzki. "So… you seen it yet?" he asked. And without waiting for an answer he said gleefully, "Come out well, hasn't it?" "**Heimatseite**?" I asked. "What's that supposed to mean? What **Heimat** are we talking about?" "Well, we can't exactly put "**Homepage**" on your website, can we?" "Really?" I said. "Why ever not?" "But the Führer doesn't know **foreign words**…" I shook my head energetically. "Sawatzki, Sawatzki, what do you know about the Führer? This uptight Germanness is the worst attitude one can have. You must not confuse **racial purity** with **cultural isolation**. Don't be ridiculous; a homepage is a homepage! One doesn't call **R.A.D.A.R.** *Funkortung und –abstandsmessung* just because the **English** invented it." "O.K.", Sawatzki said**.** ""Homepage" is fine. I'll sort it. (Vermes 2014a: 230)	Prvo što sam ugledao bio je veliki naslov ispisan **goticom „Domaća strana"**. Odmah sam zgrabio telefon i pozvao Savackog. „I? Jeste li videli?", upita on. I ne sačekavši odgovor, reče veselim glasom: „Je li dobro ispalo? Šta kažete?" **„Domaća strana?"**, upitah. „Pa šta to treba da znači? O kakvom se to **domu** radi?" Savacki zaneme na čas, pa onda reče: „Pa ipak ne možete vaš sajt zvati homepage..." „Tako dakle?", upitah. „A zašto, moliću lepo?" „Firer ne može nijednu stranu reč da..." Energično odmahnuh glavom: „Savacki, savacki, pa šta vi znate o fireru? Ta vrsta ponemčavanja jeste najgore što čovek može da učini. **Čistotu krvi** ne treba mešati sa **mentalnom čistkom.** Houmpejdž je naravno Homepage; tu ne treba ispadati smešan. Nećemo tenk sad nazvati ʾ**pokretni oklopni top**ʾ samo zato što je *tank* engleska reč**.** „Dobro", složi se Savacki. „Pobrinuću se za to. A kako vam se ostalo dopada?" (Vermes 2014b: 214)

Table 7: „Heimeitseite"

The script opposition underlying humour is based on role reversal, as the reader does not expected from Hitler to be open and tolerant towards foreign words, considering the knowledge they have about his values, principles and behaviour in the real historical context. Towards the end of this dialogue, there is another example of wordplay, which revolves also around literal interpretation and humorous definition of 'tank', and ethnic stereotypes directed against the enemy. Similar humorous formulas have been seen in many genres, for example in the immensely popular British sitcom, 'Allo 'Allo[13] (1982-1992), created by David Croft and Jeremy Lloyd, as discussed in Chapter 3. This British sitcom is set in France and the main characters, members of the French Resistance movement often resort to speaking broken French, German or English and playing with all these languages in order to create verbal humour and of course, activate some deeply set stereotypes that exist in each of these countries. And also, as this example given in Table 7 indicates, as long as the translation succeeds in triggering and activating the cultural conceptualisations that underlie certain lexical expressions in the target language and culture, it serves well the function of keeping the humorous effect.

In the case of *Er ist wieder da* and the examples discussed above, it has to be mentioned that it is difficult to assess the quality of humour translation unless one takes into account readers' or viewers' (when multimodal humour is concerned) reception. Audience's responses to translated humour are rarely empirically investigated, even though we often find ourselves in the position of an assessor if we watch a film in the language we have a good command of. Some exceptions in this direction are studies of English-Italian language pair done by Bucaria and Chiaro (2007) and Chiaro (2007, 2014). The results of these studies indicate that translation has a relatively big impact on audiences' humour response, particularly when verbal humour is involved. It seems that a good direction in overcoming this challenge would be recognition of various instances and forms of humour in the first place, both intended and unintended, on the part of the translator. Unintended humour would include all those examples in which the recipients see or read elements that the author did not intend to put forward as humorous. Of course, such cases require additional analysis that the translator

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[13] https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0086659/

needs to carry out in order to avoid confusion among the text's receivers or the viewers of a film.

Apart from language-based differences which make translation into a target language a very complex task, many difficulties in humour translation also derive from differences in terms of social and culture systems. A given linguistic expression created with an aim to have a certain perlocutionary effect, regardless of the fact whether this expression is a joke, pun, one-liner or something else, can be translated and rightly interpreted in the target language only if the cultural context is taken into account. The cultural context implies the whole communicative event, but also cultural conceptualisations underlying the language use. Since mutual understanding in humour varies according to the amount of social background which is shared by participants, or to be precise, the shared cultural conceptualisations, it means that while translating humour, cultural conceptualisations need to be regarded as *tertium comparationis.* This standpoint has obvious implications on the reception of the same joke by different cultures.

Mediating verbal humour poses a range of specific problems related to the whole process, which becomes even more complex if multimodality is involved. Since humour is essentially based on incongruity which may be expressed in language but also in other modes, including cultural cognition, finding a more or less similar expression in the target language, or even the same formal correspondent if the humour is based on playing with the graphological or morphological level is almost impossible.

For that reason, when it comes to specific humour translation strategies, the overall objective is closely related to observing the function of the given text. If the translator recognises the humorous intention and tries to assign the same function in the TT, they may need to move away from the exact position of the humorous expression or change its form, especially on condition that no straightforward solution can easily be found. In this chapter we used the translation of a satirical novel that is abundant with different forms of humour in order to illustrate some of the techniques translation scholars recommend. In many ways Humour Studies with its theories, specific taxonomies and criteria used to analyse verbal humour linguistically can benefit Translation Studies as the translators may apply these findings in the process of humour recognition and identification and then translation.

5. HUMOUR IN EDUCATION

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the role of humour in education taking into account several perspectives. First of all, we will discuss the benefits, but also the challenges related to using humour in any educational context, and then shift the attention to teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) with and about humour, exemplified by some specific case studies. The focus will be primarily on the context of teaching in higher education. Finally, we will suggest some specific methods and resources for including more humour in the educational context and some practical steps for developing humour competence of EFL learners.

5.1. Exploiting humour in the educational setting

Since humour is part and parcel of almost any communicative event and social interaction, it is, of course, expected and natural to find it in the educational setting as well. Nevertheless, historically, humour was thought to have no place in the educational institutions (Bryant et al. 1980), as it was regarded as a major source of distraction with a negative effect on learning outcomes. This view on humour and play in general implies that trivial and superfluous language use has no place in the serious spheres of life, most notably (higher) education, despite its potential benefits (cf. Cook 2000). In addition to that, this negative attitude also suggests the complexity of the use of humour in the classroom, since "humour can either break or make student-teacher relations", as Van Praag et al. (2017: 394) wittingly remark.

Yet, current pedagogical trends have changed significantly, and nowadays, the whole learning process is supposed to be enjoyable and more supportive of a relaxed atmosphere that nurtures bet-

ter retention and achievement (cf. Bell and Pomerantz 2016). As Tsakona (2021: 141) has it, this tendency could be interpreted as change in the cultural shift from negative to positive evaluations and perceptions of humour. Nowadays, it is believed that humour motivates students, increases their creativity and attention span. Moreover, it puts them at ease, by breaking the predictable classroom routine and in that way makes them keep the focus. Since humour has a huge impact on interaction patterns, it is indispensable for maintaining good and authentic relationships. As much as it can reduce learning-related stress and anxiety, it can also help teachers to deal with the increasingly demanding job on a daily basis.

All these aspects became strongly evident during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the imposed shift to online teaching and learning that hit the whole world in 2020. Social media became instantly flooded with various digital forms of humour, memes, funny videos, comments, allusions, etc., which dealt with online schooling and the challenges related to it. These examples show how some old jokes get recreated and re-contextualised in a new context (Illustration 18), offering an insight into some new problems that the online teaching brought about, such as the lack of working space at home or adequate equipment needed for remote teaching, or lack of technical skills of both the students and the educators to handle the situation.
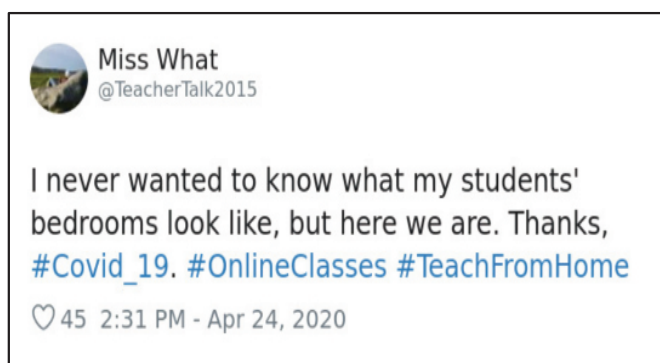

Illustration 18: A Twitter post
(source: https://twitter.com/TeacherTalk2015;)

These humorous forms typically foreground the teacher's perspective, as in the tweet in Illustration 18, but also the problems teachers

face while trying to balance different demands related to the job (Illustration 19).

Illustration 19: Online teaching
(source: https://www.ohyaaro.com/funny-memes-for-online-classes;)

For instance, in their analysis of twits collected as a response to home schooling in Australia, Ewing and Vu (2021: 81) found on a very large corpus that humorous content was predominantly used, albeit most frequently. In the first place this is an indicator of the need to have some humorous relief given the challenging circumstances; yet, it also shows the change in the social reality, in which education itself is becoming the object of ridicule.

Due to this ambivalent approach towards the role of humour, a "humour paradox" in the educational setting can still be noticed, as Morrison (2008: 73) succinctly observes. Namely, the benefits of using humour in education are widely discussed in the relevant literature, yet some reluctance and discomfort in supporting humorous exchanges in classrooms are still present. These reservations lead to its absence from practice and consequently insufficient empirical studies that could shed more light on this issue.

Teachers' or instructor's use of humour as a class management, interaction and teaching tool may lead to an increase in students' attention, motivation, and learning (Berk 2002, Berk 2003; Bell and Pomerantz 2016). Humour builds rapport and promotes an atmosphere that is more supportive of learning and helps memorising new information. Also, humour changes the perspective we use to interpret a given situation, enabling critical thinking (Tsakona

2021) and fosters the development of creative skills. When we laugh together in a group, better group dynamics and coordination among group members is achieved, which directly affects interaction patterns and increases the level of attainment of the common goal. Strategically used humour has been shown to lead to higher-order thinking, increased creativity, and deep knowledge relating to subject matter among students (Lovorn 2008, Chen, Chen and Roberts 2019, Lu et al. 2019), despite the complexities related to its multifaceted nature and hesitancy among teachers to use it (Morrison 2008).

In addition to that, when the individual characteristics of both teachers and students are taken into account, having a good sense of humour (Ruch 1998) is one the essential characteristics of an ideal teacher (cf. Miron 1983, Ziegler 1998, Horng et al. 2005, Szentes et al. 2020). In general, humour is seen as an individual's ability to find things funny or their ability to make people laugh (Ruch 1998) and this is associated with other positive personality traits important for teaching, such as intelligence, friendliness, tactfulness and kindness (Cann and Calhoun 2001). Moreover, trying to find empirical evidence to support correlation of humour and creativity, Chen, Chen and Roberts (2019: 86) found that effective humour helps people to be creative, and creativity is one of the key soft skills closely related to academic success. In a survey of sense of humour among school teachers, humour was significantly correlated with four creative thinking skills: imagination, flexibility, originality and open-mindedness (Chen, Chen and Roberts 2019: 86). However, some studies that explored the perceptions the students typically have regarding their teachers show that they find them to be intelligent and knowledgeable, but lacking humour and creativity. They consider them to be humourless and tedious, and most of the lessons they deliver dull, boring and demotivating (Ziegler 1998, Lei, Cohen, and Russler 2011). Nevertheless, the use of humour in the classroom needs to reflect the personality of the teacher, be authentic and appropriate to the context in order to be perceived as positive by the students. Otherwise, it may be more harmful than beneficial.

Most of the research in the relevant literature is centred around teachers' humour production, or sometimes humour that is jointly constructed by the group, which may indicate power rela-

tions on the one hand, but also the amount of time occupied by the teacher as the main speaker in the classroom. Van Praag et al. (2017) found that when students apply humour in the educational context, it is usually to express their attitudes towards school and teachers. Their (Van Praag et al. 2017: 399) findings also suggest that common social background of teachers and students enables better bonding through humour. This is probably related to the fact that common background implies shared cultural cognition which is employed in both humour production and comprehension. If all interlocutors recognise and understand the intention and the humorous exchange, the chances are they would appreciate it properly.

Martin et al. (2003) argue that since humour involves cognition, emotion, behaviour, a physiological reaction and social interaction, it brings pleasure psychologically speaking, and pleasure enhances internal motivation, which may prompt thinking differently and creatively. Of course, on condition that humour is positive and affiliative. This applies to all levels of education, and all disciplines and subjects taught, however, in this chapter, the focus here will be on the context of higher education, primarily due to the fact that some previous research in this field found that university and college instructors and professors use humour more frequently than teachers in the primary or secondary level of education (Bryant, Comisky, Crane and Zillmann 1980, Javidi and Long 1989). To be specific, according some research (Javidi and Long 1989) these instances range from an average of 6.50 times per 50-minute class period for experienced professors to an average of 1.60 times for inexperienced ones.

When used appropriately in classroom, humour can be very beneficial as it leads to a more relaxed atmosphere, affects students' motivation and learning, develops good rapport among the students and the instructor and relieves tension and negative emotions, inspiring novel ideas (Powell and Anderson 1985, Ziv 1988, Berk and Nanda 1998, Cook 2000, Schmitz 2002, Garner 2006, Prodanović Stankić 2011). The same applies to the learning process: students' ability to perceive and appreciate positive humour may be beneficial for their learning and retention.

Nevertheless, as much as the benefits of the use of humour seem to be prevailing, the existing literature is still indecisive in

terms of its positive effects. One of the reasons for this is the complexity of the phenomenon itself. Humour used in classroom is typically conversational humour and it does not always reside within particular bits of language, but rather the overall context, culture and the people involved. Since it represents an emergent, co-constructed dimension of communication, it depends on many variables and factors, which are not always explored in relevant research.

As Banas et al. (2011) conclude in their literature review of research in this field, the main problems related to the existing studies are methodological inconsistencies and orientation, as they differ significantly, making comparisons almost impossible. In most studies, the transformational power of instructional humour may seem extremely positive, especially when the increase in motivation and learning is concerned (cf. Bryant, Comisky and Zillmann 1979; Bryant and Zillmann 1989; Frymier, Wanzer and Wojtaszczyk 2008; Frymier and Weser 2001).

On the other hand, humour can also lead to negative feelings, particularly if it creates any kind of divide or inequality among people, highlights or establishes some relations of power and leads to disruptions of the learning process if not used appropriately and in a balanced way. For instance, Torok, McMorris and Lin (2004) investigated students' perceptions of different types of humour used by their instructors in class and their own assessment of improvement. Despite many potentials of humour to humanise, illustrate and encourage, sarcasm and gender humour may have very negative consequences on the whole learning experience and even add to alienation and loss of motivation among the students. Wagner and Eduardo (2011) and Morrison (2008) argue that the students' reception of the instructor's humour depends primarily on the manner in which humour is delivered. This supports the argument that humour is a specific mode of communication. Humour that is delivered through insult or sarcasm is straightforwardly perceived as negative. The same applies to sexually suggestive humour if it is not directly associated with content, such as sexual education, as Allen (2014) shows in her study.

The negative and positive effects of the use of humour in classroom can be correlated with empirical and theoretical research in the psychology of humour. Martin et al. (2003) identified four

prototypical styles of humour that have the biggest impact on well-being of people in general, regardless of the social context. Two of these styles are positive: affiliative and self-enhancing humour. Affiliative humour affects interaction and facilitates keeping closer relationships to other people. It refers to telling jokes, providing amusing comments and anecdotes to make others laugh and encouraging group cohesiveness. Self-enhancing humour is more related to individual coping mechanisms as it is used to regulate emotions and cope with stress by sustaining a positive, cheerful and humorous perspective on life.

The other two styles described by Martin et al. (2003: 52) are regarded as having a negative effect and being detrimental to mental health. Aggressive humour demeans or intimidates others, since it includes forms such as sarcasm, teasing, derision, or any other type of humour used to manipulate other people. Ridicule and self-defeating humour entail identifying ways to make others laugh at one's own expense (Martin et al. 2003: 53). By self-defeating they (Martin et al. 2003: 53) imply excessively self-disparaging humour, or attempts to ingratiate oneself or gain the approval of others by doing or saying funny things at one's own expense, allowing oneself to be the target of other's humour. Forms of defensive denial and repressing one's own feelings in order to maintain the acceptance of others are also included in this category.

This distinction between positive and negative, or benign and malevolent uses of humour is one of degree, not a clear-cut distinction. Sometimes some forms of relatively benign forms of affiliative humour may include some degrees of disparagement, for example, when a group of close friends uses gentle teasing or making fun of others within the group to increase bonding and enhance their overall feeling of group identity. However, this is often very sensitive and depends a lot on the given context, since context is definitely a significant factor in the process of understanding humour. As Martin et al. (2003) elaborate, these humour styles have been found to be reliable and valid across various cultures and they provide an insight into how people use humour spontaneously in different kinds of situations.

For instance, a study (Bakar and Kumar 2019) that analysed different types of humour used by five lecturers, awarded as best and

most humorous in a university in New Zealand, found that the lecturers used both spontaneous and intended humour. The use of spontaneous humour indicated that the lecturers' use of language was natural and not scripted all the time, despite some joke-telling that was strategically planned in advance. As experienced and confident professionals they were open to improvise and use opportunities to be humorous, resorting to both verbal and nonverbal means. When it comes to specific types of humour that the lecturers used the most, they seem to fall in the category of negative uses described above: self-deprecating humour, disparaging others, teasing students, sarcasm, funny comments and riddles. Paradoxically, although most of these types belong to negative uses according to the classification by Martin et al. (2003) given above, in Bakar and Kumar's (2019: 19) study all of these types were met with students' laughter and appreciation. This is supported by the fact that the participants in the communicative event (the lecturer/speaker, the student/audience) were well aware of the setting (a classroom), the topic (the subject) and students' evaluation (feedback), and interpreted all instances of humour in the context of amusement and having fun that aids learning.

To illustrate this, we will use two examples provided by Bakar and Kumar (2019: 19):

> (29) Philip: …So we share 75% of our genes with other animals. So we share 75% of our genes with food flies. All right?! So next time if there is a fly on your window, and you go [squish it] that is 75% of your genes dying right there.
> Students: [Laughing]
> Philip: OK.

> (30) Alejandro: You thought that this is easy. This is all fun; it is zesty according to someone. I got an email saying 'thanks for the zesty lecture'.
> Students: [Laughing]
> Alejandro: I have never been described as 'zesty' …
> Students: [Laughing]
> Alejandro: But, hey I take salsa.
> Students: [Laughing]

In both of these examples the lecturers were teasing the students in the classroom. In the example (29) the lecturer addressed all students, minimising in that way the element of 'making fun of someone', while keeping the same perlocutionary effect, whereas in the example (30) the lecturer obviously was thinking of a specific student, though he intentionally avoided referring to him/her, foregrounding the word choice as humorous in the given context.

Similarly, when sarcasm is used, which by definition denotes a comment that has the contrary meaning to what is being said (Attardo et al. 2003), it is typically mitigated and turned into a humorous comment when followed with corresponding paralinguistic (tone of voice) or nonverbal elements (smile, eye rolling, etc.) to make it less harsh, as in the following example (Bakar and Kumar 2019: 19):

> (31) Alejandro: [reading a long review in one breath]. Easy!
> Students: [Laughing]
> Alejandro: Totally easy!
> Students: [Laughing]

The lecturer accounted for his use of sarcasm as a pedagogical method to show the students that he was aware of the difficulty of the given review, indicating his understanding and at the same time keeping students' attention focused despite potential distraction.

Still, it must be acknowledged that the use of humour in the classroom always implies an inherent power difference between teachers and students. Power-based humour inevitably maintains boundaries between social roles, creating or maintaining status and influencing the audience. Hence, when the lecturers in the examples given above used humour, they used it from a position of power which carries an additional level of responsibility and accountability. In the formal setting of a classroom, students are not in a position to continue teasing, or any other form of humour addressing the instructor. In that sense, those in power should not abuse their powerful position; otherwise, the use of humour would lead to disastrous consequences.

5.2. (In)effectiveness of humour in the classroom

The major challenge or a possible obstacle in the way of using the full potential of humour in teaching and learning is closely related to language-based and cultural skills, or the lack of these. It goes without saying that if the recipients do not recognise the humorous intention of the speaker, or the ambiguity on which it is based, it will result in failed humour. Bell (2015: 4) defines failed humour as "any utterance that is intended to amuse, but that, due to interlocutor, environmental, or other factors, is not negotiated 'perfectly'." As much as the examples of failed humour indicate violation of some communicative norms, they may also show the recipients' negative evaluation of the humorous content which disparages a certain group, or refers to topics that are not meant to be laughed at.

However, on a positive note, language barriers need not necessarily represent an obstacle for a non-native speaker, if the context or other interlocutors are supportive enough. For example, Davies (2003) indicated in her research of cross-cultural conversation groups that beginning learners collaborate with native speakers in constructing conversational joking discourse. Some other studies support this (Habib 2008), and show that in close groups of friends (who use the same non-native language, but have different cultural backgrounds), even teasing is used for bonding and learning more about the language that is used and cultural elements associated with that language use in the context that is co-created in a multilingual setting. In these situations, humour was used to highlight cultural and linguistic differences for the purpose of expanding the knowledge of the participants.

In her study of interactional adjustments to humorous intercultural communication, Bell (2006) found that the adjustments made by native speakers during conversational humour may not be appropriate for the non-native speakers. Bell's (2006) research is in line with the arguments advanced in this book regarding the interface of language and cultural cognition. Namely, it seems that the level of language proficiency is not always related to the level of cultural and intercultural competences, and during a conversation, it is very difficult for native speakers to assess these levels and then adjust the message. In other words, a non-native speaker may be

quite familiar with grammatical or lexical resources of the language, but lack pragmatic skills or adequate knowledge of cultural conceptualisations relevant for participating in the given exchange. Conversely, the opposite applies as well.

To that end, for example, a non-native speaker using English as a foreign language may be familiar with some global elements of culture related to English as the international language, and share these cultural conceptualisations with native-speakers, which would enable the process of recognition and comprehension of humour, even though their language proficiency is rather average or low. Another option is also possible: the lack of culture-specific knowledge despite advanced language proficiency may lead to misunderstanding or just the inability to play with these elements. This can be easily noticed across different generations of learners of English. For example, in Serbia, the older generations of learners of English were usually exposed to elements of the British culture in their courses, course books and the activities they did to practice language use and improve their proficiency. The newer generations, on the other hand, have been more exposed to different elements of popular culture via the Internet or broadcast TV channels, rather than through formal education, which inevitably results in variations in their cultural cognition associated with the foreign language. For them, English has become "the nativized foreign language" (cf. Prćić 2014a, 2014b; Mišić Ilić 2014, 2017), which induced many changes on their use of both Serbian and English. In terms of humour, it often results in blending both languages in some hybrid combinations (cf. Prodanović Stankić 2021), for the purpose of expanding their communicative repertoire of resources used to create the intended humorous effect.

While balancing the potential obstacles in humour production, native speakers of a language need to be aware that the whole process of recognising and understanding the instance of humour needs to be pleasurable for L2 learners and speakers ("the difficulty has to be moderate and the process has to be relatively effortless" Forabosco (2014: 137)). Otherwise, given various obstacles, humour can often prove to be a frustrating experience for many L2 users as the cognitive effort to comprehend would diminish the element of unexpected resolution of humour.

All this calls for a need to include teaching of intercultural and humour competences in teaching foreign languages and intercultural communication. This would include pragmatic and culture-specific elements that pertain to different cultural practices or rather cultural schemas related to joking that different speech communities have. Hence there is a lot of variation in terms of when, how and with whom you are supposed to share humour, and what kind of humorous content is appropriate in the given context. Problems that may arise due to lack of this knowledge become easily noticeable in any kind of intercultural setting, be it related to education, work, or any other sphere.

Given the above-mentioned differences in cultural practices that exist in different languages, power differences related to them may also be more or less pronounced, depending on the given culture. For example, students may find it strange and unexpected to participate in such interactions in which humour is used in highly formal settings. In one study 32% of students identified the use of humour in general as potentially offensive (Torok et al. 2004), while Banas et al. (2011) point out that offensive humour based on making fun of race, ethnicity, sex, political or sexual orientation, as well as vulgar and profane humour should always be prohibited in the classroom environment.

In addition to cultural differences, significant variations have been shown to exist in terms of gender and humour use in education, even though the intersection of these two variables is still underresearched in the relevant literature. For instance, Bryan et al (1980) found that male professors tend to use humour in the classroom more frequently than female professors, and they used different types of humour. While male professors tell jokes and funny stories more frequently, female professors tend to be more spontaneous using humour more relevant to the given situation and course material.

In their study of gender differences in students' perceptions of instructor humour in college science courses, Cooper et al. (2018) found that women were more likely to perceive some topics to be more offensive than men. Accordingly, there were significant differences in gender-related perceptions of the same jokes the instructors told: while the male students considered them funny, the female ones rated them as offensive. In addition to that, women were found to be

less tolerant of jokes about male and female stereotypes that are crude and profane (Sev'er and Ungar 1997) and they were less likely to enjoy sexual humour (Herzog 1999). This is line with previous research on gender differences in the perceptions of humour and multicultural education (Izgarjan et al. 2013). Hence, humour that is perceived as funny by both genders will benefit them equally (Cooper et al. 2018: 15), and conversely, humour that is perceived as offensive by both male and female students will be equally negatively affected. Based on their findings, Cooper et al. (2018: 18) concluded that women will be negatively affected by humour because they find more subjects offensive, not because of their response to the offensive humour.

In a similar vein, when cultural background of students is concerned, cultural cognition they apply while interpreting instances of humour encountered in classroom play a very important role, as sometimes cultural conceptualisations will represent a filter that impedes recognition of humorous instances in the first place, on condition that they understand the message language-wise. Even though there is a significant research gap in the sphere of cross-cultural studies related to the use of humour in lectures, some of these studies represent a solid base for further explorations in this field.

For instance, in the well-known research on universal and variable cultural dimensions, Hofstede and Hofestede (2005) argue that all social interactions, including those in the domain of higher education, are culturally mediated, and when "teacher and student come from different cultures, such as in the context of economic development programmes, many perplexities can arise" Hofstede (1986: 301). One of Hofstede's (1986) cultural dimensions is individualism vs. collectivism, which accounts for preferences related to acting on its own or in a tight-knit collective framework. To that end, Zhang (2005: 114) shows that humour in classroom makes Chinese students feel uncomfortable, because it "highlights individual attention and deviation from the group… since individualistic people are more likely to employ humour to cope with stress and anxiety than are collectivist people". This becomes even more evident in multicultural and multilingual settings, since students from different cultural backgrounds certainly rely on different cultural cognition and probably different cultural conceptualisations applied to interpreting instances of humour.

Hence, different concepts of what is considered a usual pedagogical practice exist in cultural schemas related to teaching and learning, which are part of students' cultural cognition. Flowerdew and Miller (1996) analysed lectures on different subjects in universities in Hong Kong, given by native speakers of English to Cantonese students who were advanced L2 speakers of English. They (Flowerdew and Miller 1996: 134) report on lecturers being unwilling to use humour at all, despite the fact that they would do so with native speaker audiences. The examples given below (32) illustrate some of these instances of failed humorous attempts:

> (32) L: (lecturing on housing management in Hong Kong, where buildings are mostly made of concrete)
> Managing the bricks and m o r t a r - or concrete, bricks and mortar don't make sense here. (The lecturer laughed at this but none of the audience did).
> L: (at the beginning of the lecture the lecturer explained a small change to the
> lecture notes) You'll probably say he keeps changing the notes so we'd better go to the lecture. (Again the lecturer smiled, but none of his audience laughed).
> (examples taken from Flowerdew and Miller 1996: 134)

When the students were asked to comment on these humorous episodes, they stated that "the purpose of lectures is to convey information and sometimes to develop thinking skills, not to entertain". This inevitably leads to cross-cultural misunderstanding, in which "lecturers, on the one hand, may be perceived by their students as lacking in human warmth, and students, on the other hand, may be perceived by their lecturers as unresponsive" (Flowerdew and Miller 1996: 137). Interestingly enough, when lecturers strategically used humour for bonding and for reducing the distance between themselves and their students, they switched from English to their local language, i.e., a Cantonese dialect (Flowerdew, Li and Miller 1998: 224).

While discussing the use of humour in EFL courses taught in China, Jiang (2022) notes that Chinese EFL teachers tend to "construct and assume an English teacher identity", which is thought to

be completely different from the identity of a typical Chinese teacher. Chinese teacher's identity is constructed under the influence of Confucianism (Zhang and Liu 2014), and in general it stands for a respectable and serious person. In order to motivate their students, Chinese EFL teachers are ready to change this image and even be trained in using humour to help their students attain the learning objectives and become fluent in English.

Davies (2003) studied conversational humour in intercultural academic settings in an American university and found that language learners have difficulties following and coping with interactions in L2, which adds to their feeling of being powerless and incompetent language users. What leads to this is a combination of factors, idiomaticity of the language and their lack of fluency together with cultural elements they are not familiar with. On the other hand, Bell (2005, 2007a, 2007b) argues that despite potential obstacles related to language use and culture specific elements, misunderstandings are rather rare. When conversational joking is concerned, native speakers try to provide support and contextual clues that facilitate the process of understanding. Hence, if the communicative goals of L1 and L2 speakers are common and if they are jointly creating humour, it is cognitively and linguistically easier to bridge the gaps in understanding.

However, intercultural communication that is less interactive, as in the case of academic lectures, often leads to misunderstandings of teasing, irony and other forms of humour used by the lecturer, as Wang (2014) shows, and it is also the result of the inability of the multicultural and multilingual audience to recognise humorous intent of the speaker (lecturer). Nesi (2012) analysed the corpus of British Academic Spoken English (BASE) and Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE) and found cultural differences related to the same language. Using laughter as an indicator of humour, Nesi (2012: 87) argues that in British lectures, it has more of a strategic than rhetorical purpose, and lecturers often refer to shared conventional scripts shared by them and the students to create humour, which is not the case in American lectures.

In order to explain why humour is not always effective in the educational context, Wanzer, Frymier and Irwin (2010) propose the Instructional Humour Processing Theory (IHPT). Drawing on sev-

eral theoretical models, IHPT explains that students need to perceive and identify an element as humorous in the instructional message and then resolve it. This is related to incongruity-resolution model[14] (Suls 1977, 1983). If the students do not identify an utterance as humorous, as some of the examples given above show, they cannot resolve it, and the lack of resolution leads to confusion. The question that would need further psycholinguistic examination is whether this stage (recognising-identifying-resolving) increases students' attention or adds to distraction.

The resolution stage, which is closely related to interpretation, is linked to disposition theory, which posits that the recipients necessarily evaluate a humorous message as (in)appropriate and hence accordingly appreciate it, or dismiss as irrelevant. As Wanzer, Frymier and Irwin (2010: 7) argue "if the humorous message has elements that enhance students' ability to process such as being related to the course content or makes the content relevant, then students will be more likely to process the instructional message and learning will be enhanced". It is also assumed in IHPT that instructors' use of humour should result in increasing students' motivation to process learning material better and more efficiently, as the learning material will be more relevant and clearer. In addition to that, the use of humour will result in gaining students' attention and creating positive affect (Booth-Butterfield 2010: 224).

Ziyaeemehr et al. (2010) explored the reasons behind the instructors' unwillingness to use humour in the classroom by analysing students' perception of the whole process. Their findings show that instructors avoid using humour mostly because humour is not an integral part of their personality (35%), they lack competence in L2 to create humour (16%), and they are more content oriented (10%) (Ziyaeemehr 2010: 114). Hence, their results indicate that non-use of humour in the EFL classes in this study is primarily related to the personality of the instructors, as some instructors are perceived to be naturally humourless.

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[14] the recipient meets with an incongruity (usually in the form of a punch line or a cartoon) and then is motivated to resolve the incongruity either by retrieval of information in the joke or cartoon or from his/her own storehouse of information; thus, humour results when the incongruity is resolved; that is, the punch line is seen to make sense at some level with the earlier information in the joke. (Suls 1983: 43)

In addition to that, the instructors might avoid using humour knowing that it is a double-edged sword. Humour that is inappropriate or which might target anyone in the classroom is destructive, not just to the instructor-student relationship but to the well-being of the person who felt offended and attacked by the inappropriate or insensitive humorous message. This is highlighted by Dunbar (2014: 208), who argues that the students make judgments related to the targets: if the humorous form is targeted at someone, the chances are that the whole group will dislike the targeted individual and they will not be recognised as a part of that group's identity. Finally, the (in)appropriateness of humour impacts the affective or emotional response and in that way may (not) enhance motivation, recall of information or better focus.

The IHPT is a general proposal that needs to be supported by further research. However, judging by the cross-cultural studies mentioned above and the problems of recognition of humour that is related to the lack of intercultural competences or cultural conceptualisations, it seems that this aspect needs to be included theoretically in all attempts to account for instructional humour.

5.3. Developing interlingual and intercultural skills with humour

Foreign language teaching, or teaching the second language (L2), seems to be the most suitable arena for using humour strategically, for several reasons, at least judging by the relevant literature in this field (Cook 2000, Schmitz 2002, Bell 2009, Bell and Pomerantz 2016). In that context, it can be used for the similar purposes as in teaching and learning in general, as listed above, particularly for class management and group dynamics, better learning outcomes and increased motivation for learning. Yet, in teaching a foreign language, humour can serve as resource or input for teaching different aspects related to language use and culture.

Teaching L2 by definition implies developing communicative competence in a foreign language, and communicative competence entails linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic components (Council of Europe 2020: 17-19). Hymes (1972) introduced the concept

of communicative competence in language studies, arguing that language acquisition and learning L2 need to include learning functions of language and appropriateness of speech acts, both in terms of production and evaluation of other interlocutors' utterances. This was followed by Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) methodology, which has become the prevailing methodology particularly in teaching English as a foreign language. CLT methodology is based on the learner's participatory experience in meaningful L2 interactions in (often simulated) different communicative situations, which highlight the significance of less structured and more creative language tasks (cf. Dörnyei 2009). Ecological approaches to language learning (Kramsch 2008, 2014), which put forward the interconnectedness of language, cognition and interactional social dimension have followed the same idea, leaving the traditional decontextualised ways of teaching L2 behind.

In that context, humour and language play represent natural and intrinsic elements of language use that foreground the multifaceted nature of authentic communication, which is creative, multilayered in terms of interpretation and dynamic meaning construction, and needed in classroom interactions. On another note, it has to be mentioned that the L2 classroom in the 21st century implies a multilingual and multicultural reality more often than not, which underscores the need for diverse communicative repertoires that should be used to meet the individual needs of language learners. Drawing on Rymes (2010: 528), Bell and Pomerantz (2016: 11) argue that communicative repertoires should be recognised as a sum of ways that represent the individual's use of language, including other means of communication (gestures, facial expressions, dress, posture and/or other media) with the aim of functioning effectively in the multiple communities in which they participate.

The communicative repertoire represents a very useful concept in applied linguistics as it can better cater for the needs of the teaching/learning objectives in the multilingual and multicultural educational context of the global world, since it can account for the language functions a learner can complete with using a language. Also, it provides space for the inclusion of various genres, speech style and functions, multimodality, language play and humour in the emergent and dynamic process of meaning-making. In that sense, humour may

refer both to the key or manner which the speaker adopts while speaking or writing, or it includes specific instances of language play and creative language use (Bell and Pomerantz 2016: 15).

5.4. Using humour in EFL teaching: two case studies

In order to determine the effects humour has on students' performances, the author of this book conducted several case studies in which humour was used both as a tool and resource in a university level EFL and a literature course (Prodanović Stankić 2011, Prodanović 2015, Izgarjan and Prodanović Stankić 2016). Starting from the premise that language embraces ambiguity, uncertainty, texture and nuances of meaning, which are central to language use and which are not just confined to creative and aesthetic uses of language in literature and poetry (Fleming 2010: 6), the main idea behind these studies was to sensitise the language learners to a wide range of humorous forms in L2 by using language play and humour, to develop their humour competence in L2 and to improve their fluency and literacy in L2.

Language play is understood here in terms of Cook (2000), who includes in this category playing with language form like sounds, songs, rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, puns, spoonerisms, and grammatical parallelism, as well as the units of meaning to create imaginary worlds (Cook 2000). As Cook (2000) has it, the use of humour and language play in EFL is supposed to have the potential to create opportunities for the appropriation of L2 resources and also contexts in which access to L2 resources may be facilitated.

The first study (Prodanović Stankić 2011) was conducted as a part of an EFL course, *Integrated Language Skills 3-4*, taught as an obligatory undergraduate course at the Department of English Studies, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad. The main objective of this course is to develop students' communicative competence in L2: expand their knowledge of vocabulary, especially when it comes to vocabulary dealing with specialised topics, help them achieve a better control over grammatical structures, particularly more complex ones, increase their writing and reading comprehension skills. Besides, the aim is to develop their overall fluency in

English, enable them to communicate effectively and effortlessly using both informal and formal registers.

The participants of the study were 80 undergraduate students who were at B2 level at the beginning of the study and were supposed to reach C1 level of the Council of Europe Framework (CEFR) at the end of the academic year. They were mainly native speakers of Serbian (N=64), and some of them were native speakers of Hungarian (N=8), Slovak (N=5) and Ruthenian (N=3). In the study they were randomly divided into the experimental and control group. All students were exposed to the same input in terms of lexical and grammatical resources, yet in the control group the instructor presented or elicited the same lexical units using examples that were categorised as humorous. The study lasted one semester or 60 classes of 45 minutes.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in the study, since the aim was to quantitatively measure the achievement of the experimental and the control group and to observe whether there were any noticeable differences in class management and students' attention and participation in in-class activities. The qualitative method was based on instructor's observation, recorded in a journal, while the quantitative method pertained to comparing the average results students from the control and experimental group scored in the tests. Testing and assessment were done in the standardised way, following descriptors that are recommended by the Faculty.

In this study, language and culture-based humour was intentionally used in the syllabus as a resource for revising grammatical structures, for learning new vocabulary as well as developing students' awareness of nuances of meaning, expanding knowledge on word formation and idiomatic expressions. As it is argued (Prodanović Stankić 2011: 257), students at this level are familiar with all the most important grammatical issues and generally have a good degree of knowledge, still, they need more self-confidence in using a wider range of lexical and grammatical resources. Drawing on Schmitz (2002), who proposes that humorous discourse should be introduced in the initial stages of the teaching session, and that it should be continued throughout the language teaching program, different humorous forms were strategically implemented in the syl-

labus and each lesson. The humorous material was selected to suit the linguistic competences of the students.

The instructor included a lot of authentic language material (video clips, texts in which personal anecdotes are retold, jokes, cartoons, witticisms, one-liners, jabs, excerpts from comedies, etc.) to introduce new vocabulary or for revision and practice. In that way, new items were embedded in humorous discourse of different kinds, but essentially humour revolving around language-based ambiguity, or culture was used. Some specific examples of resources used were the following:

- teaching materials taken from *English Grammar Book with Laughter* (Woolard 1999), which contains photocopiable exercises that can be easily used for tests and revision.
- funny cartoons that are followed by a caption containing either a polysemous lexeme or a phrase that can be further used to elicit from the students lexemes or phrases that are related to it; they turned out to be very useful (as exemplified by the Illustration 20 given below) since they visually depict the use of idioms, or the difference in spelling/meaning and word forms
- longer texts taken from the webpage http://languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/~myl/languagelog/
- a compilation of personal anecdotes, cartoons and stand-up comedian skits that was collected by the instructor, but also buy the students who were encouraged to share funny and entertaining content
- stand up comedian's performances that focused on culture-specific elements (e.g. *Dress to Kill* (1998) by the British stand-up comedian Eddie Izzard was very interesting and insightful because he compared and contrasted the American and British history, tradition, culture and stereotypes in an amusing way)

Judging by the results of the study (Prodanović Stankić 2011: 261), wordplay was by far the most 'laugh-provoking' resource, or rather rated as the most interesting, regardless of the level of language on

which it was based: phonology (sound), morphosyntax (grammar), semantics (meaning), or pragmatics (what is meant by what is said). These examples often represent some combination, crossing the linguistic boundaries in an unexpected and witty ways. Wordplay based on phonology was used for practicing pronunciation and spelling, and when based on morphology, it was helpful in drawing students' attention to differences in meaning among different prefixes and suffixes, as in the example given in Illustration 20. Such examples were also used to elicit new word forms or revise the familiar ones.
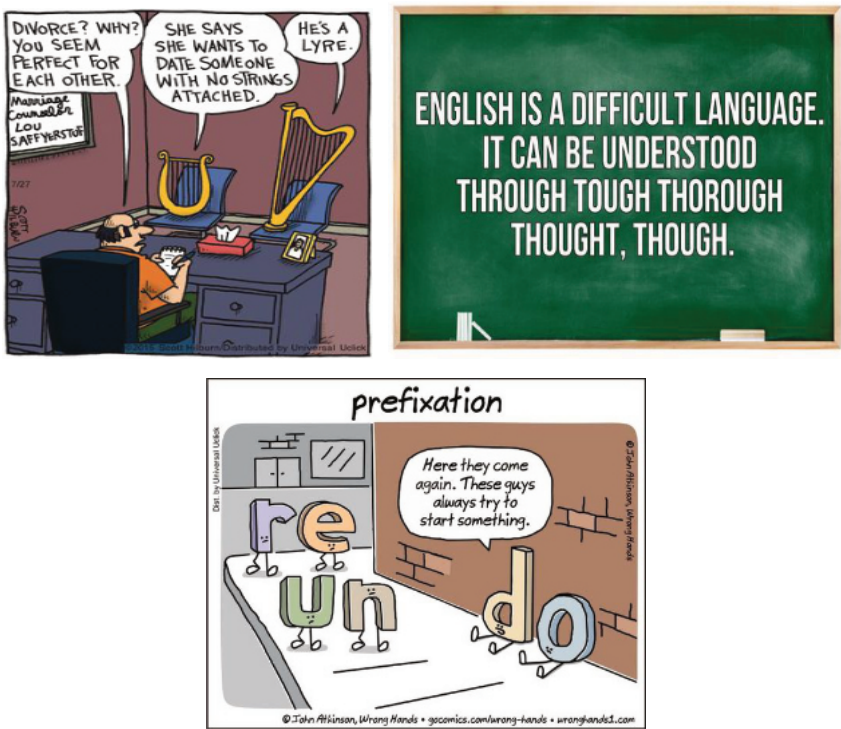

Illustration 20: Some examples used in the course

These findings are to some extent corroborated by Panić-Kavgić and Kavgić (2020), in a study that draws on elements of popular culture with the aim of prompting learning of new grammatical structures, and Özdoğru and McMorris (2013), who found that the

use of cartons with humorous captions helped in making the whole learning atmosphere more enjoyable.

Additionally, authentic video materials represented a useful source of multimodal humour, and in terms of verbal humour, they were abundant with instances of wordplay and playing with the pragmatic level of language structure, such as violating Grice's Co-operative Principle (Prodanović Stankić 2014, 2015). Also, these examples contained many references to extralinguistic knowledge, particularly culture: specific cultural models, norms, customs, stereotypes or tradition related to the UK and the USA. In that way they represent authentic material for teaching cultural concepts and accordingly cultural conceptualisations.

English was almost exclusively used in all interactions. Rarely was the use of Serbian included, and when it was, it was typically initiated by the students. For example, while trying to understand or memorise meanings of some idioms, or phrasal verbs particularly those that entailed some metaphorical mappings, some students suggested literal translation in Serbian, which usually included some reference to a popular song, or even started singing the melody, which caused laughter in the classroom.

The results of the study (Prodanović Stankić 2011: 262) indicate that the students who practised and learned new vocabulary in the humorous context did better in terms of specific tasks in language tests, such as reading comprehension tasks, multiple choice or key word transformations, which were based on the elements that were taught with using humour. In that sense, humour had a positive impact on retention and use. This is in line with Bell and Pomerantz's (2016: 13) argument that "language play can be useful in raising learners (and teachers!) awareness." Of course, raising awareness in reference to a wide spectrum of nuances in meaning is crucial for any learner. Furthermore, it is important to stress that the use of humour enables us to view communication as an act of interpretation, as it activates different kinds of meanings simultaneously, and that is perfectly suitable in the process of reaching a better command of the foreign language. Such a perspective also creates space for embracing spontaneous humour production in the classroom, not just initiated by the instructor, but the students as well. These spontaneous instances may represent perfect opportunities for in-

structors to support authentic interaction and dynamic meaning construction in the given context.

This becomes particularly evident in the instances in which humour is used to develop intercultural skills and competences. When both the instructor and the students feel safe to critically examine cultural practices, norms, stereotypes and values, and change the perspective from the serious to a non-serious one, they can benefit from learning more about the ways culture is encoded in language and cognition. Even though non-native speakers or language learners may need more time for humour comprehension, or may be unable to grasp the full meaning due to the fact that they do not share the same cultural conceptualisations as the native speakers, this whole process affects the learning process positively. As Lantolf and Johnson (2007: 886) point out, that has very important consequences for teaching. In effect, this means that less time would be spent explaining whether an utterance is right or wrong and more time exploring with learners how an utterance positions the speaker in relations to others and the cultural schema it evokes, how it may be understood and evaluated by others, and what is assumed to be shared knowledge and thus remains unarticulated.

Also, using humour in the classroom provides an insight into another cultural practice and adds to the development of intercultural skills. For instance, while discussing the general trend of integrating not only cultural facts in a foreign language curriculum, but intercultural awareness as well, Davies (2003: 1362) claims that for Americans, joking is "a significant manifestation of conversational involvement, because it represents an important way in which rapport is developed and maintained. Even though joking, as linguistic and interactional process, appears to be a universal human phenomenon, it is more obviously embedded than most communication in situated sociocultural context. Previous research in this field indicates that the challenge to the language learner in learning to participate fully in conversational joking is not only to acquire the appropriate social and cultural knowledge, but also to achieve an appropriate level of interpretive and productive expertise. Consequently, being a crucial part of real life communication, humour represents a valuable resource in language classes.

The other benefits of using humour were related to creating an environment in which everyone was more relaxed and at the same

time more focused on the given assignments and more willing to work, both in pair and group work activities and individually, which is in line with previous research in this field (Wagner and Eduardo 2011, Özdoğru and McMorris 2013). Besides, humorous discourse helped the instructor in class management, diffusing embarrassing situation, handling occasional fits of tiredness, and lack of motivation, which sometimes pose a serious problem in longer teaching sessions. Overall, the students described the instructor as very approachable in their final evaluation, which had a positive impact on group dynamics, creating encouraging learning environment in the classroom and establishing better rapport. According to the instructor's observations, the whole group was in total more cooperative than the control group and more willing to share ideas and experiences. Specifically, their attention span on average was rather longer than the attention span of students from the control group.

In another case study we did (Izgarjan and Prodanović Stankić 2015), the aim was to integrate humour in the literature course, and use humour to teach about some other concepts relevant for *19th Century American Literature,* a course offered at the undergraduate level of studies at the Department of English Studies, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad for students who are majoring in the English Language and Literature. Needless to say, our generation Z students are more used to fast-moving images and immersive worlds of video games than the steady pace of 19th century novelists, which was a starting point that motivated this study. In general, they tend to find the course material intimidating due to some perceived difficulty related to reading in L2 material that is rather long. Therefore, the main objective in this study was to increase our students' motivation for reading and to develop their reading comprehension skills in L2. Also, we wanted to draw their attention to the use of humour as a means for social critique, subversion of norms and conventions in a socially accepted way through fiction, and by doing that to develop their critical literacy as a specific skill.

In order to motivate them and encourage reading and critically analysing the content, we combined the traditional text with modern era renderings of the text in the video formats. In other words, the concept of multimodal learning was applied by using

films as a supplement to reading. The focal point through which these traditional and multimodal approaches were refracted and integrated was humour, which became a teaching resource in the new learning paradigm. In essence, the aim was to help the students identify and comprehend humour in different genres and through the process of constructing meaning relate its meaning to the functions it serves in the text.

The new learning paradigm did not entail only humour but developing literacy and critical thinking skills. Namely, it is well known that the development of fluency in a foreign language and reading comprehension skills are also closely tied to developing literacy in L2, intercultural and critical thinking skills. However, in the 21st century literacy does not imply only the ability to read and write texts, but also the ability to know other discursive and interactional norms in order to communicate and construct meaning (Kress 2003). In that context, "the traditional text is no longer the only constructor of meaning, as videos, music, social media, and multidimensional hypertexts carry the reader along meandering paths of meaning construction, in which the reader is an active agent" (Vaarala and Jalkanen 2010).

In order to develop these skills, we tried to motivate our students to read more in L2 and to critically examine the overall meaning of complex authentic written discourse. Therefore, one of the main objectives of the course in *19th Century American Literature* is to encourage students to read in English, so that they can get a better and deeper insight into the literary works as well as art and culture period to which they belong. In this study, we wanted to highlight various humorous forms that can be found in the assigned novels in order to encourage and motivate the students to read more and then to compare the text with various audio-visual prompts in which the directors also used parody and humour to play with some cultural concepts.

First of all, in light of identifying the opportunities for introducing humour in the classroom, we drew on previous teaching experience. Typically, at the beginning of the course in *19th Century American Literature*, it can sometimes be daunting for the students to grasp all the important changes the American society went through in a relatively short period of time, from European colonisation, strict Puritan communities and slave societies to an independent

state. The introduction of the elements of humour proved to be very useful since it helped the students approach the task of analysing the American literature with more enthusiasm and motivation.

The key elements in these assignments were based on identifying the humorous parts in the text. The students focused on humorous keying in the literary works, by relying on the unexpected or incongruent use of some lexical item or a grammatical sequence. Their assignment was interpreting incongruity, which underlined both humour and Gothic 'horror' to illustrate American dualism. For example, we used several versions of film adaptations of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" written by Washington Irving alongside with the short story to illustrate how Irving's story can be rendered differently and how humour can be performed and indicated in different ways. While the Hallmark version is faithful to the original, it lacks the insight into the duality of the American vision that is much more successfully provided in the Disney version and especially Tim Burton's film through the usage of the elements of horror and humour. Burton's rendering of Irving's story amplifies the aspect of duality making it the focal point of his work. He skilfully blends the elements of horror and humour, often in the same scene, approaching grotesque, as it is evident in the scene when Ichabod applies his newfangled forensic skills and gets all sprayed with blood which horrifies him revealing his anxieties behind the veneer of a city detective (Illustration 21).

(33) (video clip Sleepy Hollow https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2k0mUKGYUQE)

Illustration 21: Screenshot of the film

(33) No tale was too gross or monstrous for his
capacious swallow. It was often his delight,
[...] to con over old Mather's direful tales,
until the gathering dusk of the evening
made the printed page a mere mist before
his eyes. Then, as he wended his way, by
swamp and stream and awful woodland, to
the farmhouse where he happened to be
quartered, every sound of nature, at that
witching hour, fluttered his excited imagi-
nation [...] The fire-flies, too, which
sparkled most vividly in the darkest places,
now and then startled him, as one of uncom-
mon brightness would stream across his
path; and if by chance, a huge blockhead of
a beetle came winging his blundering flight
against him, the poor varlet was ready to
give up the ghost, with the idea that he was
struck with a witch's token.
(Washington Irving, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*)

In the excerpt given above (example 33), the students discussed Irv-
ing's mockery of the obsession the early American settlers had with
witchcraft and devilry. Irving juxtaposed the main character's own
superstitions with his self-proclaimed scientific view of the world
and the responsibility as an urban teacher to dispel any misgivings
the inhabitants of the Sleepy Hollow had.

It has to be mentioned that despite their relatively high profi-
ciency level of English (C1 according to CEFR), the students strug-
gled with recognising humorous elements and incongruity created
through incompatible scripts, which is expected, due to Irving's spe-
cific style and their reading skills in L2. Essentially, the instructors
need to develop students' understanding of incongruity and script
opposition prior to introducing anything else, while trying to help
them build their sociocultural knowledge related to L2 (Wulf 2010:
159). When the students grasp the humorous mechanism, they can
focus more on other elements entailed in the humour production and
the elements activated in the given context.

Films as a different kind of genre rely on the multimodal narrative, and humour is both verbal and nonverbal (as can been seen in the video, example 33), so in that sense, it was easier for the students to recognise both the humorous intention and different forms and functions of it. This is certainly attributed to more humorous keys found in multimodal content that lead them to such an interpretation. Similarly to Irving, Burton uses archetypal images of the Gothic genre (haunted place, witchcraft, living dead, etc.) showing the extent to which they have become a part of our collective consciousness. However, by emphasising the Gothic elements, he creates caricatures and derives humour out of parodying them. Our students often commented that watching and discussing Burton's contemporary reading gave them a deeper insight into Irving's story. The interdisciplinary approach proved valuable in the discussion of various uses of humour, but also different sociocultural realities against which these uses of humour can be interpreted. It was very useful for them to intersect several perspectives and learn how to draw their own conclusions.

While Hallmark's and Disney's version rely more on nonverbal humour, slapstick and burlesque, Burton predominantly uses irony, grotesque and parody. We also explored different ways in which the directors and screenwriters tackled gender roles and the dynamics between urban and rural environments. This is in line with the argument advanced by Bell and Pomerantz (2016: 172), who say that

> To understand humour, one has to engage with both what is actually present in an interactional moment and one's assumptions and expectations about what should have been there. This can be particularly challenging for L2 learners, because their interpretive repertoires may differ from those of other users of the language of instruction.

Ultimately, the incongruity of the scripts on which both the humorous and gothic elements are based, coupled with visual and nonverbal humour in the films used in the classroom, aided the students in the process of grasping these concepts and other issues related to

19th century American literature. The analysis of humour, linked with irony and parody, but also with the elements of horror helped the students to understand better the writers' attitudes toward the American society as well as the political, social, religious and economic aspects of the changes it underwent. Also, they learned that humour interpretation depends a lot on the overall context, not just the socio-cultural context, but the ways it is foregrounded and presented.

One of the advantages of combining different perspectives when it comes to different authors and interpretations of the same text is related to facilitating the process of developing critical literacy. Namely, the students learn not to take anyone's interpretation for granted or as the only one. Rather, they are encouraged to reflect on them and provide their own view and apply the same methods in the analysis of other types of texts.

Equally valuable was the students' conclusion that it is very difficult to translate humour not just in different media, but also in different languages. They became more determined to read the assigned texts in the English language, rather than Serbian, despite their initial difficulties, in order to be able to better appreciate nuances of meaning. The discussions about various ways the original story gets reinterpreted in films also convinced them that films should be used as a supplement to reading and not as a complete replacement. This is in line with the argument that in the 21st century, literacy cannot be restricted only to text, but it should rather include different forms of expression that account for its inherent multimodality (Prodanović Stankić and Jakovljević 2022). Moreover, the educators in the 21st century need to be aware of the fact that meaning-making in different cultural and social contexts implies relying on multimodality, which needs to be included in the process of (re)designing curricula and syllabi.

Applying humorous content to language and literature teaching had manifold consequences. First of all, as our study shows, the learning material was more interesting and appealing to the students, which affected the learning outcomes in a positive way. The students were more motivated to read the novels and short stories that were assigned. They were better at the tasks that focused on retrieving specific vocabulary items from memory or understanding and discussing the nuances of meaning in a literary text, particularly

the fusion of the elements of humour and horror that is characteristic of some of the 19th century American writers. Also, the usage of audio-visual media with the elements of humour and horror to illustrate some of the aspects of the duality of the American vision, affected not only the class dynamics but, what is more important, the students' grasp of these issues. All this provided them with an additional context in which the task of understanding 19th century American literature became easier, since as Tsakona (2021: 146) argues that the multiple interpretations of humour and its context-dependent nature highlight the importance of context for interpretation and meaning negotiation.

The interdisciplinary approach that was based on the use of multimodality and humour led to the students' critical comparison of the director's rendering of a particular work of art and their own vision. As regards the instructors, this approach helped in leading the students beyond the literal meaning towards a critical reflection of the texts thy read.

5.5. Developing humour competence of EFL learners

Ultimately, our aim as educators is to develop our students' critical literacy, first in L1, but then in L2 as well. Taking into account the fact that English has achieved a genuine world presence (Crystal 2003) and a special status in every country, it is evident that English is the L2 for the great majority of the world's population. In addition to that, as Sharifian and Sadeghpour (2021: 1) argue, English is used by communities of speakers around the world to express their worldview and culturally constructed conceptualisations. In that context, learners of EFL need to develop their literacy, language and intercultural skills to find their position in the global job market, including the changing social world as well. This is undoubtedly a very daunting task, as literacy entails a whole range of sub-skills, necessary for understanding text (or multimodal input) and context. It the modern world literacy entails responding to this input too. Some researchers have challenged this skill-based view of literacy and view it as a kind of social practice (Barton 1994, Barton and Hamilton 2000) that needs to account for different forms and modalities and name it multiliteracy. This concept denotes the need

to become literate in different forms of language and other modes of representation, using new technologies and forms of social relationships. As Kalantzis et al. (2016) have it, multiliteracy refers to variability of meaning-making in different cultural and social contexts, and using multimodality, in which written linguistic modes of meaning interface with oral, visual, audio, gestural, tactile and spatial patterns of meaning. This view of literacy seems to be more suitable for educators in the 21st century, since they face new challenges in the process of (re)designing methodologies and pedagogical practices.

Humour, or to be more precise, humour competence has a very important role to play in that context, and for that reason it is argued here that it should become and intrinsic part of every classroom. First of all, it seems that humour can enable adopting a new, or a different perspective to a question or any issue that needs to be dealt with, due to the fact that the very essence of humour implies juxtaposing some opposed scripts in an unexpected way. As Bell and Pomerantz (2016: 177) have it, humour can help engaging learners in critical reflections about meaning construction. These critical reflections are based on the premise that "neither discourse nor our interpretations of it are neutral, and that discourse shapes our understandings of the worlds, ourselves and others" (Tsakona 2021: 149).

As it has been repeatedly mentioned in this book, humour is part and parcel of almost any social interaction, regardless of the mode. Also, it is more often used with some communicative intention beside the pure need to invoke mirth. As a result, humour typically indicates some sort of inequality, the (im)balance of power in the society, either in the contemporary or historical context. Grasping all of these elements, which are involved in cultural conceptualisations of one speech community may (to some extent) be easy to understand, and may represent some common knowledge, yet, when we consider the perspective of a L2 learner or a non-native speaker, all this can be quite difficult, especially if they are not prepared or equipped with some specific skills that can help them in the whole process.

As the studies described above suggest, sometimes the first problem L2 learner encounters is recognising and identifying the

humorous intention and the very instance of humour due to different barriers, but mostly linguistic, social and cultural ones. If we disregard the pure linguistic barriers, which are gradually removed by increasing one's proficiency in L2, in order for someone to be able to overcome all of them, they should be equipped with meta-pragmatic or meta-linguistic awareness of humour. Such awareness can enable them to identify, comprehend, produce and respond to humour. In a similar vein, teachers and instructors need to be equipped with some specific guidelines that can help them develop humour competence of their learners. Attardo's (2002: 161) definition of humour competence of native speakers might be helpful in shedding more light on this elusive concept, but only partially:

> The capacity of a speaker to process semantically a given text and to locate a set of relationships among its components, such that he/she would identify the text (or part of it) as humorous in an ideal situation. This humour competence is analogous and in fact part of the semantic competence of speakers: being able to recognise a sentence as funny is a skill equivalent (but not identical, of course), for example, to being able to recognise a sentence as synonymous with another sentence.

As it can be seen, this definition foregrounds only the semantic competence (lexical meaning) without including the pragmatic one (for instance, how is the humorous intention signalled in the given context? what is the function of that utterance? etc.) or the cultural one, probably due to the fact that Attardo describes the competence of a native speaker, and his/her extralinguistic knowledge and cultural cognition are assumed.

When it comes to non-native speakers, or rather L2 learners, nothing should be assumed, as it is often the lack of cultural knowledge or cultural practice that hinders the effective use of humour, and not just language-based barriers. In addition to that, when the L2 learner moves away from identification and comprehension of humour in L2 to production or proving a response, some additional problems may arise, which are bound to potential risks and rewards. Bell and

Pomerantz (2016: 176) warn against these issues and suggest that this desire to expand learners' communicative repertoire needs to be linked to raising metalinguistic awareness and critical reflexivity. To this end, Heidari-Shahreza (2021: 238) suggests "a humour-integrated language learning as way to enhance learner's 'humour literacy' alongside their language proficiency".

These suggestions are interesting and may be very practical, as long as they are in line with the overall aim of developing critical literacy and some meta-cultural awareness that can help in the process of dynamic meaning construction. Any kind of discourse or multimodal input that gives some kind of a message is susceptible to interpretation and neither discourse nor our interpretations of it are neutral, regardless of the humorous content or mode of representation, as Tsakona (2021: 148-149) stresses. This has become more pronounced in all social interactions of all kinds, in and outside the classroom, in most situations that involve humour. We laugh at some funny joke or meme that is based on some stereotype, or share it further online, we listen to politicans or leaders of different kinds use humour abundantly to entertain us, but also to win over voters or distract our attention from some more serious issues. The use of humour in these social contexts leads to a following question: does humour provide social criticism aimed at deconstructing some deeply-rooted beliefs or does it rather provide a way for these beliefs to be dispersed even further? These issues related to raising critical awareness should be closely related to learning objectives in any discipline, not just in foreign language teaching and integrated in curricula and syllabi in order to develop multiliteracy of our students both in L1 and L2.

Nevertheless, foreign language teaching seems to be well-suited for developing humour competence that should entail not only communicative competence in L2, but meta-linguistic and critical awareness, as well as meta-cultural competence. Regardless of the fact whether foreign language teaching is part of the higher education curricula, a kind of training designed as a preparation for the job market, or a result of living in a multilingual and multicultural environment – globalisation has prioritised the need to focus on fluid discourse processes as comparison, contrasting, analysis, interpretation, inferencing, and de- and re-contextualisation, rather than

on predetermined, stable, predictable facts of a linguistic, functional, or cultural nature, as Kramsch (2014: 296) observes.

Globalisation and other social issues (such as, for example, the imposed shift to online teaching and learning during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020) have induced some inevitable changes in the educational context: authentic learning input has become more available, interaction has moved to different chat rooms, digital platforms and other forms of virtual classrooms, telecollaboration has put the language learner in the midst of intercultural and/or multilingual environment. As Kramsch (2014: 296) points out, in that context, language teachers are no longer sure of what they are supposed to teach or what real world situations they are supposed to prepare their students for. However, as it has been mentioned above, as much as the whole process of interacting fully might be very challenging for a L2 learner, it seems that the teacher or the instructor may help the learners a lot by providing them with opportunities to develop and practice their ability to critically reflect on these issues and to develop their meta-competence in humour and critical literacy.

L2 humour competence will be defined here as a multidimensional competence which includes communicative (linguistic and pragmatic) and intercultural competence, as well as critical and meta-linguistic awareness that can equip the L2 user with skills to recognise, identify, comprehend, respond to and/or produce verbal or multimodal humour in L2. In today's world, for the majority of learners, L2 implies English, specifically English as the international language (EIL). This is the current default context for intercultural communication.

What this fact entails is the following: English as the international language (EIL) is used by bilingual or multilingual speakers who have different cultural backgrounds and varying cultural conceptualisations, which they employ in language use, to explicate and negotiate, and to create or comprehend humour. Xu (2017: 709) states that "the EIL proficiency involves exploring various systems of cultural conceptualisations and practice in adopting effective communicative strategies when communicating in EIL context". It can be added here that effective communicative strategies would include a certain dose of flexibility and awareness of meta-cultural elements

that may vary even though they are associated with the same language, EIL, in the process of humour production and comprehension. Such view on humour competence can be easily applied to other domains as well, most notably translation of humour and developing humour translation strategies, as it was discussed in Chapter 4.

Moreover, when considering the fact that the overall transformation and globalisation of the labour market towards increasingly information-based production has led to necessary changes in higher education, it becomes evident that the increased need for the English language proficiency needs to be complemented with a whole set of 21st century skills. These 21st century skills, which include humour competence beside critical thinking, intercultural competence, collaboration, team work, etc., have to be integrated in teaching EIL, as proficiency in EIL would entail the whole spectrum.

The question, of course, remains, as to how to develop these skills in theory and practice. This is a new and underresearched topic, but it seems that Cultural Linguistics can offer some useful directions in the first place by offering some principles that can be further elaborated in specific strategies that could be implemented in curricula and syllabi designs. These general principles draw on Xu's (2017: 711) suggestions for developing meta-cultural competence: acknowledge, anticipate, acquire and accomplish.

If we start from acknowledging the facts that a) humour is intrinsic in any kind of communication; b) it can have different forms and functions c) it can be expressed in language and/or culture, or any other semiotic mode, then that makes the educators aware of the need to find place for it both in informal and formal conversations that surround teaching some content. Also, such an approach prepares ground for anticipating humours utterances, identifying and recognising them in the multitude of different forms. In addition to that, it prepares the learners to anticipate varying degrees of differences, particularly in the domain of cultural conceptualisations, and not just in terms of language-based differences related to various structures of some languages. Finally, the learners would acquire the competence and be able to accomplish employing this competence in producing humour in L2 on their own and playing with it creatively.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The chapters in this book are centred around the main idea that humour is part and parcel of joint interactions among people, which involve communication and culture. In order to get a better insight into this interface between language use, culture and cognition, we have analysed humour in discourse, its different forms, functions and underlying meaning. The last two chapters, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, deal with the application of humour in different domains, translation and education.

The beginning of the book sets the scene and offers a brief overview of concepts and theories that are most relevant today to the study of humour, particularly in reference to linguistic approaches. The main aim of the book is to explore humour, both verbal and multimodal, as a specific type of language use in the social and cultural context. Also, the underlying idea behind this book is to deconstruct the patterns on which verbal and multimodal humour are based, to describe how it gets its full potential in social interactions, and to determine how we can apply these findings in the domains of translation and education. Hopefully, this would represent a step towards a more holistic understanding of underlying humour mechanisms, its production and comprehension in different kinds of discourses.

The analysis is based on the theoretical and analytical framework of Cultural Linguistics since this framework offers an interdisciplinary approach that can examine and explain the interrelationship of language, mind and culture, three main elements of humour. Humour is an intrinsic human feature, and in that sense it is universal: our minds are wired for perceiving oddities or things that do not fit the expected patterns; or in other words, we are prone to perceiving incongruity and, given favourable circumstances, resolve this incongruity in a humorous act or laughter. People are also keen on taking an active approach to this and exploiting the potentials of

their language, culture and knowledge for the purpose of creating humour. Sometimes they do it for sheer pleasure and mirth, however, it is also done to pursue some other intentions and purposes.

As a double-edged sword, humour can serve both positive and negative social functions, since it can both unite people by solidifying bonds and sense of belonging to a group, and divide people by establishing social boundaries and fostering discrimination. In that context, culture-specific elements come at play: we may have a universal propensity towards humour, yet, speech communities differ to a great extent in terms of what is funny in the given language and culture, and which mechanisms are typically used to create that humorous effect. This has huge consequences for translation and other acts of intercultural communication.

The analysis of verbal and multimodal humour from the perspective of Cultural Linguistics can account for this universality and specificities in several ways. First of all, humorous discourse, as any other discourse, embodies and reflects cultural cognition of the speech community. At the cultural level of cognition, meanings and conceptualisations appear to arise from the interaction between the members of a cultural group, and hence, studying these cultural conceptualisations can offer an insight into this group's cultural cognition. Cultural conceptualisations, as a theoretical and analytical tool, are quite suitable for the explorations of language but also of cultural artifacts, such as hybrid forms of multimodal humour shared on the Internet as well.

These hybrid forms of multimodal humour, which blend text, image and sometimes other modes have become globally popular and appreciated, even though they sometimes combine different languages or rely on culture-specific elements. Language has a crucial role in activating and highlighting these processes of localisation and globalisation through humour, in the first place, English as the International Language. In these uses, English either indicates the cultural conceptualisations related to these humorous forms, or guides the process of meaning construction, showing that the glocalised culture is far from being homogenous and uniform. This explains the predominant use of English in these examples as well.

This has considerable consequences for translation, as an activity that mediates between two languages, but also for any kind of

intercultural communication. If language encodes cultural conceptualisations, then adequate translation should find the way to preserve and explain these conceptualisations in the target language as well. This is in line with the view that cultural conceptualisations should represent *tertium comparationis* in the translation of culturally constructed elements. As it has been repeatedly mentioned in this book, humour is often based not just on playing with language, but with cultural elements as well, which is a huge challenge for translation. Yet, it seems that Humour Studies and Translation Studies can benefit both from this challenge, as humour puts the most important concepts in translation theory to test and the other way around: when mediated through translation, humour needs to preserve its power in other languages and cultures. Finding adequate strategies and methods that can be used as tools for achieving that is an important task Translation Studies have to deal with.

The other important application of humour is in the educational context, which was discussed in Chapter 5. Humour can serve many functions in education, and it can contribute both to the process of teaching and learning. In (foreign) language teaching it plays a significant role since humorous language is by definition ambiguous and entails multiple meanings that depend on the context, both in terms of linguistic and extralinguistic elements. In that way it can be a resource in developing not only literacy and language-based skills of our students but their transversal, or 21st century skills, particularly intercultural ones. With these caveats in mind, we hope to have provided some fertile ground for further analyses, contrastive and contextualised that may shed more light on the versatile functions and transformative nature of multimodal humour.

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