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PARSING SATIRICAL HUMOR: A MODEL OF COGNITIVE-LINGUISTIC SATIRE ANALYSIS

Abstract: Even though not all satire needs to be funny, it is the humorous element that makes it amusing. This paper attempts at explaining the humorous element along with the inner working of satire from a Cognitive Linguistic viewpoint. This paper proposes an integrated Cognitive-Linguistic approach to verbal and visual satire, and the humor ensuing therefrom. By employing Blending Theory and General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH), the aim is to structure a comprehensive ready-made model for future satire analysis. The present study analyses satire in the fake news TV format of Comedy Central's The Daily Show, a highly potent resource of both verbal and visual type of satire and humor. The results of the study elicit three main features of the satirical discourse of the show – ridicule, visual input, and cultural reference. Besides having significance for satire research, the results of the paper also raise questions on the general understanding of language.

Keywords: Blending Theory, General Theory of Verbal Humor, Satire, Incongruity, The Daily Show

Introduction

From Juvenal to more contemporary satire writers such as Swift, Pope, and Twain, satire has been at the center of social attention. Its centrality stems from the social relevance it carries. Satire represents a subjective view of any aspect of social life. Anything that is part of a society can become the target of satire.¹ Before giving a definition of satire or continuing the work altogether, a layout of the paper needs to be presented. The starting point of this paper is an attempt to contextualize satire as a social phenomenon with the final aim of suggesting how to devise “ideal”² satire, that is, the basic guidelines for coding and decoding satire, understanding who participates in satirical discourse and what it is about. Next, departing from the question whether satire needs to be funny, incongruity is detected as the basis for contemplating about humor. Moreover, the intention is to lay out the two theoretical frameworks, Blending Theory and GTVH, and to propose several modifications of the key Knowledge Resources known from GTVH. Next, three examples that are representative of three distinct features of the corpus – ridicule, visual input, and cultural reference – will be analyzed through the framework proposed in this paper, following a discussion and conclusion.

Devising satire is not completely arbitrary. Fletcher (cited in Gray – Jones – Thompson 2009: 12) defines satire as a “verbal aggression in which some aspect of historical reality is exposed to ridicule. It is a mode of aesthetic expression that relates to historical reality, involves at least implied norms against which a target can be exposed as ridiculous, and demands the pre-existence or creation of shared comprehension and evaluation between satirist and audience.” Following the quote, satire is:

- A verbal aggression onto somebody/something
- Aesthetic
- In accordance with social norms (of the particular society)
- A collaboration of two sides – the satirist and the audience

¹ An individual, a group of people, a political party, a mode of thinking etc.

² According to what is going to be adopted from existing literature and what is going to be concluded throughout the research.



Particular importance is contained in features of social norm and collaboration. Namely, satire is neither completely subjective nor arbitrary; it is a reflection, a reminder of the moral norms that are disregarded at a certain instance. Moreover, it needs be observed that different societies/social groups function on different moral values. What is embraced in one society may be despised in another. This fact is worth mentioning because satire passes judgement on social behavior and individuals that act in a certain society, according to a certain worldview. Metaphorically speaking, the transgressor (the target) has violated a presupposed law and is *rightfully judged*³ according to it. The collaborative side of satire entails that the satirist performs in front of an audience that shares her/his values. What follows from this is that satire is subject to limited dissemination. That is, satire is predestined to fail if presented to an audience that does not share the satirist's worldviews.

The two points mentioned above converge at what Lewis et al. (2006) call "normative community", following Killingsworth's (1992) "global discourse community" (cited in Carrell 1997). It is worth highlighting that global discourse communities are not restricted by physical site. It is rather likemindedness, political and intellectual affiliation, and other such 'special interests' that connect the two sides (cited in Carrell 1997: 13). On that note, Simpson (2003: 8), defining satire as a distinct discourse, distinguishes three positions: the satirist (the producer of the text), the satiree (the addressee) and the satirized (the target). Simpson (2003) calls the first two positions "ratified" whereas the target is seen as "ex-colluded", an "invited participant" in the discourse exchange. Importantly enough, all three sides belong to the same "normative community", which is a precondition. In other words, one cannot (under ideal conditions) satirize someone who does not belong to the satirist's community. Lewis et al. (2006: 8) give a list by saying:

Normative communities also have such unwritten rules about, for instance, the propriety of jokes about sex or people in power, or situations where joking is or isn't allowed. And they

³ According to the social conduct of a "normative community" (Lewis et al. 2006). See below. The attempt of this paper is to give an "ideal" form of satire, one of its properties being judged according to socially accepted norms of behavior.

always have the understanding that some things are too sacred, or too important, to joke about: the Queen, God, the Holocaust, the Pope, the Bible, Katrina, the President – or the Prophet.⁴

Having listed the essentials of satire as a social phenomenon, it is now important to deliver a transfer towards what it means as a cognitive-linguistic humorous phenomenon.

Incongruity

While laughter is certainly an important outcome if satire is to have its full effect, we disagree that laughter is a necessary component or distinguishing feature of satire. Laughter is ultimately something satire may or may not produce within the audience; it is not something that resides in the artistic expression itself. As others have argued⁵ [...] satire need not be funny.

(Gray – Jones – Thompson 2009: 13)

The position that is taken in this paper is in agreement with the quotation above – when humor and satire converge the effect is funniness (distinction between humorousness and funniness explained below). However, there are additional converging points of satire and humor, important from a cognitive-linguistic viewpoint. First, satire and humor both represent an artistic form that is only fulfilled in the listener's/reader's mind. Language input triggers a search through long-term memory for a frame that will anchor the message-level representation (Coulson 2001: 37). Second, both satire and humor presuppose the receiver's background knowledge on the subject at hand to "fill the gap" that is unsaid on purpose. In both humorous and satirical discourse, listeners need to know some facts about the topic at hand to be able to render meaning. Third, with both – either respectively, or as one unit in satirical humor – it is essentially the unsaid that produces listener "satisfaction" once reached i.e. successfully

⁴ Prophet Muhammad, as suggested in Lewis et al.'s article. There, authors admit that there have been perhaps jokes about most, if not all of the entities mentioned.

⁵ Peter Keighron, "The Politics of Ridicule: Satire and Television," in *Dissident Voices: The Politics of Television and Cultural Change*, ed. Mike Wayne (London: Pluto Press, 1998). Referenced in Gray – Jones – Thompson 2009.



deduced from an input (what is said). What might sound intangible is actually a preview to incongruity, a prevailing position of understanding humor.

Speaking of verbal irony Booth (1983: 729) (cited in Hess 2011: 155) describes the process of meaning making as “the little intellectual dance we must perform to understand”. The key term is incongruity. It represents now a predominant theory of humor and is best and shortest explained as “a conflict between what is expected and what actually occurs in the joke” (Shultz 1976, cited in Ritchie 2004: 48). Incongruity is found in both humorous and non-humorous discourse (conundrums are an example of non-humorous incongruity), however, in a different quality. In non-humorous examples the result of incongruity is not the unexpected *per se* but the puzzling/enlightening. Secondly, in non-humorous incongruity the listener is not expected to render two meanings (of which one, the second usually, is the correct one), and, thirdly, non-humorous examples are not based on a local logic but rather on principles of universal logic.

Shultz’s (1976) definition from above is mostly inclined towards what is called garden-path incongruity-resolution, only one of the incongruity-resolution models that are known. Besides violated expectation (as the prime feature of garden-path incongruity resolution), there are sheer surprise, and incomprehensibility that make distinct incongruity-resolution models. Dynel (2012) provides three incongruity-resolution mechanisms: the garden-path mechanism, the red-light mechanism, and the crossroads mechanism. Garden-path is present in humorous discourse when the listener is lead along one interpretation line first until the punchline, which reveals new meaning (initially held covert) to the earlier text rendering a reinterpretation. The “red-light joke ends with a surprising punchline which neither proves the setup ambiguous nor invalidates any earlier inferences but brings unexpectedly incongruous piece of information, which is then rendered congruent with the first part of the text” (Dynel 2012: 6). In other words, red-light is like garden-path in terms of re-evaluating the input up to the punch line, however,

red-light does not imply “the right” rendering up to the punchline. In the crossroads mechanism, the listener is lead to “incomprehensible premises which surpass absurdity typical of many jokes” (Dynel 2012: 6) and is “assisted” in rendering the right meaning since the entire joke is governed by “local logic”. The crossroads mechanism is particularly interesting since it introduces an incongruity in the set-up phase which offers no counterpart interpretation-wise hence a need for the humorist’s/satirist’s further “guidance”.

Even though humor is an optional feature of satire it is certainly desirable. However, the distinction between humorousness and funniness needs to be elicited here. Carrell (1997; cited in Dynel 2009: 7-8) gives the following distinction:

Humorousness is a binary category representing a stimulus’s theoretical capacity to induce a humorous response, while funniness is a gradable category indicating the degrees of appreciation of a humorous text, differently perceived by individuals.

In other words, something can be viewed as humorous but not embraced as funny, since the latter is the listener’s willingness to appreciate⁶ the humorous work. It can be argued, from a satirical point of view, that the lack of appreciation for something that is perceived as humorous might stem from the fact that the listener is closer to the target side than the “ratified” (Simpson 2003: 8) satir-ee’s side. If that is not the case, funniness certainly emerges.

In a lack of a unified cognitive-linguistic tool for analyzing satirical humor, the present study provides a comprehensive Cognitive Linguistic tool for verbal and visual satirical humor.

Method

The present study encompasses 155 episodes⁷ of Comedy Central’s *The Daily Show*, a satirical fake news TV program oriented towards political satire. Examples of conceptual integration (blending) have been recorded, transcribed, and analyzed through Attardo and

⁶ Dynel (2009: 8) makes a distinction between comprehension and appreciation.

⁷ A yearlong of episodes.



Raskin's General Theory of Verbal Humor (1991), and Attardo's 1997 upgrade⁸ to the theory. Since the GTVH is not devised for satirical humor (and account for it as such), Blending Theory is seen as antecedent to GTVH. That is, Blending theory is structurally superimposed onto what is known from GTVH. However, whereas Blending Theory is responsible for the structure and some inherent cognitive linguistic features of satirical humor GTVH with its Knowledge Resources is able to explain several key factors. This is the reason why neither of the theoretic frameworks can handle satirical humor on their own.

Blending Theory (or Conceptual Integration Theory), introduced by Fauconnier and Turner (2002), is a process of combining two (or more) mental spaces into a final "blend", which is an intersection of the two. Simply stated, a blend is a combination of two (or more) distinct verbal or visual inputs that are communicated and combined in a way that in order to understand the message as a whole, the listener needs to have background knowledge on either input to some extent. Conceptual integration theory is based on Fauconnier's (1994) Mental Spaces Theory. The theory tries to explain how meaning is generated in real time language reception scenarios (either spoken or written). Fauconnier and Turner (2002: 40) define mental spaces as "small conceptual packets constructed as we and talk, for purposes of local understanding and action". The implication of "small conceptual packets" is that understanding is listener bound i.e. the inputs s/he receives meet life experience, long term memory and background knowledge to eventually result in understanding, or rather, meaning making, while "local understanding and action" refers to on-line language processing, that is, decoding (understanding or meaning making) the message in real time (Maslo 2016: 116). The new finding Fauconnier and Turner (2002) put forward was that the blend, besides being a "mix" of two distinct input spaces, also provided for new insights that are found in neither of the input mental spaces. That result of the blend is called *emergent structure*

⁸ In his 1997 article, Attardo raised a number of questions and offered solutions to dilemmas that had existed. That is why the article in question can be considered an upgrade to the core theory established by Attardo and Raskin.

and is at the heart of the researcher's interest. In other words, it is the comparison between input and result that gives rise to new meaning, particularly interesting in the discourse of satire as a highly creative mental faculty. A very famous example of conceptual integration found in the literature is that of "The Buddhist Monk" also explained in Fauconnier and Turner (2002: 39–49). In the riddle, the monk goes up a mountain one day, stays there for several days and goes back again. The question arising from the riddle is – is there a place on the path that the monk occupies at the same hour of the day on the two separate journeys? The fact that humans are able to entertain the thought of "meeting oneself" already speaks in favor of conceptual integration in real usage. We are able to draw on our long-term memory of encounters and map it onto two distinct journeys of one person in real time – as if that person was meeting himself (the Monk).

The other theoretic framework that has been utilized is Attardo and Raskin's (1991) General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH). Even though the model proposed by the authors was intended for verbal humor, jokes primarily, the Knowledge Resources proposed bear a striking similarity with the essence of how satire can be understood from a Cognitive Linguistics view. The Knowledge Resources of Script Opposition, Logical Mechanism, Situations, Target, Narrative Strategies, and Language are all crucial to satirical discourse. The order given here represents the top-bottom hierarchy Attardo and Raskin (1991: 325) have proposed, however, to meet satirical priority, the hierarchy will be slightly altered (shown below). In this scheme, script opposition, highest in the hierarchy, is facilitated by the fact that "the text of the joke is always fully or in part compatible with two distinct scripts and that the two scripts are opposed to each other in a special way" (Attardo and Raskin 1991: 308). "Two distinct scripts" from the quote matches input spaces in Blending Theory, both in their distinctiveness and in their oppositeness in a "special way". However, quality wise, the phenomenon is seen slightly differently in the two theories (as will be seen in the elaboration of the proposal).



Script opposition, as stated by Attardo and Raskin (1991), functions on three levels, the highest being the real/unreal script opposition. It is this script opposition that best suits satirical discourse in its very core. Satire in the form of satirical (fake) news is a portrayal of what *is* and what *is not*, hence, the *real/unreal* script opposition, paraphrased as *true/fake* opposition (closer to satire wording), is suitable for satire analysis. However, while the script opposition as elaborated in GTVH does bear a similarity with the oppositeness of mental spaces in Blending Theory there is also a particular difference. The oppositeness as seen in GTVH is the result of a violation of expectations and is only triggered by the end of the joke. However, the oppositeness in Blending Theory is the starting point for the meaning making process as such. In other words, the blend as the result of a message that is communicated is necessarily composed of several (opposing) inputs. In other words, both the nature and the positioning of the oppositeness are different. The intention in this paper is not to override script opposition in GTVH but rather to enrich it by going one step backwards and showing how jokes, eventually, come into being in the first place. Fakeness, it needs to be highlighted here, is not necessarily only what is contrary to the truth (but also that) but anything that the satirist invents for humorous purposes. “Inventing” means putting the target into imaginary, exaggerated, impossible, improbably or merely far-fetched scenarios which, as a whole, contributes to the humor of satirical discourse.⁹

Attardo (1997: 404) warns of a “hardwired list of oppositions”. As explained above, for the purpose of satirical discourse (in the fake TV news format at least) the real vs. fake opposition is positioned highest in the hierarchy because it precedes all others in the meaning making process. Therefore, it is only this opposition (in terms of mental spaces) that can be considered hardwired. All other oppositions are script based i.e. appear only by the end of the joke.¹⁰ This is why script opposition as defined in GTVH cannot suffice for a Cognitive Linguistics account of satirical humor.

⁹ For a thorough view of counterfactuals in satirical discourse, see Maslo 2016.

¹⁰ Or as so-called jab lines (Attardo 2001: 29).

The logical mechanism knowledge resource, stated to be “most problematic” (Attardo 2001: 25), presupposes and embodies a “local logic”,¹¹ i.e., a distorted, playful logic, that does not necessarily hold outside of the world of the joke. Speakers are well aware of the limits of local logic and ‘go along with it’ in the spirit of ‘willing suspension of disbelief’” (Attardo 2001: 25). Satirical targeting is a local construct ephemeral in nature, intended for “local understanding”. That is, satirical humor does not subsume the current depiction of the target to be a definite image thereof.¹² It is rather that instances of satirical humor tickle the listener’s mind for comparisons in online language processing.

Besides script opposition and logical mechanism as the highest and most important knowledge resources, the remaining four also play a role in satire. While Attardo and Raskin (1991: 319) and Attardo (2001: 24) proposed Target as being an optional knowledge resource, it is central to satire. As for what a target can possibly be, GTVH and Blending Theory do not differ.¹³ Each satirical attempt does have a target since “target” is a mandatory element of satirical discourse. Social critique as seen in satire targets either a person, a group of people, or a mode of reasoning that is deemed wrong by the satirist.

“By narrative strategy, for lack of a better term, we mean the genre, or rather microgenre as it were, of the joke, in other words, whether the text of the joke is set up as expository, as a riddle, as a question-and-answer sequence, and so on (Attardo and Raskin 1991: 300). The recursiveness of narrative strategy “i.e. any character in a narrative [...] may initiate another narrative embedded in it” that Attardo (2001: 80) points out is worth of emphasis in relation to satire. Namely, in the corpus studied, owing to the TV format *per se*, satirical discourse is deepened by increments i.e. further scenarios into which the target is taken.

¹¹ Ziv’s (1984) concept, cited in Attardo 1997.

¹² An exception would be repetitive framing a target in the same manner, perhaps wanting to leave a more lasting image.

¹³ In the corpus analyzed, it is political figures and parties only due to the nature of the program itself.



The least explored knowledge resource, Situation, is reintroduced in the present theoretical framework in the light of the blend. Attardo (2001: 24), admitting the scarce background of this knowledge resource, explains that “[t]he situation of a joke can be thought of as the ‘props’ of the joke: the objects, participants, instruments, activities, etc. Any joke must have some situation, although some jokes will rely more on it, while others will almost entirely”. The situation, as it is claimed here, is result of the two input spaces (explained below) and the “scenarios” the satirists introduces the target into.¹⁴ According to Attardo (2001: 22–23), language as a knowledge resource boils down to paraphrase and the position of the punchline. Attardo (2001: 22) also notes that the language knowledge resource “is responsible for the exact wording of the text and for the placement of the functional elements that constitute it”. The Cognitive Linguistic viewpoint that every word belongs to a frame (Lakoff 1987; Lakoff 2004) supported in this paper is an underlying notion to the language knowledge resource. It is the associative potential of words (and their position) that triggers humor response.

Towards a satirical model of humor

Gettings’ (2007) work is highly important not only for The Daily Show as a corpus *per se* but for satire in general. The author observes (2007: 22–23) that “usually the structure of a fake news story is to begin with facts and end in farce”. Even though it deals with fiction, it is not fiction itself, at least for its relevance for “the real world”. Simpson (2003: 167) also holds this view by saying:

To suggest that satirical discourse operates within a suspended framework of truth is to argue that it does not uphold the representation of facts as they connect to “the” world of external nature. Yet to say that satire is simply “fictional”, and of the same order as the fictionality of prose writing or filmic texts, is a somewhat unsubtle characterisation.

¹⁴ It is worth highlighting that, stemming from the nature of satire itself, the knowledge resource Target plays a more significant role than it was given in the GTVH.

Gettings (2007: 17) strikes a note by eliciting the following:

This suggestion is still a bit hasty. A poorly researched work of non-fiction isn't intended to deceive and may contain many falsehoods, but that doesn't make it fictional. A simple work of fiction might accidentally contain many truths, but that doesn't make it non-fictional. So the ratio of falsehoods to truths doesn't account for the distinction between fiction and non-fiction.

Attardo's (2001: 98) observation that "for most humorous narratives, the humour is, so to speak, superimposed on an essentially serious fabula" summarizes the relationship between blending and knowledge resources in satirical discourse. More technically speaking, each instance of satirical targeting can be illustrated in the form of a conceptual integration network with one real (true) and one unreal (fake)¹⁵ input space, and a resulting blend from which new structure emerges.¹⁶ The true input space, as it is, introduces facts to the story while the fake input space is the farce part i.e. the satirist's creative contribution. Since there can be multiple input spaces on either side, on one hand, and for purposes of accommodating different both true and fake inputs, on the other hand, the two opposing inputs will be called thesis (true) and antithesis (fake)¹⁷. In other words, both the thesis and antithesis can host multiple input spaces because they are broader terms. The thesis ought to be observed regarding factual information about each story at hand while the antithesis is to be comprehended with reference to out-of-the-domain phenomena that the satirist introduces for purposes of humorous effect. The idea can be illustrated on an example from *The Daily Show*.¹⁸

¹⁵ True and fake will hence be used since they are closer to satirical wording (fake news etc.).

¹⁶ In the Blending Theory there is also a parent "generic input space" from which both input spaces emerge, however, the generic space will not be portrayed in this paper because the nature of the input space is overly general and can be grasped from the two input spaces.

¹⁷ Simpson (2003: 8–9) calls the phenomena "prime" and "dialect".

¹⁸ The three examples that are going to be used as an illustration of the entire corpus were selected because they represent respective, recurring features of the show's satirical discourse (perhaps other types of satire as well). Namely, example 1) is an example of ridicule as a form of making satirical humour in the show, that is, by provoking listeners to make use of their knowledge to make sense of what is otherwise "nonsense" (that people are guns). Example 2) is representative of the recurring feature of using visual images to support the verbal layout of the joke whereas example 3) makes reference to salient cultural phenomena (books, tv shows, movies, characters, franchises etc.) from American culture.



On the topic of US immigration laws and in connection to the controversial gun laws in the US, the author pretendedly speaks to immigrants:

“Background check? That’s easy, all you have to do is tell Immigration you’re a gun.”

The author of the show portrays a ridiculous (fake) scenario in which he is “advising” immigrants to tell they are actually guns so they do not undergo background checks. The author thus connects two hot topics of American legislature drawing on the listeners’ experience of the two laws. Textually represented, example 1) can be parsed like this (visual representation, Figure 1):

Thesis: US gun law, US immigration law, background checks

Antithesis: immigrants as guns

Blend: immigrants do not undergo background checks if they say they are guns

To render a full analysis, the example needs to be defined according to relevant knowledge resources.¹⁹

SO: real/fake

LM: red light

TA: US legislation

LA: question

NS: advice giving

SI: immigrants as guns

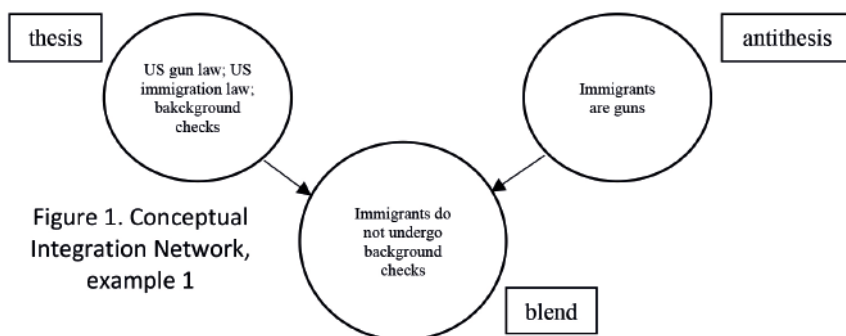
The factual input space, the thesis, and the counterfactual input space, the antithesis, merge into an absurd scenario which “advises immigrants how to avoid background checks”. The incongruity of having to think of people as guns,²⁰ and serious tone of advice-giving foster the

¹⁹ The order given slightly differs Attardo and Raskin’s (1991) hierarchy since it better reflects the priority of satire.

²⁰ “Immigrants are guns” is in the form of a conceptual metaphor. However, in Blending Theory wording there are four types of networks – simplex networks, mirror networks, single-scope networks, and double-scope networks – of which conceptual metaphor is only one type. Another reason for the lack of using conceptual metaphor to name the phenomenon in the example is the fact that is situated in the antithesis which is defined as being capable of hosting several input spaces (without necessarily going into details of each), with the top-priority condition of being “fake” (as defined above).

humorous effect. Needless to say, a rudimentary background knowledge of the thesis i.e. the US legislation frame is required for parsing the joke successfully. The knowledge resources deepen understanding. At hand is a real/fake script opposition which is, as it was stated in this paper, a constant feature of satire. The red-light logical mechanism is explained, in a wider context of the news segment, as a sudden encounter with an incongruous element, which is the resolution at the same time. Even though it is usually labelled as irrelevant in Attardo's (2001) concrete joke analysis, the position of the language resource is given more prominence in satirical discourse. As it turns out in example 1), it is only for the phrase "background check"²¹ and the fact that it is deeply rooted and highly associative with a certain domain of US society and/or legislation that listeners are even brought to the red-light (having to imagine people as guns). Unmistakably, the target resource is accounted for by the knowledge that the only responsible are US policymakers. The narrative strategy knowledge resource adds to humorousness by the form of "legal advice-giving" in a ridiculous fashion whereas the situation resource is a mental image representation of immigrants as guns.

The Daily Show, owing to its TV format, either alters original images or shows imaginary ones. The visual prompts complement the spoken part in cases where a humorous moment would not be arrived at only by text. A representative example of thereof is the following.



²¹ In American culture this phrase is repetitively used to mean checks of criminal records of people who want to buy guns.



- 1) The US might avoid war with Syria was through our usual semantic shenanigans. We would bomb them, but we would call it freedom play date.

[news segment shown saying:] The armed response is off the table.

It's not off the table. This is America, the armed response is never off the table. Who believes the armed response is off the table? Have you seen the table?

[shows President Obama sitting at a table looking like an aircraft carrier]²²

Thesis: military action

Antithesis: image shown

Blend: war is never off the table considering "the table"

SO: real/fake

LM: crossroads

TA: US military (foreign policy)

LA: figurative; question

NS: debate

SI: President's desk as aircraft carrier

The factual part is a possible US military intervention in Syria whereas the antithesis is the image itself. Sheer outrageousness or hyperbole is one of the clearest indicators that part of a fictional narrative is false or made up (Gettings 2007: 19). The blend is fostered by the common phrase "off the table" in correlation to the ridiculous image shown where (former US) President Obama sits at a desk that looks like an aircraft carrier. Script opposition is real/fake. The fake is made obvious on purpose as Mullen (2011: 180) points out "unlike other news outlets which attempt to hide the manipulative aspect of such

²² Link to the show's site in Internet resources.

images and present them as real, The Daily Show makes no attempt to deceive the audience". The images used in the show are of ridiculous nature, clearly showing an impossible scenario. The crossroads resource is both introduced and resolved when the image is shown, however, prepared for by the language resource i.e. common phrase "off the table". Obviously, the target are US military forces and their then Commander-in-Chief Barack Obama. A frequent strategy of The Daily Show is to introduce other news or TV segments for the sake of arguing for or against something. In example 2) the technical layout of the news segment yielded in the narrative strategy resource being a debate form.

A frequent strategy of satirists is to depend on the background knowledge on cultural phenomena as a prerequisite for the parsing of the message. The mere mention of a franchise, a popular individual, or a historical fact triggers the most salient feature of each phenomenon and offers the bit for the listener to connect to the thesis. Reacting to former senator Stacey Campfield's proposal that parents of children who do badly at school should see 30% paycheck cuts as a consequence, The Daily Show responds:

- 1) Is Stacy Campfield a state governor or a villain from a Dickens novel? [...] Who is this state legislator who wants to turn Tennessee education into the actual Hunger Games?

Thesis: politics

Antithesis: villain from Dickens' novel, The Hunger Games

Blend: if Campfield's proposal is pursued, Tennessee education is going to become the "actual" Hunger Games

SO: real/fake

LM: red-light

TA: Stacy Campfield

LA: question, "actual"

NS: debate

SI: Campfield is a villain



The introduction of cultural references is both effective and economical. The taken-for-granted properties of the antithesis²³ are automatically mapped onto the thesis, and the introduction of the cultural reference enables the satirist to operate on a series of characteristics that she/he does not need to explain in detail (they are part of the listeners' background knowledge). It is owing to framing as a cognitive phenomenon that mere questioning carries statement potential i.e. The Daily Show authors did not claim that Campfield actually *is* a villain or about to ruin Tennessee education. The satirist assumes that listeners draw on their experience of Dickens ill-tempered villains (Quilp, Scrooge etc.) and the (then-running) sci-fi movie series The Hunger Games and they do so. The language resource carries a far greater potential than was proposed by Attardo and Raskin (1991) and Attardo (1997; 2001). In the example given, the question form indirectly states something, and, "because it is perceived as play, humour also offers a 'way out' in discourse because it allows a humourist to take back what he or she says: 'it was only a joke' is one oft-voiced disclaimer" (Kane et al. 1977: 13, cited in Simpson 2003: 2). The word "actual" triggers the sci-fi scenario known from the movie series to be applied on Tennessee education in reality. The situation resource, thus, sets Campfield as a villain with destructive intents.

Discussion

The humorous element in satirical discourse is not a pre-requisite for the phenomenon itself, however, it certainly fosters enjoyment in viewers. The major finding that needs to be highlighted in this paper is that humorous satirical discourse can be rendered as a conceptual integration network with factual inputs on one side, and fake ones on the other. More interestingly for analysis, as part of the satirist's creative work, the antithesis as the fake element is a deliberate and obvious distortion of reality in order to mock the target. Stemming from Conceptual Integration Theory, the resulting blend consistently follows the theory's implication that each blend has new emergent

²³ The fact that Dickens is famous for his malevolent characters (Bill Sykes, for example) and the fact, or knowledge of The Hunger Games franchise (novels and movies).

structure. It is that structure that is at the heart of satirical analysis. The emergent structure is never put into words but left for the listener to render in the final reading, a strategy well known in jokes. An unsaid, yet consentaneous reality of the ratified participants of satirical discourse is that the counterfactuality displayed in the instance given never interferes or otherwise alters *the* reality. Both are well aware of the locality of the joke at hand. Listeners are, as obvious as it may seem, willing to set apart the local logic of the humorous satire at hand from reality and entertain imaginary scenarios.

The knowledge resources have been used to help explain the underlying principles satirical humor operates on. Even though they are borrowed for the GTVH, the knowledge resources underwent further definition and reorganization. Script opposition, the highest and most important in the original GTVH hierarchy, has been explained as to how it contributes in the creation of humorous discourse. The “original” script opposition from GTVH remained “unharmful”, however, the script opposition that has been displayed through the examples above reflect a Cognitive Linguistic view onto language i.e. meaning making. Script opposition, as it has been repetitively stated, reflects the thesis and antithesis respectively since they are broader terms that can host various input spaces (containing conceptual metaphors, allegories, analogies, ridicule etc.). It is this cognitive division that gives way to proper reading of satire. In other words, satire naturally displays what can be defined as “earnest fictitiousness”.

Along with script opposition, the upper-rank knowledge resource logical mechanism was customized for satirical purposes and reduced to Dynel’s (2012) tripartite model. In other words, there are three ways the sudden realization can take place. It is the yet undefined split-second internalization on the hearer’s part which leads to emergent structure. At each logical mechanism there is a re-adjusting, adapting to the new “reality” the satirist has formed. Among all, the language resource gained most prominence and is defined as to “set the stage” for the logical mechanism i.e. the incongruity (and its resolution). The language resource is the listener’s guide towards incongruity and resolution. It foreshadows the logic that is going to



be violated at the local level, functioning as an anchor to the humor. The language resource is a verbal manifestation of the more abstract narrative strategy knowledge resource. It usually induces an imaginary debate with the target, along with feigned counselling, deliberately irrational questions, or mere ridicule.

Visual inputs as a source of humor behave no different than verbal ones considering the model proposed. They are placed in the antithesis and act accordingly. That is, they show a visually edited or completely invented image of the target and/or the scenario following the discourse around the target. However, since they are considered as “the situation in which the target is placed” it can be well established as to represent the situation knowledge resource. The difference between the verbal and the visual fake input is, however, that the latter is also the emergent structure itself. Employed in instances of extreme absurdity, visuals serve as either an aid to emergent structure or the structure itself.

The limitations of the approach proposed are many-fold. The question of how to represent and parse non-humorous satire still remains. Another possible research field could be the target’s view of satirical discourse. An investigation of the logical mechanism is necessary to shed more light on, for instance, humor response time and to define the shift more thoroughly. Finally, the framework could be probed through another format of satirical humor that also includes visual humor.

Conclusion

The paper discussed and proposed an analytical tool for satire. Running against the assumption of being subjective, satire is, as shown in the paper, rather a socially relevant, norm-promoting form of critique. It is aesthetic owing to the satirist’s creative input in terms of the counterfactual part. The main aim of the paper was to combine Blending Theory and the GTVH in a harmonious framework that would do justice to both the serious and the humorous end of satire. The three examples analyzed have been recognized as being representative of recurring instances of satirical humor

shown in *The Daily Show*. The TV format as a corpus is limited and limiting, however, it represents a multimodal view of satire. To answer the title of the paper – parsing i.e. the listener’s side of satirical discourse is done through a general understanding of the phenomenon of language in Cognitive Linguistics, and through the proposed model as a more tangible tool for doing so. However, the paper also gives another reading i.e. how “ideal” satire is devised. The reorganization of knowledge resources of the GTVH should not be understood so as to undermine the theory itself but as a mode to accommodate the essence of satire. Conceptual integration in the light of humorous discourse was utilized as a blend of the thesis and antithesis, the factual information input versus the satirist’s creative (fake) i.e. humorous input.

The results gained from the analysis have significance for the general understanding of language, besides being representative of satire as a discourse. The analysis also highlights the importance of conceptual integration as the human ability to operate in an online context, that is, the ability to simultaneously employ long-term memory (knowledge) and various novel, creative inputs, and combine them into a meaningful unit.



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Internet resource

<http://www.cc.com/video-clips/nz3ypj/the-daily-show-with-jon-stewart-dude--where-s-my-war->



RAŠČLANJIVANJE SATIRIČKOG HUMORA: PRIMJER KOGNITIVNOLINGVISTIČKE ANALIZE SATIRE

Sažetak: Iako satira ne mora u svakom obliku neminovno biti smiješna, njeni humoristični elementi čine je zabavnom. Ovaj rad nastoji pojasniti humoristični element satire, kao i njene unutarnje mehanizme kroz prizmu kognitivne lingvistike. Uvodi se kognitivnolingvistički pristup verbalnoj i vizualnoj formi satire, te humoru koji iz njih slijedi. Uvezujući teoriju konceptualne integracije sa općom teorijom verbalnog humora, u ovom radu se nastoji ponuditi model za analizu satire. Televizijski format satiričnih vijesti, *The Daily Show*, kao jako bogat izvor verbalne i vizualne vrste humora, predstavlja korpus za analizu. Rezultati analize izdvajaju tri glavne karakteristike satiričnog diskursa TV-formata – ismijavanje/podrugivanje, vizualne elemente te upotrebu kulturnoloških referenci. Pored značaja za istraživanje satire, rezultati istraživanja također upućuju na neka pitanja iz općeg razumijevanja jezika kao fenomena.

Ključne riječi: teorija konceptualne integracije, opća teorija verbalnog humora, satira, nekongruencija, *The Daily Show*

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