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ATTITUDES AND EMOTIONS IN HUMOUR: THE IMAGE OF THE PROTAGONISTS AS PORTRAYED IN SELECTED JOKES

Abstract

The purpose of the paper is to analyze various jokes which evoke different emotions. The present study explores the relationship between jokes and feelings. The paper aims at analyzing the function of the selected jokes in Polish and indicating the occurrence of various attitudes and emotions which one can have towards the protagonists portrayed in the jokes. The feelings on the part of the reader and the protagonists will be analyzed with reference to the image of the protagonists as it is presented – the way they behave towards their interlocutors.

Keywords: humor, joke, feeling, emotion, protagonist, image, theories of humour

1. Introduction

Humour is a universal phenomenon. Regardless of the language, culture, social factors or circumstances humour is ubiquitous and observable in a number of situations: “Independently of their age, sex, social or economic status, culture, or epoch, people are capable of finding things funny, and laughing at them” (Raskin, 1985: 1-2).

It is important to stress that the content of the jokes, the description of the protagonists and their images are far from real and do not reflect real features or phenomena, while behavioral patterns are usually exaggerated. Nevertheless, the main purpose of a joke is to evoke laughter which constitutes an integral part of our everyday life. Hence, humour teaches us how to laugh at our imperfections, disadvantages, shortcomings and flaws.

The paper discusses the various attitudes, emotions and feelings which one has towards the protagonists of the jokes and the jokes themselves. The analysis of the given material is based on the image of the protagonists who are portrayed in selected Polish jokes which vary thematically. Thus, the protagonists depicted in the jokes represent various social groups. The image of the protagonists is demonstrated in connection with the feelings one can have towards them, but also the feelings one has towards the whole joke.

1.1. Theories of humour

Regardless of the non-serious nature of the area of investigation – that is humour, it constitutes a subject of interest of the research – not only on the part of linguists, but also philosophers, psychologists and other researchers. Thus, there are a number of theories of humour that have appeared. Nevertheless, it is crude to stress that none of the theories given so far gives an exhaustive account of all the aspects associated with the function of humour. “Thus, each theory accounts for some aspects or types of humor, but fails to give a complete picture. To gain a broad understanding of humor, we need to combine insights from all the different theories” (Rod, 2007: 32). As a result, the theories of humour are based on a mixture of various theories due to the complicated nature of humour.

There is a traditional classification of theories of humour into three main categories: *theories of incongruity*, *theories of superiority / disparagement* and *theories of release / relief*. Theories of incongruity, which are cognitive in nature, are based on the occurrence of inconsistency, contradiction, discrepancy or lack of a certain harmony. Hence, “According to incongruity theories, the funniness of a joke depends on the unexpectedness or surprisingness of the punchline (Rod 2007: 71). The sudden shift of the interpretation is usually achieved by the ambiguity, which is ubiquitous in a number of jokes based on wordplay.

Theories of superiority / disparagement, categorized as social-behavioral, are generally based on aggression, hostility, criticism, mockery or even contempt (Rod, 2007: 45). There is a lot of humour, including jokes which is intended to ridicule, mock and emphasize the negative features and ways of behaviour of particular people, nations, groups (social, political), professions / occupations. In this way, by highlighting someone’s drawbacks or laughing at others’ stupidity, one feels better or superior to others. Similarly, the alleged superiority might also refer to the fact that by understanding a joke, the listener of the joke feels superior as opposed to others, who are unable to understand the real depth of the joke (usually based on wordplay).

Finally, theories of release / relief / relaxation, categorized as psychoanalytic and based on psychological effects caused in the recipient of the joke.

The two most recognized theories are often used when analyzing humour:

-*The Semantic Script Theory of Humour (SSTH)* – based on the notion of a “script”. According to this theory, one deals with the combination of scripts, that is the script oppositions (mutually incompatible scripts) where we receive an alternative or another interpretation of the story (Raskin 1985). The purpose of the theory is “to provide a model of a hypothetical information-processing system that is capable of making sense of a humorous text but not necessarily the way humans actually do it (Rod, 2007: 89).

-*The General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH)* – a broader linguistic theory developed by Raskin and Attardo, constitutes an extension of the Raskin's SSTH and is based on the addition of 5 Knowledge Resources: the script opposition (SO), the logical mechanism (LM), the target (TA), the narrative strategy (NS), the language (LA), and the situation (SI) (Attardo, 1994: 223). "Raskin's original SSTH theory corresponds to the SO component and is thus just one subset of this broader theory" (Rod, 2007: 91).

1.2 Attitudes, feelings and emotions

Whenever we are exposed to humour, there are always some feelings, attitudes and emotions which accompany us. It is important to stress that psychologists distinguish feelings from emotions dividing the former into simple – distress and pleasure, anger, fear, sadness and joy and complex – also referred to as emotions, such as greed, envy, love (Puzynina, 2000, quoted in Rubene, 2012: 103). Emotions can be positive or negative, weak or strong. According to Nowakowska-Kempna (1986, 1995), feelings are divided into: *affects*, such as surprise, anger, *dispositions*, *moods* and *attitudes*. Whereas *affects* are defined as "specific happenings in the human psyche", *dispositions*, *moods* such as joy, sorrow and *attitudes*, such as reluctance, friendliness, etc. (Nowakowska-Kempna, 2000, quoted in Rubene, 2012). Thus, "dispositions towards specific happenings are understood as affects" (Nowakowska-Kempna (1986: 71).

It is necessary to stress that there are a number of different emotions, such as depression, sadness, hatred, love, happiness etc., but there does not exist a name for the emotion which one gets when exposed to humour. In other words, it is difficult to define the real emotion caused by humour. However, there have been a number of proposals made by theorists, psychologists, philosophers and other researchers of how to define the feelings which one obtains and experiences when exposed to humour, such as hilarity, exhilaration, cheerfulness, amusement, etc. (Rod, 2007: 8). However, linguists identify emotions with feelings and do not distinguish between them. Hence, continues Rod (2007: 8), "Some researchers have used the word *mirth* to refer to smiling and laughter, which are facial and vocal expressions of the emotion rather than the emotion itself, and therefore should be kept distinct." In other words, laughter is a result of experiencing the emotion of mirth and is therefore considered to be a social behaviour (Rod, 2007: 9). It must also be stressed that due to the non-serious nature of jokes, regardless of how much they ridicule, mock or even offend people, their features and behaviour (as we know there are plenty of jokes based on making fun of people), the feelings which we experience are always positive. The only difference might pertain to the intensity of the abovementioned "mirth" elicited by the occurrence of humour – the alleged funniness of the joke

in this respect. In other words, taking into consideration the fact that jokes are not based on a real communication and that the purpose of the jokes is to cause a humorous effect, evoke laughter, make others laugh and make them feel “good”.

2. The scope of the study

The study aims at analyzing the function of jokes – more specifically, on focusing on the images of the protagonists in the jokes analyzed. It also attempts to demonstrate the connection of the selected jokes with various feelings and emotions. The jokes which have been selected are thematically varied in order to indicate the variety of emotions which they evoke. In the analysis, selected Polish jokes - both linguistic and situational – which have been selected randomly will be discussed and dealt with.

3. Research questions and objectives

The following research questions are posed in the paper:

- What feelings do the presented jokes evoke?
- What is the connection of the analyzed jokes and the feelings or emotions?

4. The structure of the joke

A joke constitutes a brief, amusing story which consists of *a setup* and *a punch line*. *The setup* is supposed to create some expectations, *the punch line* involves an unexpected and necessarily funny shift of the meaning with a view to causing incongruity which constitutes an indispensable element in the formation of a humorous effect (Rod 2007: 11).

Taking into account the ubiquity of the jokes and different types of jokes, one can classify them in terms of a different structure:

a) one – liners

I haven't spoken to my wife in years; I didn't want to interrupt her.

Marriage isn't a word... it's a sentence.

Marriage is an adventure, like going to war.

I don't want to have sex; you're my wife, for God's sake!

b) question – response

Co mówi prostytutka po obsłużeniu klienta? „Baza wirusów została zaktualizowana”.

What does a prostitute say to her customer?

Your virus database has been updated.

c) dialogue

My wife claims that I don't take care of my children. I can't stand it anymore!

-How many children have you got?

-Two...or maybe three?

A woman was telling her friend, "It was I who made my husband a millionaire." "And what was he before you married him?" asked the friend. The woman replied, "A multi-millionaire".

Man: I want to share everything with you.

Woman: Let's start with your bank account.

Mother: "Why are you home from school so early?"

Son: "I was the only one who could answer a question."

Mother: "Oh, really? What was the question?"

Son: "Who threw the eraser at the principal?"

Jokes are divided into: *linguistic / verbal and situational / referential* (Raskin, 1985, quoted in Brzozowska, 2000). It is not difficult to distinguish between those two types of jokes. A linguistic joke is based on the occurrence of a particular key word or phrase which must not be replaced with another one. Hence, whenever the function of jokes is analyzed, two disambiguation processes are taken into account: *disjunction* and *connection*. Whereas *disjunctors* (Raskin's script-switch trigger) pertains to both *referential / situational* and *verbal / linguistic jokes*, *connectors* (which is usually defined as *any segment of text that can be given two distinct readings*, Attardo 1994: 96) appears in *linguistic / verbal jokes*: In other words, whereas *the connector* indicates two or more different meanings of the same word or phrase, *the disjunctors* –which is based on *script-switch trigger* introduced by Raskin refers to "the element of the text that brings forth the passage from the first to the second script actualized in the text" (Attardo, 1994: 203) and thus the passage from one isotopy to another causing a change in the interpretation.

The three jokes given below are examples of situational / referential jokes.

Małżeństwo siedzi przy obiedzie. Żona do męża: - Wiesz Stasiu, kiedy pomyślę, że nasze małżeństwo trwa już 25 lat, to ciepło mi się robi przy sercu. Mąż odpowiada: - Daj spokój Helena, po prostu cycek wpadł ci do zupy.

A married couple is sitting by the table. A wife says to her husband: -You know, Staś, the very thought of having been married for 25 years makes me elated. The

husband responds: Give me a break, Helena – the thing is that your tit ended up in the soup.

Mother: “Why are you home from school so early?”

Son: “I was the only one who could answer a question.”

Mother: “Oh, really? What was the question?”

Son: “Who threw the eraser at the principal?”

Teacher: Did your father help you with your homework?

Student: No, he did it all by himself.

However, the examples of verbal / linguistic jokes where one can observe the occurrence of the expressions which are based on the ambiguity thanks to which, as a result, one also obtains two different interpretations. Moreover, the reply (the punchline) which one gets is undeniably incongruous with the setup and thus evokes laughter. These are the following examples based on ambiguity which gives rise to the formation of implicatures and thus other interpretations:

“Daddy,” a little boy asked his father. “How much does it cost to get married?”
“I don’t know, son. I’m still paying for it.”

Co mówi prostytutka po obsłudze klienta?

“Baza wirusów została zaktualizowana”

What does a prostitute say to her customer?

Your virus database has been updated.

5. Analysis and discussion of the selected jokes

With a view to analyzing the function of the jokes and the connection of the jokes with the emotions evoked by them, we have selected 35 Polish jokes which vary thematically. These are the following jokes which have been chosen for the analysis.

1)

Na zjeździe językoznawców:

- ... w różnych językach są pojedyncze i podwójne zaprzeczenia, które mogą oznaczać zarówno negację, jak i potwierdzenie, ale w żadnym języku nie ma podwójnego potwierdzenia, oznaczającego negację...

Głos z sali:

- Dobra, dobra!

At a linguists' symposium:

-...in many languages there are single and double negations, which can mean both a negation and a confirmation, but there's no language in which there is a double confirmation, which would be a negation...

A voice coming from behind:

-Right, right!

The protagonist's – here the linguist's argument about negation has been questioned and refuted by the utterance “dobra dobra” – “right, right” a repetition of the word „dobra” – “right”, which constitutes a disjunctive and undeniably evokes laughter. It clearly indicates that the presenter is simply mistaken and thus unreliable. Although in such contextual settings fervent discussions the purpose of which is to question or refute the arguments of the presenter are common during such symposiums and conferences, here we subconsciously assume that the knowledge of the presenter is insufficient and thus his argument has been questioned so easily. The feelings which we have in this respect might be negative towards both the presenter and the listener: the former might evoke negative emotions due to the lack of knowledge or preparation, the latter might be associated with lack of respect and good manners.

2)

Panie doktorze, proszę przyjechać do mojej żony!

- A co jej dolega ?

- Nie wiem, ale jest taka słaba, że musiałem ją zanieść do kuchni, żeby mi zrobiła śniadanie.

Doctor, please come to my wife.

-And what's wrong with her?

-I don't know, but she is so weak that I had to take her to the kitchen to make breakfast for me.

This situational joke depicts a man who is unable to cope with daily duties on his own and who is dependent on his wife. His helplessness or possibly laziness evoke negative attitude towards him.

3)

Na wykładzie studentka pyta profesora seksuologii:

-Co zazwyczaj robią mężczyźni po odbytym stosunku?

-10% odwraca się na drugi bok i zasypia, 10% wychodzi do łazienki.

-A pozostałe 80%? – pyta dalej studentka.

-No cóż, ubiera się i wychodzi.

A student asks her professor of sexuology in class:

-What do men usually do after sex?

-10% turn over on their backs and fall asleep, 10% go to the bathroom.

-And the remaining 80% - asks the student.

-Well, they get dressed and leave.

In the joke given above, we observe the violation of social norms as it refers to unfaithfulness on the part of men. Thanks to the disjunctive „-No cóż, ubiera się i wychodzi” – “Well, they get dressed and leave”, we learn that 80% of the men betray their partners. Thus, the feelings which we have towards the protagonists are negative – the joke evokes contempt and disrespect towards the men.

4)

Ksiądz i zakonnica przepychają się w drzwiach. Nagle zakonnica zarumieniła się i mówi:

-Hmm, proszę księdza... ojoj

-Nie ojoj tylko klucz od plebanii...

A priest and a nun come accidentally push each other. Suddenly, the nun blushes and says:

-Uuu, priest, uuuuuu.

-No, that's not it – this is the church key.

Similarly, in this joke we observe the occurrence of a sexual innuendo in which socio-cultural norms are violated taking into account the protagonists of the conversation. It is simply inappropriate for the nun to behave like that. The nun's erroneous thinking is clarified by the priest, which in turn causes laughter. The feelings which we have towards the nun are negative due to her inappropriate behaviour. In fact, in this contextual setting with these interlocutors, it evokes disgust and contempt.

5)

Rozmawiają dwie koleżanki:

-Widziałas, jak Kaśka zbrzydła?

-No, aż miło popatrzeć.

Two friends are talking to each other:

-Have you seen Kate? She became uglier.

-Well, that's right. What a nice picture!

This is a conversation between two women. They are gossiping with each other about Kate who has become uglier. The very gossiping, which usually occurs behind someone's back, is perceived negatively. Instead of sympathizing with her, the two protagonists are happy about Kate's mayhem – and the final response, which is a disjunctive implies that they are not friendly towards Kate. Thus, the feelings which a reader has towards the two protagonists talking to each other are definitely negative – it is socially inappropriate to be happy at someone's misfortune though the protagonists seem to delight in another woman's misfortune.

6)

Rozmowa małżeńska.

-Kochanie, koledzy z biura powiedzieli, że mam bardzo zgrabne nogi.

-Naprawdę? A nie wspomnieli nic o wielkiej dupie?

-Nie, o tobie nie rozmawialiśmy.

Two married people are talking:

-Honey, your colleagues from the office said that I had well-shaped legs.

-Really? Didn't they say anything about your big ass?

-No, we didn't talk about you.

In this joke a woman is talking politely to her husband and is bragging about her nice legs. Her husband is referring to her in a derogatory way trying to reduce if not eliminate her enthusiasm and excitement. In the punchline, the final “-Nie, o tobie nie rozmawialiśmy” – “No, we didn't talk about you”, evokes laughter. Due to the use of the rude word „dupa” by the husband, we regard him as insensitive and unkind.

7)

-Dlaczego się smucisz?

-Bo będę ojcem...

-Ale to jest powód do radości!

-Niby tak, ale nie wiem jak powiedzieć o tym żonie?

-Why are you so sad?

-Because I will be a father.

-This is a reason to be happy.

-Maybe, but I don't know how to tell my wife about it.

In this joke a man is presented as an immature, irresponsible and unfaithful husband. We find out that his own wife is not the mother of his child. The question „Niby tak, ale nie wiem jak powiedzieć o tym żonie?” – “Maybe, but I don't know

how to tell my wife about it” constitutes a disjunctive which enables us to reinterpret the message. Undeniably, although the fate of the wife due to her husband’s infidelity is unavoidable, the final effect is humorous. From the point of view of the cooperation principle, the statement “Bo będę ojcem...” – “I will be a father” violates the maxim of quality and quantity and as a result it is ambiguous. The protagonist is not happy although normally everyone would be in this situation. In other words, in the setup the feelings which we have towards the protagonist are positive. Similarly, the very asking about the cause of the sorrow on the part of the first protagonist indicates interest and concern, which evokes positive feelings in a reader. However, in the punchline, which is reflected by „Niby tak, ale nie wiem jak powiedzieć o tym żonie?” – “Maybe, but I don’t know how to tell my wife about it”, which at the same time functions as a disjunctive, we are made to reinterpret the message and obviously, the feelings which we have towards the protagonist are undeniably negative as socially such behaviour is unacceptable. However, our feelings would be positive if he shared the pregnancy with his wife.

8)

Jeden facet mówi do drugiego:

-W zeszłym tygodniu obciąłem ogon mojemu psu, bo moja teściowa przyjeżdża.

-Tak? Ale nie widzę związku.

-Zrozum, nie chcę, żeby sobie pomyślała że ktoś się cieszy z jej wizyty.

A man says to another one:

-Last week I cut off my dog’s tail because my mother-in-law is coming.

-Yes? But I don’t see the point.

-Try to understand, I don’t want her to think that there is someone who is happy to see her.

In this joke, one observes the absurdity of the situation. The feelings which we obtain here are negative – it would be difficult to imagine someone cutting off a dog’s tail just to prevent the dog from wagging its tail due to the arrival of the mother-in-law. The mother-in-law is apparently disrespected, scorned and despised by her son-in-law. The main protagonist – the man is depicted as a crazy, fanatical, insensitive, abnormal and cruel person who hates his mother-in-law, hurts his dog and who behaves totally unpredictably. The feelings which we have towards the son-in-law are negative – his behaviour evokes contempt, disgust and pity. On the other hand, the son-in-law’s behaviour might be perceived as positive since his actions are well-thought out and carefully planned. In other words, he is intelligent and thus predicts that the dog will be happy to see the mother-in-law. Hence, looking at it this way, the feelings which we have towards the main protagonist are positive

– he deserves praise and acknowledgement due to his ability to predict the consequences.

9)

Teściowa do zięcia:

-Nigdy się nie rozumiemy! Ja jestem zagorzałą katoliczką.

Zięć do teściowej:

-Ja też jestem za gorzałą.

A mother-in-law to her son-in-law:

-We never understand each other. I am a fervent Catholic.

The son-in-law to his mother-in-law:

-I am also for vodka.

In the joke, we observe the play of words – the pun, which the joke is based on. This is a conversation between a mother-in-law and her son-in-law. She admits that she is a fervent, adamant Catholic while he asserts that he likes vodka. The pun is based on the ambiguity of “zagorzałą” – “fervent” and “za gorzałą” – “for vodka” which are identical in the pronunciation, but differ in spelling and meaning. The word “też” – “also”, which indicates that the son-in-law agrees with his interlocutor although in fact they are talking about two different things, which undeniably contributes to the funniness of the conversation.

10)

Przychodzi blondynka do sklepu RTV:

-Poproszę telewizor z lotnikiem.

-Chyba z pilotem?

-Nie wiem, jestem w tych sprawach zupełnym lajkonikiem.

A blonde comes to a TV shop”

-Can I have a TV with a pilot.

-With a remote control – this is what you mean, right?

-I don't know, I am “a person dressed as a Tartar riding a wooden horse during a Cracow Corpus Christi Day festival”.

The words which she uses have nothing to do with the context although they sound similar to those which should have been used in this respect: “lotnik” – “pilot” vs “pilot” – “remote control”, “laik” – “a complete amateur” vs “lajkonik” – “a person dressed as a Tartar riding a wooden horse during a Cracow Corpus Christi Day festival”. The funniness of the joke in this respect is based on the confusion of

the words made by the blonde. As a result, by the wrong use of the words, the blonde is portrayed here as dumb, unintelligent and even stupid.

11)

-Dlaczego David Copperfield musiał odwołać swój występ w Polsce?

-Nikt nie był nim zainteresowany. W Polsce nie jest niczym niezwykłym, gdy coś znika.

-Why did David Copperfield have to cancel his performance in Poland?

-Nobody was interested. In Poland there is nothing unusual about things which disappear.

This joke is an example of a joke which makes use of a stereotype about Poland and Polish people. It pokes fun at Polish people and the country. It implies that in this country stealing is common and ubiquitous. It also refers to Polish people who are portrayed as potential thieves. In other words, the joke insults or at least mocks Polish people and the country by depicting them in a negative way. The act of stealing in Poland is mentioned here in an indirect way and the joke evokes laughter by comparing David Copperfield's performances in which objects disappear to the disappearance of objects in Poland due to stealing, such as cars, money, etc.

12)

-Dlaczego nie powinienes potraćć Polaka jadącego na rowerze?

-Możliwe że to twój rower.

-Why shouldn't you jostle a Polish person riding a bicycle?

-It is possible that this is your bicycle.

Similarly, in the joke above, we also observe the reference to a stereotype about Polish people – their alleged bad features, such as stealing in this respect which is allegedly typical of Polish people. In other words, Polish people are portrayed as thieves. As a result, one must be careful and thus not associate with a Polish person as it might be dangerous. The feelings and attitudes which we have towards Polish people in this joke are definitely negative.

13)

-Zdanie z 10 wyrazami i 4 kłamstwami?

-Uczciwy Polak jedzie na trzeźwo swoim własnym samochodem do pracy.

-A statement with 10 words and 4 lies:

-An honest Polish person, sober, is driving his own car to get to work.

In the joke above, we observe that a typical Polish person is depicted in a negative way. Since all the positive features portrayed in the punchline are based on a lie, it indicates that Polish people are neither honest nor sober. Moreover, they are thieves and reluctant to work.

14)

-Gdzie kojarzą się najbardziej dobrane pary?

-W akademiku. Przed pierwszym każdego miesiąca studentka jest goła, a student ma długi...

-Where do the best relationships start?

-In a dormitory. Before the first of each month a female student is naked and a male student has debts.

This joke is based on a sexual innuendo where the protagonists – students in this respect – are presented in a negative way. They are depicted as immoral and immature whose primary concern is sex. Whereas male students pay for sex, which is immoral, antisocial and scornful, female students prostitute themselves in order to make money, which is also socially unacceptable and inappropriate.

15)

Na egzaminie profesor pyta studenta:

-Z czego się pan uczył?

-Słuchałem wykładów pana profesora.

-O, to pan nic nie umie!

During an exam a professor asks a student:

-Which materials did you use to study?

-I listened to your lectures, professor.

-Uuu, so that means that you don't know anything!

The joke presented here reflects a conversation between a student and his professor. The student's utterance „Słuchałem wykładów pana profesora” – “I listened to your lectures, professor” did not result in a good reception on the part of the professor. In fact, it provokes the professor to express a hostile, impolite remark about the student's lack of knowledge.

The professor's final remark „O, to pan nic nie umie!” – “Uuu, so you don't know anything!” which is a disjunctive, criticizes both himself and the student. It implies that the notes taken during the lecture are not even insufficient, but unnecessary as they do not contribute to increasing the student's knowledge. Hence, the emotions

which we have towards the lecturer are negative – due to the fact that his lectures are worthless and that in fact he realizes that.

16)

Na egzaminie zaliczeniowym na biologii zdają student i studentka. Pytanie:

Jaki narząd u człowieka może powiększyć swoją średnicę dwukrotnie?

Student: -Żrenica.

Studentka: -Penis.

Profesor: -Panu gratuluje zdanego egzaminu, a pani wspaniałego chłopaka.

A male and female student are taking a biology exam. Question:

-What organ in a human being can double its diameter?

Male Student: -A pupil.

Female student: -A penis.

Professor says to the male student: -I wish to congratulate you on passing the exam and you lady – your boyfriend.

In the joke presented above, we observe lack of knowledge or ignorance on the part of the female student. At the same time, the words uttered by the professor in the punchline „Panu gratuluje zdanego egzaminu, a pani wspaniałego chłopaka” - indicate both politeness and impoliteness on the part of the professor. By congratulating the male student on passing the exam, the professor shows politeness and respect towards the student; however when referring to the other student, he violates social norms by interfering with the student’s private life. Thus, the feelings which we have towards the professor are mixed – depending on who he refers to.

17)

Szkoła Zarządzania, prawo. Wykładowca podchodzi do studentki robiącej na drutach.

-A co pani tutaj robi?

-Sweter

-A dla kogo?

-Dla narzeczonego.

-I on będzie w tym chodził?

-Tak.

-To musi panią bardzo kochać.

School of Management, Law. A lecturer comes up to a student who is knitting:

-What are you doing here?

-I’m making a sweatshirt.

- For whom?
- For my fiancé.
- Is he going to wear it?
- Yes.
- So I guess he must love you very much.

The very thought of knitting in class evokes laughter. Due to the circumstances, the student's behaviour is unacceptable. The professor, indirectly criticizes the sweatshirt which is being knitted by the student in his class by saying "To musi Panią bardzo kochać" – "He must love you a lot". This implies that the quality of the sweatshirt is not very good. The professor's critical remark might have to do with his student's inappropriate, disrespectful and offensive behaviour. He might be furious and offended by the situation. Similarly, the very thought of such a situation evokes negative emotions in a reader simply on account of the lack of manners and respect on the part of the student. Additionally, the professor's final, "innocent" remark, which is a disjunctive here can also be perceived as impolite.

18)

Na zajęciach profesor zadaje pytanie:

-Co wy będziecie robić po tych studiach jak wy nic nie potraficie?

Z sali pada odpowiedź:

-To samo co pan, wykładać.

A professor asks his students:

-What are you going to do after these studies since you know nothing?

A voice from behind:

-The same thing, just like you – to lecture.

An academic teacher or a lecturer is someone who is knowledgeable, intelligent and well-educated. In this joke, the lecturer is perceived as someone who does not know anything. Thus, this contradiction provokes laughter. In this context, the student's response is undeniably cheeky, offensive and rude and thus evokes negative feelings on the part of the reader. At the same time, it causes laughter as it implies the teacher's incompetence and ignorance – features which by no means pertain to the teacher. The impoliteness on the part of the student is also justified due to the professor's rudeness and directness.

19)

Przyjaciółka do przyjaciółki:

-Podobno twój mąż leży w szpitalu, bo coś złamał.

-Tak. Przysięgę wierności małżeńskiej.

A female friend to a female friend:

-It is rumoured that your husband is in hospital as he's broken something.

-Yes. The oath of marital fidelity.

The verb „złamać” constitutes a connector in this joke as it has two different meanings. The first interpretation which we obtain is literal and after the setup we predict that he broke his arm or leg. However, the punchline „-Tak. Przysięgę wierności małżeńskiej” – “Yes, the oath of marital fidelity” makes us change the interpretation of the message. Additionally, it implies that the woman contributed to his stay at the hospital by physical violence, i.e. beating her husband up.

20)

W samolocie stewardessa do taliba:

-Może drinka?

-Nie, dziękuję, za chwilę będę prowadził.

On the plane a flight attendant asks a jihadi:

-How about a drink?

-No, thank you. I will be flying soon.

In the joke above, we observe that a terrorist attack is pending. The flight attendant, who is polite and helpful, offers the main protagonist a drink. The response which she gets, which at the same time constitutes a disjunctive causes laughter as it implies that he is going to hijack the plane. The whole situation looks dangerous as it indicates that a lot of people will die in a plane crash. The feelings which we have towards the jihadi are both negative and positive. Our emotions are negative and provoke fear because of his insidious tactics and bad intentions the purpose of which is to kill people. On contrary, both positively and negatively, we perceive him as either honest or simply stupid when talking to the flight attendant. Both his honesty or stupidity combined with his bad intentions contribute to the funniness of the whole situation.

21)

Jedzie chłopak z dziewczyną autem. Chłopak kieruje, a dziewczyna siedzi z tyłu. Chłopak się odwraca.

Ona:

-Patrz na drogę! Patrz przed siebie, idioto! Na miłość boską, patrz, gdzie jedziesz!

On nie wytrzymuje:

Zamknij ryj, kretynko - cofam!

A boyfriend is driving a car, his girlfriend is sitting in the back of the car. The boy is turning back:

She goes: -Look out! Look ahead, you idiot! For goodness' sake – look where you're going!

He responds uncontrollably: -Shut your face, you cretin – I'm just backing back!

One of the two protagonists – the girl demonstrates concern she is scared that her boyfriend might cause an accident. However, she does not realize that they are going backwards and that, in fact, everything is under control. Hence, first our feelings towards her are positive – she is warning her interlocutor about the danger he is about to cause. Only later do we learn that he is not so careless and that she is not so bright, which changes our attitude towards her.

„Zamknij ryj, kretynko - cofam!” – “Shut your face, you cretin – I'm just backing up!” constitutes a disjunctive and makes the whole situation clear. At the same time, it forces us to reinterpret the message. After the reinterpretation, we discover that the boyfriend is not so careless as a driver and that his girlfriend is not so intelligent. The driver refers to his interlocutor in a derogatory way by using offensive words – “Zamknij ryj, kretynko” – “Shut your face, you cretin”. Thus, the feelings which we have towards the protagonists might have changed – both the protagonists are perceived as negative. The disjunctive „Zamknij ryj, kretynko - cofam!” - “Shut your face, you cretin – I'm just backing up!” reflects the boyfriend's directness, a lack of sensitivity, rudeness and hostility towards his girlfriend, which provokes negative emotions and attitudes towards him.

22)

W restauracji kelner pyta:

-Jak panu smakował chłodnik?

-Dupy nie urywa.

-Cierpliwości.

A waiter asks in a restaurant:

-Did you like the gazpacho?

-Well, it doesn't turn me on.

-Be patient.

This is a verbal joke which is based on two interpretations of the connector “dupy nie urywa”. There are two distinct readings of the expression – literal and figurative. The punchline “Cierpliwości” – “Be patient” causes us to reinterpret the intended meaning and undeniably provokes laughter. In this context, the first reading which we obtain is figurative – it indicates that the food was not as good as expected. Only later do we receive another meaning and interpretation of the phrase – the literal one. The feelings which we have towards the customer and the waiter

are negative. It is inappropriate for a customer to use such language when talking to a waiter / waitress in such a situation. Thus, we consider the customer to be rude. Similarly, the waiter has bad intentions towards the customers since apparently he is expecting bad consequences. However, the question made by the waiter in the setup indicates that he is interested and polite.

23)

Facet jedzie samochodem i słyszy w radiu dla kierowców:

- ... Uwaga! Jakiś wariat na autostradzie A4 jedzie pod prąd...

Słyszac to, odzywa się:

-Jeden wariat? Są tu ich tysiące...

A guy is driving a car and hears a message for other drivers on the radio:

-... Attention! An idiot is going ... On A4 highway.

-Hearing this, he responds:

-One idiot? There are thousands of them here!

This is another example of a referential joke which derides men as drivers. The protagonist does not realize that he is not the only one who is violating the rules of the road. In fact he is convinced that everybody is committing an offence except for him. This indicates his stupidity and carelessness. The reader's attitude towards the driver is apparently negative. However, "Jeden wariat? Są tu ich tysiące..." – "One idiot? There are thousands of them in here!" constitutes a disjunctive, which makes us laugh.

24)

Przychodzi szczęśliwy mąż do domu i mówi do żony:

-Kochanie, wygrałem w totka, pakuj się.

-Och to wspaniale, wyjeżdżamy gdzieś?

-Nie, ja tu zostaję, a ty wypierdalaj...

A happy husband comes back home and says to his wife:

-Honey, I won the lottery – pack your bags!

-Oh, that's great! Are we going anywhere?

-No, I'm staying here and you're getting the fuck out of here!

In the conversation above, we observe how disrespectful the husband is towards his wife. It implies that for the former, money is the most important thing. What is worse, he does not need his wife any more who he was probably dependent on before he won the lottery. The picture of the husband is presented here negatively – as insensitive, rude, selfish and ungrateful.

25)

Rozmawiają dwaj studenci:

-Jak mam napisać rodzicom, że znowu oblałem egzamin?

-Napisz: "Już po egzaminie, u mnie nic nowego".

Two students are talking:

-What should I write to my parents? I've failed the exam again!

-Write: "The exam is over, there's nothing new with me".

In this joke there are two students talking to each other. One of them has a problem and does not know how to inform his parents about failing the exam. The other student's advice „Napisz: „Już po egzaminie, u mnie nic nowego” – “Write: the exam is over, there's nothing new with me” constitutes a disjunctive and implies that the student keeps failing exams all the time. We infer that he is not intelligent and hardworking enough to study.

26)

Poszli studenci na egzamin.

Profesor:

-Mam dwa pytania: Jak ja się nazywam i z czego jest ten egzamin?

Studenci spojrzeli po sobie:

-Cholera! A mówili, że z niego jest taki luzak!

Two students are taking the exam.

Professor:

-I have two questions: What is my name and what exam is it?

The two students looked at each other:

-Damn it! And they say that he is so cool!

This is another joke about students who are also depicted here in a negative way – more specifically due to a lack of knowledge and carelessness, which is contrary to expectations that students should be knowledgeable and well-prepared for the exam, the two protagonists portrayed here are not only unprepared, but also disrespectful towards the examiner. The disjunctive “Cholera! A mówili, że z niego jest taki luzak!” – “Damn it. And they say he is so cool!” indicates that they do not even know what exam they are taking and what is the name of the examiner. To their astonishment, they failed the exam in spite of the professor's alleged “being cool”.

27)

Siedzi dziadek na bujanym fotelu, pali fajeczkę, nagle ktoś łomocze do drzwi.

-Kto tam?

-Jean Claude Van Damme.

-Nie znam! Wszyscy czterej wypierdalać!

An old man sits in an armchair, smokes a pipe and suddenly someone bangs at the door.

-Who's there?

-Jean Claude Van Damme.

-I don't know you and all the four – get the fuck out of here!

The main protagonist – a grandfather is portrayed here as someone who does not know a famous actor – Jean Claude Van Damme. Moreover, he does not realize that this is one person, not four. Thus, he demonstrates ignorance and stupidity. The swearword used in the punchline indicates that he is also unhospitable and rude.

28)

Siedzi kilku informatyków i cały czas rozmawiają o komputerach. W końcu jeden mówi:

-Słuchajcie, pogadajmy o czymś innym, np. o dupach...

Nastąpiła chwila ciszy i konsternacja. Po czym jeden się odzywa:

-Moja karta graficzna jest do dupy.

There are some computer scientists talking about computers. One of them says:

-Listen, let's talk about something else, for example about cunts.

After a moment of silence and consternation, one of them says:

-My graphic card sucks.

The purpose of the joke is to mock and deride computer scientists. It indicates that this group of people is boring and apart from computers, they have nothing else to talk about. It implies they are shallow and boring. The feelings which this joke evoke are definitely not positive – we feel pity. Moreover, through the offensive use of language when referring to women (the derogatory word “dupy”), we learn that they are impolite.

29)

Idzie dwóch psychiatrów i jeden pyta drugiego:

-Która godzina?

A drugi odpowiada:

- Chcesz o tym porozmawiać?

Two psychiatrists, one asks the other one:

-What's the time?

-The other one responds:

-Do you want to talk about it?

Stereotypically, psychiatrists are people who cannot be normal due to the job they do. As a result, the final question, which at the same time constitutes a disjunctive confirms that. The offer made by the other psychiatrist makes us laugh - it would be difficult to imagine two people who want to talk about the time. Thus, the joke ridicules psychiatrists who are depicted as abnormal since they are going crazy.

30)

W samolocie odzywa się blondynka i mówi:

-Ci ludzie z powietrza wyglądają jak malutkie mrówki.

Na to facet z tyłu się odzywa:

-Bo to są mrówki – my jeszcze nie lecimy.

On a plane a blond says to a guy:

-These people from the top look as if they were ants.

The guy responds:

-These are ants, we are not flying yet.

This is a situational joke the purpose of which is to demonstrate stupidity on the part of the protagonist who is a blonde woman. In fact, the joke evokes laughter due to the absurdity of the whole situation. The punchline “Bo to są mrówki – my jeszcze nie lecimy” – “These are ants – we are not flying yet” which constitutes a disjunctive makes the reader reinterpret the message and as a result causes them to laugh.

31)

Rude dziecko mówi do mamy:

-Kocham cię!

A mama na to:

-Zostańmy przyjaciółmi...

A red-haired child says to his mother:

-I love you!

The mother responds:

-Let's be friends!

It is undeniable that regardless of the funniness, the joke evokes negative feelings towards the mother who is prejudiced due to the colour of her child's hair. The disjunctive "Zostańmy przyjaciółmi" – "Let's be friends" is incongruent and irrelevant with "kocham cię" – "I love you" – at least in this context where the child is expressing love to his / her mother. Nevertheless, the final response would be relevant in a conversation of a boy talking to a girl, which in fact occurs very often in everyday conversations.

32)

Dlaczego mężczyźni są jak reklamy w telewizji?

- Ani jedno słowo z tego co mówią, nie jest prawdziwe.

-Why are men like TV commercials?

-Not even one word which they utter is true.

In the joke presented above, we observe another comparison of a man to a TV commercial. The purpose of the joke is to emphasize the negative features which a typical man possesses – which are dishonesty, deception and unreliability. These features pertain to both commercials and men.

33)

Dlaczego faceci lubią mądre kobiety?

-Przeciwności się przyciągają.

-Why do men like wise women?

-Oppositions attract.

„Przeciwności się przyciągają” is a common utterance which is used in male-female relationships. In the question, the noun “women” is modified by an adjective “wise”. As a result, due to the disjunctive “przeciwności się przyciągają” – “oppositions attract” “wise women” are contrasted with “stupid men”. In other words, the joke presents men as stupid as opposed to women who are wise. Thus, since wisdom on the part of women is contrasted with stupidity on the part of men, the feelings which a reader has are both positive and negative: wisdom brings forth positive feelings, such as admiration, pride and respect as opposed to stupidity which evokes negative feelings, such as disrespect, shame, humility or even scorn.

34)

Co mówi kobieta po wyjściu z łazienki?

-Ładnie wyglądam?

Co mówi mężczyzna po wyjściu z łazienki?

-Na razie tam nie wchodź.

What does a woman say leaving the bathroom?

-Do I look nice.

What does a man say leaving the bathroom?

-Don't go there for a while!

The joke given above demonstrates the behaviour of men and women after using the toilet. It is undeniable that the feelings which the joke evokes are both positive and negative: whereas the former pertain to women, the latter pertain to men. Stereotypically, women always focus on hygiene and good looks as they want to look attractive. The final statement “-Na razie tam nie wchodź” – “Don't go there for a while!”, which pertains to men evokes disgust – the very thought of which is implied is unpleasant if not disgusting.

35)

Jeżeli mężczyzna przesiaduje od rana do wieczora w barze i żłopie piwo, to przyczyny tego stanu mogą być dwie:

- Nie jest żonaty.

- Jest żonaty.

If a man sits in a bar from morning till the evening and guzzles beer, there are two reasons for that:

-He isn't married.

-He is married.

In the joke the main protagonist is a man who represents all men. The men are shown here as those who drink alcohol and their only entertainment is spending time in a pub drinking beer. Thus, the image of a man is portrayed very negatively. The opposition of the two utterances “He is not married” vs “He is married” indicates that regardless of marital status, a man will always have a reason to drink beer. Thus, the feelings which it evokes are negative – the image of the man drinking beer all day in a pub is disdainful. The joke also refers to married women who allegedly contribute to men's drinking problems.

As can be observed, there are different jokes which reflect various protagonists, which are usually portrayed negatively. Hence, the feelings which accompany us are also rather negative. The situations and the protagonists' behaviour depicted in the jokes are often weird – inappropriate, socially unacceptable and disrespectful. Hence, the image of the protagonists analyzed in the material is usually portrayed

in a negative way. However, it is undeniable that the feelings which we have towards the whole jokes are positive as they cause us to laugh.

6. Conclusions

The objective of the paper is the analysis of selected jokes – varied thematically with different protagonists in order to observe and evaluate them and their behaviour. Moreover, the analysis is also based on analyzing the protagonists' behaviour in connection with the feelings and emotions which are evoked by the jokes.

It is evident that the protagonists portrayed in the jokes and the way they behave are depicted in a rather negative way. The image of the protagonists and the protagonists' behaviour are usually associated with contempt, disrespect, anger, frustration, disappointment on the part of the reader. Similarly, the attitudes between the protagonists are also based on competition, envy, frustration, disrespect, malice, impoliteness, hatred, scorn and also disgust.

However, in spite of the variety of emotions, feelings and attitudes which we have towards the protagonists' behaviour and the protagonists themselves as well and which are usually negative, we must remember that jokes are based on a non-bona fide communication and the actions and people presented in them are usually exaggerated with a view to emphasizing their flaws and thus demonstrate inappropriate behaviour. Therefore, the feelings which we experience when exposed to such jokes are undeniably positive. Even though some of them might even reflect the behaviour and features of human-being in real life, it is important to distance oneself from the content of the jokes and not take it personally. In other words, regardless of the harshness depicted in the jokes which demonstrates many negative aspects and imperfections of the nature of human-beings, the feelings one has towards the protagonists are rather negative, but the feelings which one has towards the whole joke are undeniably positive due to the positive nature of humour and laughter.

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