

**11TH HUMOR RESEARCH CONFERENCE 2021**

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# **Book of Abstracts**

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## Humor Representing Cross-cultural Environment in a Comedy Film *A Good Year*

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Uncle Henry: “Max-a-million, ask me what is the most important thing in comedy.”

Young Max: “What is the most important thing in com...”

Uncle Henry: “Timing”

*A Good Year*

The nature of humor within the comedy film *A Good Year* is analyzed following the discursive approach mentioned by Salvatore Attardo in terms of using humor pro-socially or anti-socially. Filming the two cultures in the movie makes it possible to perceive the humor as culture-specific with respect to the aspects of language use. The atmosphere of high-pressure London is expressed in the language by “Max-a-million” as opposed to the calmness of the vineyard estate in southern France represented in “A few vintages ago...” and “Many vintages later...”. Furthermore, the lifestyle in Provence is amplified by the simple pleasures of playing chess, listening to retro songs through the record player and even singing songs to the vine plants by the winemaker.

In addition, the concept of timing receives special attention in this comedy film. The notion of “timing” first explained by Uncle Henry to Young Max as the most important thing in comedy is later mentioned as the secret to riches and demonstrated by the aggressive strategy to sell bonds at London Stock Exchange by the grown-up Max. As explained by Doug Stevenson “For natural comedians, timing is an instinctive ability to know when to pause and for exactly how long. For them, timing is like the syncopation of music. At its best, comedic timing is the interplay of inflection, gesture, pacing, attitude and rhythm. It’s like jazz with words” (Stevenson 2000). The role of “timing” and the culture-specific nature of humor allow analyzing structural function of humor for the story of this comedy.

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## **The emergence of the Bernie memes.**

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On January, 20th, 2021, Joe Biden became the 46th president the United States. As is traditional, the inauguration took place at the US Capitol, outdoors. The temperature in Washington, DC, during that time of the year is usually quite cold. Due to Covid 19 social distancing restrictions, attendees were sitting six feet away from each others. As a result an image of Senator Bernie Sanders sitting on a chair and wearing a heavy coat and handmade mittens was taken. Soon it became a meme which spread extremely fast. This meme is interesting for numerous reasons, which will be explored in the presentation: first, we can pinpoint with accuracy the exact founder meme (Shifman, 2014) i.e., the original joke/meme that starts the process of meme production (memeiosis). This allows us to quantify the speed of memeiosis. Second, the affordances of the meme will be explored; the extreme simplicity of the meme (Sanders, sitting on a chair, wearing a coat and mittens) means that the number of affordances is reduced and this facilitates the task. Third, we will explore some of the semiotic-cultural features associated with Sanders that may have facilitated the spread of the meme.

**Miraculously Funny: Miraculous Ladybug and Cat Noir Humorous Fan-made comic.  
The effects of creativity and kindness from the fans.**

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Humor has been the closest friend of everyone especially some researchers. It helps everyone to feel the joy of life, understanding the psychological ideas of laughter, getting rid of nerves, expressing motivational support ideas, and especially enhancing and boosting creativity. Humor has been classified into some types including fandom-related jokes. Humor can be found in social media like Instagram where some of fans of TV shows and series create their account to share their comics. This idea is called fandom and some people who join the fandom sometimes understand the jokes that are shared by some accounts. The fandom that the author participates in and chose for the object of this study was French CGI animated comedy TV show *Miraculous Tales: Adventure of Ladybug and Chat Noir*, henceforth abbreviated into MLB/MLBCN. This paper aimed to analyze some funny posts that were created or shared by some accounts and connect them with their humorous creativity. The object of this study is fandom-related funny fan-made comic and the funny comments about it. The method of this study is qualitative. The result of this study showed that the fan accounts who created and shared their posts display creativity dealing with fandom-related humorous posts that only someone in the same fandom would understand, appreciate, laugh at, and repost it.

## **#badplasticsurgery: Theories of Humor and the Discourse of the Cosmetic Surgery “Disaster”**

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While nearly every academic discipline has made some contribution to research about cosmetic surgery, there has been very little discussion of the proliferation of humor sites and hashtags on the Internet devoted to jokes about cosmetic surgery “gone wrong.” An obvious explanation for the popularity of this discourse is the normalization of cosmetic procedures, but why do some people find procedures that did not turn out as intended so humorous? If we apply standard theories of humor, Superiority Theory might seem most applicable: participants in these jokes feel superior because they themselves have not been victims of a cosmetic procedure gone wrong. However, Incongruity Theory offers a richer account. Comments often focus on how the botched procedure makes the victim look “unnatural,” implying that they should not have had the surgery in the first place. However, a deeper examination suggests that the actual incongruity is between a bad procedure versus a good one that would have restored the patient to a “natural” look. This discourse is based on an assumption that only a youthful appearance is “natural” for women: what is incongruous is that we know that a procedure was carried out, rather than being able to continue believing that the patient just looks a certain way “naturally.” It is our inability to ignore the results of the procedure that creates the incongruity, and thus the (possibly uneasy) laughter. Theories of humor, can offer useful insights into the sexist beliefs and assumptions that underpin humor about cosmetic surgery gone awry.

## **The Mediating Role of Emotion Regulation Between Humor Style and Resilience**

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**Introduction-** Humor is commonly viewed as one of the personality strengths but the concept of humor styles challenges this unilateral view of humor. Moreover, the mechanism through which humor affects our positive traits is unknown. The present work aims at finding out this mechanism by testing the hypothesis that suggests the mediating role of emotion regulation, more specifically cognitive reappraisal emotion regulation strategy, between humor styles and resilience.

**Methods-** Convenience sampling was used and Google Forms containing the informed consent form and the questionnaires were shared via online platforms. Responses from 234 college-going students on humor styles, cognitive reappraisal, and resilience were collected and analyzed. Data analysis was carried out with the help of Excel 2019, SPSS V. 25, and PROCESS V. 3.5 for SPSS.

**Results-** Correlation data indicated the presence of relationships among two triads of variables: 1) self-enhancing humor, cognitive reappraisal, resilience, and 2) aggressive humor, cognitive reappraisal, resilience. These two triads were named models b and c respectively and were subjected to mediation analysis. Mediation analysis indicated that cognitive reappraisal fully mediated the relationship in both the models.

**Conclusion-** Self-enhancing humor and cognitive reappraisal led to a better resilience outcome. Both these variables were discussed to have similar constructs based on their measures. In the case of model c, cognitive reappraisal was found to nullify the negative effect of aggressive humor on resilience. It was interesting to note how cognitive reappraisal would mask the negative effect of aggressive humor on one's resilience.

## Towards Conversational Humour Analysis and Design

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Well-defined jokes can be divided neatly into a setup and a punchline. While most works on humor today talk about a joke as a whole, the idea of generating punchlines to a setup has applications in conversational humor, where funny remarks usually occur with a non-funny context. Thus, this paper is based around two core concepts: Classification and the Generation of a punchline from a particular setup based on the Incongruity Theory. We first discuss the state of Computational Humor as it stands today, and then use a feature-based Machine Learning model to classify humor. We explore a Template Based generator on thematic humor, generating placeholder entities to be then filled using various criteria. We then use and compare numerous Neural models with the help of human evaluators in a double-blind study. We then merge the rule-based and the neural approaches to create a hybrid model. The idea behind the hybrid approach is combining insights gained from other tasks with the setup-punchline model and applying it to existing Text Generation approaches.

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**Well, here I am. What are your other two wishes? A socio-pragmatic study of humorous pick-up lines used by men to approach women online.**

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In the last few years, and particularly after the situation with COVID-19, the line which separates our “real “physical lives and our digital lives is growing narrower. Love, sex and dating are no exception. According to Tinder statistics, the generalized lock-down situation resulted in an increase of Tinder matches and on the amount of time spent talking to them. Online, inasmuch as in face-to-face interaction, it is men who often approach women, and many do so by resorting to humor. Consequently, the linguistic reaction of women to different humorous conversational openers when used by men in online flirtatious contexts has been studied. Cute-flippant pick-up lines are, on the one hand, among the most recurrent conversational openers and, on the other hand, highly likely to generate dispreferred responses, even more so when they included direct or implicit sexual references. Therefore, it has been made the focus of this study to investigate, from a socio-pragmatic perspective, the responses uttered by women to humorous conversational openers. In order to analyze the answers, the responses have been classified according to attitude, Conversation Analysis theories, and Herbert’s Taxonomy of Compliment responses. Interestingly, the preliminary results seem contradictory. On the one hand, humorous conversational openers triggered one of the highest response rates and many of these answers included an initiation move. Notwithstanding, many of them transpired a negative attitude. Consequently, further investigations ought to be conducted in order to establish the success rate of using humorous conversational openers when approaching women online for flirtatious purposes.



## **Workshop: AI4Jokes -- towards a Neuro-Symbolic Approach for the Analysis and the Generation of Jokes**

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To understand a joke, the human mind must think actively and creatively to retrieve, associate, and construct knowledge. Can Artificial Intelligence also generate a joke? It seems that neither symbolic AI nor neural networks alone can achieve this. We are trying a neural-symbolic approach to this task within the framework of ML2R (Competence Center Machine Learning Rhine-Ruhr).

Currently, we are implementing a semi-automatic platform for joke analysis and generation, attempting to explicitly represent 'flows of thinking' to understand jokes. Following topics are planned for presentation and discussion.

1. An introduction to a geometric approach to unify neural and symbolic representations [Tiansi] 20'
2. Towards a Platform for Joke Analysis and Generation [Shichen and Tiansi] 25'
3. Joke Analysis using LDA [Siba and Alibay] 15'
4. Extracting Frames from Jokes [Writwick] 15'
5. Using Blender for Joke Understanding [Bitasta] 15'

## Memetic humor across generations: how does humor in memes on Covid 19 relate to age?

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(Online) humor can be a constructive way of dealing with psychologically and socially difficult situations (Vásquez 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic has affected social actions and interactions drastically during the lockdown phase (Jetten et al 2020). New laws obliged and lead social actors to practice interaction rituals in a socially distanced way, such as purchasing goods (Mondada et al. 2020), working at home and communicating via video conferencing, or homeschooling children. This in turn also lead to a complete exposure to some family members or a lack of personal and social contact. Finally, this resulted in the negligence in grooming, dressing and personal hygiene on one hand and wearing masks on the other hand (Jetten et al 2020), as well as social distancing in greetings (Katila, Gan, Goodwin 2020). We are collecting around 900 memes related to COVID-19 from multilingual German English linguistics students, their parents and grandparents to compare how online humor varies across generations. We investigate how repeating metaphorical concepts underlie multimodal creativity, for example, memes in which COVID-19 is the invisible enemy and the everyday person is compared to action heroe/ines or overworked parents are represented as zombies or alcoholics, etc. This ongoing study further investigates which memes emerged in the time of the lock down from April to June 2020 across gender and generations (the baby boomer generations, and generations x, y and z) and the second lockdown from October 2020 to February 2021. The memes are collected and are now analyzed applying concepts from multimodal interaction analysis (Norris 2019) and metaphor analysis (Hu 2020). We investigate which types of humor, humor topics and recurring metaphors appear and are related to age and gender and the phases of the lockdown.

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## **Cantonese and Korean speakers' comprehension and appreciation of L2 English jokes**

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Humour has long been deemed conducive to L2 learning, as it can help learners to lower their anxiety, sustain their attention during instruction, retain the newly acquired concept longer, have active and creative attitude towards learning, and more importantly, enhance their L2 pragmatic and communicative competence. Comprehending L2 jokes, however, is considerably challenging for many L2 learners, especially when the language is learned in a foreign language setting, and hence it has often been introduced only to advanced-proficiency learners. To address this issue, this study investigated how first language (L1) Cantonese and Korean speaker would comprehend and appreciate L2 English jokes. To extract more nuanced understanding, their L1 background, English proficiency, and different types of jokes were included as moderating variables. To be more specific, 69 L1 Cantonese and 89 L1 Korean university students answered a questionnaire that contained 30 English jokes in various types, i.e., lexical, morphological, syntactic, phonological, and cultural. Ten participants from each L1 group further completed a semi-structured interview that explored their English learning background, daily English use, and beliefs in the role of jokes in English learning. The results showed that L1 Cantonese speakers and/or advanced-level English speakers scored significantly higher on English joke comprehension, and morphological jokes were the easiest to understand for both L1 groups. Open-ended survey responses and interview comments further demonstrated that different English learning backgrounds and daily English use have significant impact on their ability to enjoy and appreciate English jokes.

## Harnessing Humor Arising from Misplaced Modifiers in Human-Chatbot Interaction

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The Computers Are Social Actors (CASA) framework posits that interactive computers are regarded as social actors and therefore subject to the social conventions guiding human-human interaction [1]. This effect becomes even more pronounced for human-like traits such as humor, which serves important social functions in conversation [2]. Misplaced modifiers can unintentionally lead to humor in a sentence due to the awkward placement of an adverb or prepositional phrase [3]. This awkward placement introduces ambiguity w.r.t. what the modifier is actually modifying. Essentially, the sentence can be interpreted in multiple ways. If we consider the following example: “My client has discussed your proposal to fill the drainage ditch with his associates.” [4], either (i) the client has discussed the proposal with his associates or (ii) the client will fill the drainage ditch with his associates. Humor arises from the incompatibility between (i) and (ii). We propose the use of misplaced modifiers to equip conversational agents (or chatbots ) with humor and present the evaluation of a prototypical interaction within the context of an advanced grammar lesson. This interaction simulates a chatbot designed to recognize the humor in such grammatical constructs, convey that it has perceived it, and harness it to explain the mistake in a way that resembles the relationship a learner would have with an educator. Outside of education, chatbots could look for opportunities to use misplaced modifiers on purpose, only to correct themselves immediately after and thus exploit the opportunity to introduce humor more naturally into the conversation.

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## **Language Learners' Reactions to IPAs' Sense of Humor**

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Intelligent personal assistants (IPAs, including Google Assistant, Apple Siri, Amazon Alexa and Microsoft Cortana), which are voice-activated agents enabling human-computer interaction, have recently been reported to find their ways into language learning as pedagogically useful agents (Dizon, 2017, 2020; Moussali & Cardoso, 2019). IPAs also use various forms of humor to better communicate with users and to compensate any performance limitations (Lopatovska et al., 2020). In order to understand the IPAs' sense of humor and their language teaching potential, this study investigated language learners' reactions to IPA's humor responses. A total of 42 English language learners (27 females and 15 males), whose language levels varied from intermediate to upper-intermediate, engaged in humorous interactions with one particular IPA (i.e., Google Assistant) installed on their mobile devices by using 15 funny prompts. The learners were then asked to rate the IPA's responses in terms of how funny they were and to share their perceptions of the potential use of IPA in language learning process. The results indicated that the learners rated most IPA responses as quite humorous and found the IPA's overall sense of humor higher than average. Additionally, male learners tended to rate the IPA's responses more humorous than female learners. Further, learners reported that IPAs could be highly useful agents to improve their overall English skills as well as the discrete language skills (e.g., pronunciation, vocabulary and fluency). Overall, this study shows that IPAs with some sense of humor have a lot to offer to language learners.

## **Soft Complexity Theory of Humor: Theorizing Humor as a Complex System through Fuzzy Logic and Soft Computing**

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Azad University, Iran

In this presentation, I will argue for theorizing humor as a nonlinear, dynamical, complex system. Initially, a snapshot of major classical and contemporary theories of humor is provided. Then, pointing out main challenges and pitfalls in concept and theory formation, I will outline key characteristics of complexity theory. Afterward, in light of the advances in complexity theory in other disciplines, I will put forth a sketch of complexity theory of humor. In so doing, I will draw upon the general features of complexity theory and humor scholarship to justify the suitability of such theoretical framework for humor. To operationalize complexity theory of humor, fuzzy logic and soft computing are then introduced. I will subsequently reflect on how humor can be (re)conceptualized and investigated within fuzzy-based soft computing. This is accompanied by examples from the relevant literature and my work in progress. Finally, some implications, limitations and future directions of soft complexity theory of humor are mentioned.

## **Humor-integrated Language Learning (HILL): Teaching with and about Humor**

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In the poster, I will initially elaborate on the pedagogical benefits of humor in the (language) classroom. Then, highlighting the theoretical and practical ties between humor and language, I will outline a recent pedagogical approach to teach with and about humor called humor-integrated language learning (HILL). HILL is further clarified through a discussion of related taxonomies and instructional designs to implement such methodology. Practical examples of HILL activities are also provided to see how HILL is manifested in practice. Having discussed humor as and for language learning within the purview of HILL, the poster presentation ends with a number of practical considerations and recommendations for language teachers to use humor in the classroom. It is intended to be a 15-slide poster presentation, fully graphical and student-friendly, hopefully to the benefit of the education-minded audience of Humor Research Conference.

## **Who Told the Joke the Computer Made: The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence Humor.**

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To the layperson as well as in some of its deceptive self-representations, Artificial Intelligence (AI), not least in its application to natural language processing, has recently become frighteningly powerful and human-like. This leads to ethical issues coming to the fore as to who is responsible for the output of these systems at various levels. General AI systems have to make life-and-death decisions when coupled with self-driving cars and weapons systems. Language-generating AI systems produce racist and sexist output reflecting the human-generated data the systems have learned from. These AI systems are also used increasingly to classify as well as generate humor, which raises the same general, but also specific ethical issues. The latter stem from the specific meaning constellations in humor leading not least to the deniability of its messages. We aim to outline the relevant key points to initiate a discussion, we think needs to happen now.



## **Masculine Hegemony through Humor in Pakistan: A Linguistic Study**

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The present paper investigates the selected Pakistani jokes which are spread through social media in order to serve the purpose of masculine hegemony through humor. The study has been conducted through a qualitative and quantitative analysis of sexist internet jokes which are against Pakistani women. The study aims to explore how gender stereotyping through internet jokes promotes gender inequality and masculine hegemony in the Pakistani patriarchy social system. Negative attitudes and prejudice are communicated and enacted in hidden ways through jokes (Allport, 1954; Freud, 2004). The present article also explores how people express their unconscious through jokes and infuse them in the minds of readers and the article further finds out how language is used and manipulated. The paper is four folded which investigates women's representation in terms of 'women in language'; 'women in public and private spheres'; and 'women as sex object'. The study is carried out by employing the framework of Van Dijk's (2003) ideological discourse strategies.

**Blending and verbal humor –  
A case study on covidiota in Spanish tweets**

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Blending as a mechanism of word formation is frequently associated with a humorous intention (e.g., Varela Ortega 2005: 95; Pharies 1987: 280), achieved by “conjoining word parts in unusual ways” (Lang 1990: 199). The humorous effect arises due to an element of surprise, or incongruity, which has been established as a crucial aspect of humor in various theories (Attardo 2020: 78ff.).

This paper presents a case study on Span. covidiota (< Engl. covidiot, < COVID-19 + idiot) as an example of a potentially humorous blend, which has been spreading on social media platforms since March 2020. The paper focuses on the question of how the humorous effect can be detected in the surrounding text: What markers and signaling elements can be identified in Spanish tweets containing covidiota?

A possible approach to the detection of humor is to study laughter and smiling as observable reactions to humor (Attardo 2020: 38ff.). In online communication, laughter and smiling can be expressed by means of emojis, which are also used to signal irony or sarcasm (Guibon & Ochs & Bellot 2016). This will be investigated by a diachronic investigation of the use of covidiota in Spanish tweets from March to December 2020. First analyses of emojis as possible markers of humor or irony in the data suggest that humor may also be conveyed by other means, and that the humorous effect of the blend can weaken over time.

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## The role of humor in the coronavirus pandemic: a linguistic analysis of memes

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The current coronavirus pandemic, which brought millions of victims and has an enormous impact on global economy, is believed to be the biggest challenge since World War II. In this objectively gloomy reality humor seems to be a strategy to cope with the situation as it gives relief allowing for emotional discharge in stressful situations (Huizinga, 1998). Humor depends on a common context, which is particularly true in the case of the pandemic as all the nations share this experience. However, some differences may be observed due to cultural conditions, but also local rules and restrictions related to the pandemic. This fact confirms the statement that humor is strictly related to the social context. In addition, humorous content is most likely to spread (Hurley, Dennett, Adams Jr, 2011), especially when it refers to current events (Grabowski, 2019), which can explain the popularity of internet memes on the pandemic. Memes, replicable culture units (Dawkins, 1976), now transferred online, are a special instance of coronavirus-related humor. They are in fact jokes in which some information is left implicit (Attardo, 1990). In the paper, selected examples of Polish memes on the pandemic will be analyzed in reference to the reality depicted as well as the linguistic means used. In the memes subject to analysis, the comic effect is obtained through puns, juxtapositions and intertextual references which seem to play a major role as this extralinguistic reality is the background for the memes.

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## **How Your Brain Gets a Joke: A Review of Major Findings on the Cognitive Neuroscience of Humor**

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There is a large literature on the cognitive neuroscience on humor processing (See Kennison, 2020 for review). The presentation will provide an overview of the cutting-edge brain imaging research documenting what brain activity during humor processing. Research studies employ a variety of methodologies, including case studies of individuals with brain damage (acquired or degenerative), EEG/ERP, fMRI, electrical brain stimulation (EBS), and deep brain stimulation (DBS). The data are consistent with a multi-stage model of humor comprehension, first proposed by Suls's (1972; 1977). Suls's model involved two stages, the detection of an incongruity followed by the resolution of the incongruity, which leads to an experience of mirth. The research findings support at least three stages of processing. Two stages are the same as those proposed by Suls (1972) with a third stage: human elaboration. Each stages is linked to increased activity in multiple, different brain regions. The findings support the view that humor is one of the most complex human abilities, requiring substantial neural resources. Research also shows that there are individual differences in brain activity during humor comprehension, many of which appear to be biologically based. There are exciting future directions for brain imaging research on humor processing, specifically the possibility of being able to identify a neural humor signature in fMRI scans (perhaps aided by machine learning algorithms) (See Just et al., 2010; Vargas & Just, 2020). Identifying a neural signature for humor could be useful in facilitating research to improve mental and physical through humor interventions.

## **Use of bumper stickers as icebreakers in EFL classrooms**

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Humor is believed to be one of the oldest but most efficient ways of attracting learners' attention and increasing their interest in learning and teaching settings. Therefore, humor can be utilized to increase learner interest through creating a positive and relaxing classroom atmosphere. This becomes especially important in leading learners to produce language since in most EFL contexts, it is not easy to get students out of their shells and get them to express themselves in English. In order to achieve this, language teachers try to benefit from a variety of materials that will appeal to their learners such as funny anecdotes, stories, and videos in the classroom. It is believed that bumper stickers, viewed as common communicative resources, can be one of interesting materials that can be used as icebreakers in EFL classrooms in countries where this use of communication prevails. This presentation aims at introducing bumper stickers as valuable resources that can be used as triggers that will encourage learners to express their views and ideas regarding messages carried out through these stickers. Moreover, the presentation also aims to suggest several ways of using bumper stickers as icebreakers in EFL classrooms by using stickers available in learners' their local contexts in addition to the examples in several other countries.

## **Joking with an unseen audience: Conversational humor in roundtable discussion podcasts**

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The audio podcast medium has risen in popularity over the last decade, becoming a source of news and entertainment for many. Despite this increasing cultural salience, there remains a lack of sociolinguistic inquiry into the nature of talk within this format. Roundtable discussion-based podcasts, those in which podcast hosts and guests speak extemporaneously about a given topic, provide a rich site for research into a particular type of conversational discourse: they are conversations performed for a listening audience, with the goal of providing information, analysis, and entertainment. As a result, talk on these podcasts includes not only on-task discussion, but friendly banter and humorous verbal play among cohosts. Following Bateson (1972), I refer to these segments of talk as play frames, and apply insights from prior analyses of conversational humor to explore these playful moments within politics-focused podcasts. I argue that in this context humor provides a source of connection between the hosts and with a community of listeners around a “shared repertoire of prior texts” (Becker 1994: 165). I demonstrate how, by drawing on shared domains of knowledge including previous episodes, subject matter expertise, and cultural references, podcasters are able to collaboratively transition in and out of play frames and rekey (Goffman, 1974) serious discussion as humorous. Invoking these shared references allows podcasters to construct a sense of community that encompasses both hosts and audience.

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## Touching and Joking in Conversation

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This study examines the uses of interpersonal touch in jokings in everyday conversation. The data for this study are a collection of 82 interpersonal touch tokens identified in approximately 14 hours of video recordings of 17 everyday interactions in Mandarin Chinese (henceforth Mandarin) among adult native speakers of Mandarin from mainland China. Predominantly (in 16 out of the 17 interactions), the participants are not in a romantic relationship (operationally defined as heterosexual or homosexual couples). An examination of the data shows that sustained touch (see the image below) recurs in conversational jokings in two interactional and sequential environments: sequentially-disaligned jokings (i.e., jokings that disrupt the speaker's ongoing turn- and activity-in-progress) and jokings after extended disagreement. Sustained touch seems to perform several functions in the two environments. In sequentially-disaligned jokings, the initiation of touch displays the speaker's orientation to the concurrent talk as disaligned with the projected talk- and activity-in-progress. Sustained touch secures the recipient's continuous participation in the sequentially-disaligned jokings, and requests the recipient's appreciation of the jokings. After extended disagreement, sustained touch displays intimacy and invites the recipient into intimate interaction with the speaker. In both environments, sustained touch seems to delimit the boundaries of a joking. The findings in the study contribute to the research on multimodal conduct and conversational humor in interaction.

## Gender Construction Through Humorous Irony in Stand-Up Comedy

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This paper employs a sociopragmatic and discursive analysis to examine how humorous irony influences on the discursive construction of the feminine gender identity in subversive stand-up comedy. We have attempted to show that irony could be used as a device available to be harnessed for challenging expectations about feminine behaviour and labels in planned discourse (Holmes & Marra, 2002; Chiaro & Baccolini, 2014; Yus, 2016; Linares Bernabéu, 2020).

Accordingly, we have analysed the FEMMES-UP corpus that includes a total of 15 stand-up acts, collected during 2017 and 2018. In particular, these stand-up performances were represented by 15 female Spanish comedians. Each one of these stand-up performances has been divided into humorous sequences, which are understood as a series of jab lines and punchlines, which revolve around a specific topic and which are interrupted by laughter, applause and even, comments from the public (Ruiz Gurillo, 2019). In this respect, the corpus FEMMES-UP consists of 504 sequences. This comes to a total of 805 minutes of recording and 97.749 words.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis of the corpus show that humorous irony is a tool for the comedian to distance herself from the message and achieve a comic effect thanks to the feelings that are shown together with her dissociative attitude. Data shows that the use of humorous irony in this type of discourse implies a negative evaluation about something or someone and, at the same time, promotes solidarity with the in-group. This has been exemplified in the analysis of the humorous sequences in which we have seen that, despite the implicit criticism in irony, the audience is able to infer the comedian's positive attitude and humorous intention. In sum, our study shows that stand-ups use humorous irony to disassociate themselves with certain gender-based behavioural norms, to construct alternative identities and to question some heteronormative norms in a creative humorous fashion.

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## **Joking (six feet) apart. Dialogical account of reasoning and perspective taking in humorous interaction**

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Humour is inherently dialogical, even in canned joke tellings and contexts such as social media, as example (1) shows.

(1) (from Twitter1)

@andrealongchu: guys will stand 5'8" from you and call it 6 feet

@chodedc: Most guys can't tell what six inches look like let alone six feet. . .

Interpreting humour requires multiple perspective taking, which has been described using the notion of different “story worlds” in the analysis of jokes (Ritchie, 2018). This perspective taking is inherent in a dialogical approach to interaction in general (Linell, 2009), and involves us making inferences based on topoi, principles of reasoning recognised within a socio-cultural community (Breitholtz, 2020). One important consequence of the dialogicity of humour is the possibility that interlocutors might interpret the same piece of discourse in distinct ways, and the source of humour is often a play on this potential for multiple interpretations. We argue that it is the juxtaposition of contrasting topoi which creates the humorous effect. For example, (1) relies on two contrasting topoi: “safe-distance” topoi that people should stay 6 feet apart and a “dating website” topoi that men who are 5'8" tall often claim to be 6", with “6 feet” as a point of overlap between the two.

(1) <https://twitter.com/andrealongchu/status/1246445034792239106>

# An exploratory longitudinal analysis of child humour in interaction: from 12 to 36 months.

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Many researchers pointed out the relation between humour (appreciation and production) and cognitive development (for reviews: Martin (2007); Mireault and Reddy (2016)). In order to characterise humour development rigorously we propose to apply the General Theory of Verbal Humour framework (Attardo, 2001). As a first starting point, we decided to focus on Script Opposition (SO). Grounding on previous work in adult conversational humour (Archakis and Tsakona, 2005) we postulate 2 criteria for the identification of child humour:

1. The occurrence of laughter from the child;
2. The presence of a script opposition appreciated/intended as amusing.

We looked at a longitudinal corpus of 4 American English children (Providence Corpus, Demuth et al. (2006)), analysing 30 minutes of video-recorded interaction with their mums at 5 time-points with an interval of 6 months between observations (12, 18, 24, 30 and 36 months). For each humorous episode identified, we annotated the SO (normal/abnormal, possible/impossible and actual/nonactual) and the Domain (Natural World laws; Social habits, moral rules or use of objects; Language phonology or semantics). We observe a progressive emergence of humour in relation to different domains (Fig. 1a): Language from age 18m, violation of moral rules from 24m, and incongruous use of objects from age 30m. Regarding SOs (Fig. 1b) we observe the opposition normal/abnormal and possible/impossible since 12m, while we do not observe any actual/non-actual opposition, possibly by reason of being cognitively more complex. We plan to extend our dataset in order to balance for the high inter-individual variability (e.g. Fig. 2).

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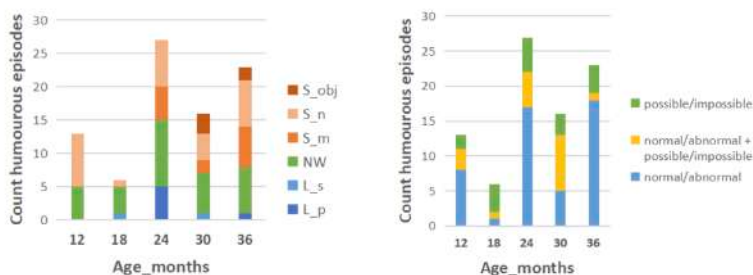


Figure 1: Classification of humorous episodes appreciated or produced by children over time according to *Domain* (a) and *Script Opposition* (b).

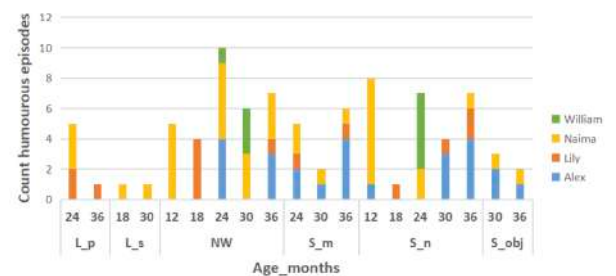


Figure 2: Humorous episodes classified according to *Domain* for each child over time.

## The Function of Laughter in Children's Literature of Atrocity

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In children's literature of atrocity, humor is used to provide distance between the traumatic experiences of the characters and the child reader's identification with them. However, laughter also creates connection for empathetic engagement, serves as a coping mechanism and catharsis, and encourages self-reflection for readers. Leon Rappoport reports that in nearly all theories of humor there is the "common underlying idea that our humor is an instinct that must have evolved to serve some important purpose for adaptation or survival" (14). This paper shows how humor functions in three children's books: *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* by Sherman Alexie, *Refugee* by Alan Gratz, and *Inside Out and Back Again* by Thanhha Lai. It shows how authors incorporate different types of humor in different contexts to achieve various types of engagement with and responses to the texts. My analysis shows how humor is used initially to create intimacy between characters and readers, thus increasing empathetic engagement. Secondly, humor is used to provide young readers with comic relief in works that could be overwhelmingly dark. Educating young people about historical and ongoing atrocities through literature requires balancing historical accuracy and respect for victims with consideration of the intended audience. Authors must entertain and engage readers while repeatedly reminding readers that while these works are fictional, they are based on real human experiences. The characters must therefore be humanized, and humor is used often to that end.

## **The Malabar Punch and the Origin of Cartooning in Malayalam**

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Cartooning in the Indian sub-continent began in the mid-1800s, inspired by British magazine Punch; or, The London Charivari. From English journals cartoons spread to vernacular magazines. The art of cartooning was thus adapted to suit the local conditions and regional print cultures. Vidooshakan (1919-1935) or The Malabar Punch, the pioneer in publishing cartoons in Malayalam, took its cue from the Punch as well as the vernacular Punch magazines prevalent in various Indian languages. A study of cartoons in vernacular print media provides a unique opportunity to understand how the cartoonist negotiated with the ideological, material, technological and cultural milieu, how the medium was indigenized and contextualized in the print media. The current paper studies Vidooshakan, in an attempt study the cultural, political, economic and technological forces that shaped the origin of cartoons in Malayalam, especially focusing on the attempts at adaptation and indigenization of the media to cater to local readership.

## **Horrifying Humor: Intersections Between Cruelty and Comedy**

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A few hours after the media had aired the video of a policeman shooting a mother and her son in Taniqui, Tarlac, Philippines five days before Christmas 2020, a (now deleted) Tiktok video showing two men and a woman went viral as they mimicked scenes from the vicious killing. Seconds before the short video ended, the three had managed to let out a boisterous laughter. The paper aims to pay serious attention to laughter as an activity replete with history and politics. Using the Taniqui incident as a demonstrative case, the project explores intersections between violence and humor to understand how laughter serves instrumental to the normalization and reproduction of ideologies bent on maintaining the culture of impunity in the country. The discussion therefore makes contribution to the emergent scholarly understanding of popular culture and national humor in the Philippines.

## Some interactional reasons of failed humor in conversations

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This presentation is part of a larger project investigating the interactional reasons of failed humor in conversation. Based on a corpus of eight French interactions, 261 failed humorous items were identified, among 1346.

The analysis of failed humor has shown that it appears into two configurations: within a serious frame, and within a humorous frame. Five interactional reasons of failure have been identified: (1) change of frame, (2) of topic, (3) of target, (4) dynamics of the conversation, (5) constraints of the storytelling. Except the first one, all the reasons appear in both configurations.

Reasons 1 to 3 concern the participants' roles and actions. Here, humor may be considered a way to change the current orientation of the conversation. Reason 4 refers to the way that humorous and serious frames succeed one another alternately. If such dynamics can probably increase the acceptance of the switch into a humorous frame, it can also lead to failed humor. E.g., while participants are engaged in a humorous frame successfully developed, at some point, one of the participants can become serious. At that moment, humor produced by the other, while fitted with the humorous frame, becomes irrelevant because the other participant has already moved on. Reason 5 concerns the constraints storytelling weighs on the teller and the hearer.

Through some examples, I will analyze in more depth these reasons and show that they can appear together, as a cluster of matching clues of failed humor.

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## Variation of Humor Type in Tweets amidst the Covid-19 Pandemic

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With the increased usage of social media platforms owing to the pandemic and lockdown situations all around the world, we have observed an exponential increase in the production of content revolving around the pandemic. With a huge chunk of this content falling under the genre of humor, especially from content creators, government institutions, entertainment companies, etc., this study aims to analyze the type of humor which peaked at each moment in the development of the Covid-19 pandemic. The paper tries to find a correlation between the tweets of a certain type of humor and the situation of the pandemic to understand if it is possible to deduce a trending topic, either universally or culturally specific, with respect to the pandemic based on the humour type. Further, this study discusses the importance of contextual knowledge in order to achieve the above mentioned objective. An in-depth analysis was done by evaluating 3000 tweets scraped using pandemic related keywords from Twitter. The use case for the findings of this study includes but is not limited to individuals or organisations who are involved in discussions regarding crisis, brands for building digital marketing strategies and behavioral researchers.

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**El humor in two idiomas: spanglish memes from a pragmatic, sociolinguistic and cultural perspective.**

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From the mythical figure of the *pachuco*, to the vast Chicano literature of today, the consolidation of *Spanglish* as a dynamic language typical of many generations who live the mixture of American culture with its Latin roots every day, has proliferated in social media from the production and reproduction of content on pages specialized in multilingualism and Latino groups in the United States, among other spaces, making the traditions and culture of these communities known to a wide spectrum of users. Based on the analysis of a corpus of memes extracted from Facebook and Twitter, this proposal will analyze some examples that show the humorous dynamics present in the apparent incongruity of the combination of two languages, the interpretation of which is only possible based on pragmatic information and sociolinguistics of the meme. Although this type of content is designed for a Mexican and Latino audience of inhabitants of the United States, the truth is that the comic effect also has scope among Spanish speakers from the American continent who are familiar with that are addressed in this type of pieces, while they make a clear reference to attitudes, beliefs, customs and values of many Spanish-speaking communities, expanding the recognition of those deep bases that are shared beyond geographic location



## The Role of Vidusaka and the Tradition of Hasya in Sanskrit Theatre

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The paper addresses the basic question of whether to consider Hasya as a comic or a humorous tradition of India. The study evaluates the difference between the comic and the humorous as it analyses the role of vidushaka in Sanskrit theatre. Vidushaka is one of the significant characters in Sanskrit theatre who accompanies the Nayaka or the hero. This character is roughly translated as a jester and is one of the mediums through which the audience is amused. While some critics view Vidushaka as a humorous character, others observe him as a comic character. Addressing the classical question of the difference between the comic and the humorous, the paper scrutinises the category of Vidushaka. The genesis of Vidushaka is presented from Bharatamuni's *Natyasastra* through Dhananjaya's *Dasarupaka*, Bhaja's *Sringaraprakasha* until Viswanatha's *Sahitya Darpana*. Giving an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the character, the study presents vidushaka as a character in Sanskrit plays, especially through the works of Bhasa, Kalidasa and Sudraka in comparison to the categories of Jester and fool as seen in English plays. Establishing the nature of vidushaka and distinguishing between the comic and the humorous, the study exhibits the evolution of vidushaka through other art forms, ancient ones like Koothu and Koodiyattam as well as contemporary forms like stand-up comedy and analyses the relevance of the character. With a detailed survey of vidushaka, theoretically as well as practically, the study fundamentally attempts to locate the tradition of Hasya as either under the purview of the comic or the humorous.

## **The Magic of Using Humor in the Classroom!**

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Traditional teaching methods used to inspire and motivate today's students are not getting the job done! Today, teachers are competing with advanced technology that is capturing the interest of these creative minds and entertaining them, as well. While researching new techniques to capture the attention of easily bored students, some trailblazers searching for strategies that delight students have discovered the power of humor in the classroom. The use of humor to grab the attention of students and motivate them to participate in learning and applying new concepts has alerted teachers that in the future humor as a powerful teaching tool is becoming serious business.