LEXICAL PUN IN SITCOMS

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Abstract. *Contemporary linguistics has tended to side with the incongruity theory of humor, according to which humor follows from the perception of incongruity between the expectations and the actuality. Of all forms of humor, puns seem to be the closest to such perception of humor, since they are highly language-dependant forms, centering around two semantically incompatible meanings. This paper attempts to describe lexical puns in the specific context of sitcom discourse. Following Simpson (2003), we interpret lexical puns as one of several types of wordplay based on ambiguity. These are classified according to the nature of their linguistic triggers. The main method is descriptive-analytical.*

Key words: *lexical pun, wordplay, sitcom discourse.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Of all forms of humor, language scholars, especially of structuralist orientation, have contributed most handsomely to the better understanding of puns (wordplay, play on words).[1] As a form of language creativity, puns have been "the only legitimate field for the interdisciplinary contacts between linguistics and humor studies for a long time" (Attardo 1994: 27). The main reason lies in the fact that, when compared with other forms of verbal humor,[2] puns depend, to the utmost degree, on the way verbal expression is maneuvered (Ermida 2008: 41). Even with the slightest change in the original wording puns lose their humorous quality, not to mention their meaning (Partington 2006: 110).

This paper aims to describe puns in a specific type of surroundings, i.e. sitcom discourse. This term is used to refer to the characters' fictional communicative practices, as reflected in their monologues, dialogues and polylogues (Dynel 2010, 2011 a, b). Linguistic research into humorous lexical puns, as they are understood in this paper (see sec-

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[1] As it the case with humor studies in general, including "linguistic humorology" (Simpson 2003), there is no terminological consensus on what the terms "pun" and "wordplay" denote. Some of the definitions will be given in section 3 of this paper.

[2] See section 3 for definitions.

tion 3), has mostly dealt with puns in the "written" media, such as newspaper headings (see Bucaria 2004), jokes (see Lew 1996), various online Web sources (Seewoester 2011), or even Shakespeare's plays (Adamczyk 2011). The main goal of this article is to describe lexical puns in the televised context of sitcom discourse. Since "relatively little linguistic research has been done into the workings of humour in the discourse of comedies and sitcoms" (Dynel 2011a: 311), this paper can be seen as a linguistic contribution to the areas of media and humor studies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

As already suggested, puns have been the object of significant amount of linguistic research. However, as Attardo points out, much of it is largely inconclusive, with most of the efforts invested in the establishment of various taxonomies: "taxonomic approach which has by and large dominated this area dictates 'low-intensity' explanatory patterns, where explanations and generalizations emerge by slow accumulation, rather than by … deductive methodologies" (Attardo 1994: 107). Similarly, Ritchie notes that puns "have been written about copiously over recent centuries" (2004: 110) and points out the lack of adequate definition of puns.

As regards this issue, in literary studies or psychoanalysis, authors mostly do not offer definitions at all, assuming that the reader knows intuitively what puns are.[3] Traditional definitions see puns exclusively as **word** games based on homophony: "[a] pun is made when someone notices that two different words sound the same, and constructs a sentence containing this sound" (Hammond/Hughes 1978: 1). The authors adopt a narrow definition of puns and exclude plays on words, which are seen to be based on polysemy and (complete) homonymy (*ibid.*). More recent definitions of puns insist that puns are not limited only to words, which is why the accent is placed on sound sequences involved in them. These definitions seem to equate puns with wordplay or plays on words.[4] Partington, for instance, finds puns to be "based upon the same fundamental mechanism: they are plays on *sounds* [original emphasis, O.J.], or rather, on the resemblance between two sets of sequences of sounds" (Partington 2006: 113).[5] The author insists that, as a form of amphibology, puns generally do not play with single words but entire phrases (*ibid.*: 113). Partington further introduces the division between the exact puns, where two sound sequences which are identical are called into play, and near puns, where two sequences resemble each other either (*ibid.*). Similarly, Attardo points out that puns primarily involve segments of spoken language- utterances, not just words, as it is often stated in literature (1994: 132): "[c]learly the range of phenomena involved in puns exceeds the word both in the direction of smaller, simpler units (morphemes, phonemes) and in the direction of larger units (syntagms, frozen expressions, etc.)" (*ibid.*).

What most if not all authors agree upon as the basic ingredient of puns is ambiguity. However, since all words are ambiguous or vague out of context, ambiguity is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for puns to occur. Regarding this issue, Attardo points out that puns seem to rely on simultaneous existence of ambiguous meanings: "puns exist

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[3] See, for instance, a series of literary essays on puns in Culler 1988.
[4] See Dynel 2007 for critique of this approach.
[5] Partington, 2006, 113: "based upon the same fundamental mechanism: they are plays on *sounds*, or rather, on the resemblance between two sets of sequences of sounds."

only as a byproduct of sentential and/or textual disambiguation" (1994: 133). However, Attardo points out that the difference between ambiguity and puns is that the two co-existential meanings in puns have to be opposed, i.e. semantically incompatible in context (*ibid*.). What exactly constitutes this meaning opposition is still the subject of discussion (see Raskin 1985; Attardo 1994; Ritchie 2004; Partington 2006). Furthermore, meaning opposition is still not enough for a language game to be characterized as a pun. As Partington states (2006: 114), someone has to deliberately manufacture, or at least point out, the ambiguity. Similarly, Ritchie thinks that the elements of context have to be maneuvered in the way which would enable the switch from first to second reading of the textual segment. These are the central aspects of puns as Ritchie sees them (2004: 112-116):

> a) There is an implicit comparison between two textual strings which are to some extent phonetically similar.[…] b) One of these strings is part or all of the utterance. c) At least one of the strings is semantically linked to the context in some way (Ritchie 2004: 116).

3. THE PHENOMENON UNDER SCRUTINY

On the basis of what has been presented so far, it is important to delimit carefully the kind of phenomenon which is of interest in the current paper. First, the terms "pun", "play on words", "wordplay" will be used interchangeably. Following Simpson, we use the term pun in the broadest sense, "to account for those potentially humorous ambiguous meanings that sit at the interstices between segments of lexis, syntax, phonology and graphology" (Simpson 2003: 20). Puns (wordplay) are therefore a form of linguistic humor,[6] and linguistic humor is a form of verbal (as opposed to visual or physical) humor (see below). In the present paper, linguistic humor is used an umbrella term to cover both puns and other forms of creative use of language, which do not involve ambiguity:[7]

I Verbal humor
  A Linguistic humor
    a. ambiguity-based: puns (wordplay, play on words)
    b. other unambiguous language play (e.g. register humor, etc.)
  B Situational humor
II Nonverbal humor

The adjective hooteracious (line 2) in the example below would be classified as "other", since its humorous effect is not contingent on ambiguity:[8]

(1) [Bud is sitting at his desk in the basement, studying. Al comes down the stairs and tells Bud that Griff, Ike, Jefferson and himself want to watch the premiere of the new Big 'Uns Network, B-U-N, or "BUN" in the basement.]

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[6] It is important to stress that puns do not necessarily have to be humorous.
[7] But see Dynel 2007. In contemporary linguistic approaches to humor, the lack of terminological consensus is mostly evident in the usage of the following terms: "verbal humor" (Attardo 1994), "linguistic humor" (Raskin 1987), "verbally expressed humor" (Ritchie 2004), "laughter-talk" (Partington 2006).
[8] All examples and turns are numbered, and the relevant contextual information is supplied in square brackets. The shorthands given in round brackets refer to the sitcom and the episode from which the example was taken. The complete list is supplied in *References*.

1. Bud: I'm not going to be able to study with you guys sitting there watching bimbo TV!
2. Al: They're not bimbos, they're hooteracious Americans. (MWCBHB)

Situational humor, though conveyed through language, is based on playing with an idea or situation (see Attardo 1994: 27, and *passim*),[9] and it will not be dealt with in this paper. The main object of interest are lexical puns, or purposeful ambiguity of a lexical item, manifesting itself in one form (or two similar ones), but conveying two different meanings (based on Dynel 2009: 1289). Lexical items are understood as single lexemes, items of vocabulary, "of which a number of actual forms may exist" (Chalker and Weiner 1994: 225), as well as various set phrases as word-like structures (see 4.3. in this paper), whose meaning is not deducible from the meaning of its parts.

3.1. Corpus and method

The corpus comprises a compilation of 25 transcripts of 5 different situation comedies, or sit-coms (5 episodes each). Sitcoms were selected on the basis of various Internet top-lists of the best U.S. humorous series. The choice of the episodes themselves was random.

The main method is descriptive-analytical, based on close reading, or "manual" analysis of episode transcripts (Bednarek 2010), which were retrieved from the Internet (see *Literature*). The main indicator of humor in the corpus was canned laughter. 2,407 humorous utterances were identified using canned laughter, out of which 97 were determined to be examples of what is understood in this paper by lexical puns.

4. DISCUSSION

In this section, lexical puns are discussed with respect to the type of their underlying ambiguity: phonological, morphological and lexical ambiguity. It is worth noting that corpus analysis produced repetitive punning patterns, whose structure was not as complex as those presented in other elaborate taxonomies (see Attardo 1994: 112-127).

4.1. Phonological ambiguity

Phonological ambiguity[10] involves various manipulations of words at the level of sound (Seewoester 2011: 74), mainly through homophony and paronymy. Most examples of homophony which were retrieved from the corpus were homophonic words (Ermida 2008: 42), i.e. words pronounced the same, with different meaning and spelling, which is why they are called partial homonyms (Chalker and Weiner 1994: 188-189). The phonetic pun in lines 3, 4 is based on the exploitation of the entirely distinct but phonetically identical noun *pact* and adjective *packed*.[11] The example is also illustrative of the

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[9] This division was introduced by Cicero (*de re* and *de dicto* humor), and many contemporary authors have tacitly relied on it, with the use of different terminology (see Attardo 1994: 27, for a list of suggestions and references). Admittedly, the distinction between the situational and unambiguous verbal humor is fuzzy and pertains to the linguistic/extralinguistic divide.
[10] Puns based on the exploitation of sound are referred to as "the phonetic pun" (see Ermida 2008: 42), or "the phonological pun", with authors' opinions differing as regards the actual referent (Seewoester 2011: 74).
[11] The main source of information on lexical meaning in this paper was Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1994).

pervasiveness of this type of ambiguity, since it forces changes at syntactic level as well (see Lew 1996: 33-34):

(2) [Café Nervosa – Morning. Frasier and Martin are seated at a table. Niles enters with a GAP shopping bag. Frasier snatches the shopping bag and pulls out a white cashmere sweater.]
1. Frasier: Just as I thought. You bought the Diego sweater.
2. Martin: Well, what's the big deal? It's just a sweater.
3. Frasier: It is not "just a sweater," it is a work of art by Spain's fabled master weaver Diego – who uses only the soft chin hairs of Andalusian mountain goats. Our sweater man could only get one this year. Niles and I made a pact that neither of us would buy it. [to Niles] You can't even keep a simple sweater pact!
4. Martin: Ah, Ronee – now there's a gal who can keep a sweater packed! (FCIA)

Phonetic identity and similarity can also be captured in sub-units of a word, whether they are real or pseudo-morphemes. In the sound-based humorous game below, morphologically simple proper noun *Nanette* is intentionally divided in an erroneous way so it would produce a pseudemorpheme *nette*, that is, a phonetic sequence that does not even constitute a regular morphological unit. Meaning dualism is thus created between the morpheme *net* and its mimetic form *nette* (line 2):

(3) [Jake and Alan are sitting at the table, eating their breakfast. Alan is trying to get Jake to go to summer camp.]
1. Jake: But I don't wanna go to summer camp.
2. Alan: Are you kidding? You'll have a great time, look at this one. It's a computer camp, with a theatre program. Ethernet by day, 'No, No, Nanette' by night. (THMOFNW)

Corpus analysis also produced examples of homophonic phrases (Ermida 2008: 42), which are contingent on juncture, or the "pause phenomena" (Pepicello 1980: 3, and *passim*).[12] Namely, with some utterances in the English language, the placement of juncture is a distinguishing feature. For instance, Frank's last utterance (line 4) was interpreted orthographically by the transcriber (see *References*) as *a poop on coupon*. Depending on the placement of juncture, this phonetic string can also be transcribed as *a Poupon coupon*. Phonological ambiguity also brings about their different syntactic representations - what could be interpreted as a sentential segment and a noun phrase:

(4) [Frank and Marie are in their kitchen. Marie is stirring a pot on the stove. Frank is sitting at the kitchen table, tearing up coupons. Ray knocks on the door and enters.]
1. Ray: Look, you know they're not my favorite people alright, but you gotta be nice Saturday. It's for Debra, and for me indirectly.
2. Marie: I will be my usual charming self.
3. Ray: Yea.
4. Frank: I'll even bring a present. [holds up a coupon] Here. 30 cents off Dijon mustard. A poop on coupon. (ELRIL)

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[12] Such puns are sometimes called "phonological sequencing puns" (Simpson 2003: 25).

Phonological ambiguity can also be the product of phonetic similarity, not only iden-tity.[13] This is otherwise known as "paronymy", the similarity in both pronunciation and orthography (Attardo 1994: 118; Ritchie 2004: 112). In the chosen corpus, phonetic similarity was used to create unintentional forms of verbal humor (unintentional puns)[14] imitative of the ones which can be found in everyday language, such as Freudian slips, malapropisms and spoonerisms. Ariel's slip of the tongue in line 4 is based on the status of consonants /v/ and /b/ as minimal pairs:

(5) [Bud and a girl named Ariel are sitting on his bed in the basement playing Strip Study.]
1. Bud: [reading from card] Okay Ariel, Ulyssus S. Grant was a general in which war?
2. Ariel: Um ... the war on drugs?
3. Bud: Mmm ... close. No, the correct answer is [shows her the card] The Civil War.
4. Ariel: They named a war after Cybil Shepherd? (MWCBHB)

(6) [Al opens the door for Brenda.]
1. Al: Ah, after you, my rear. Uh, I mean, my dear. (MWCDTS)

Similar type of (intentional) wordplay can be noticed in Berta's utterance in line 10. This time, the minimal pairs of vowels /a/ and /u/ are instrumental in the realization of an aggressive type of humor:

(7) [Berta is in the kitchen. Alan and Charlie just got up.]
1. Alan: Morning.
2. Berta: Morning.
3. Charlie: Morning.
4. Berta: Morning.
5. Berta: So, how was your weekend?
6. Alan: Fine.
7. Charlie: Okay.
8. Berta: Nothing exciting happening in your world, Charlie?
9. Charlie: Like what?
10. Berta: Oh, I don't know. Go to a fun party? See a great movie? Run into an old flame with a new wick? What are the odds, huh? One brother turns them gay, the other turns them guy! (THMOFNW)

4.2. Morphological ambiguity

Many lexically-based ambiguities rely on morphological divisions for the realization of humor (Seewoester 2011: 94-96). In our corpus both word-formation processes of compounding and derivation were exploited for the purpose of producing ambiguity. In TV comedy words are either brought together to create a peculiar type of compound, or their morphological structure is consciously destructed by way of their ungrammatical segmentation, the main role in which is given to affixes.

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[13] Ermida calles them "pseudo-puns", since the words are not pure homophones (2008: 45).
[14] However, Attardo does not allow for puns to be unintentional, arguing that "if puns can be unintentional and unnoticed, all ambiguous sentences are puns" (1994: 314). Sitcom discourse is specific, though, since the ultimate intention has to be attributed to the collective sender, i.e. the film crew (see Dynel 2011a, b).

The compound in line 6 is created by combining the pronoun *any* and common noun *town* into the proper noun *Anytown*. A claim could be ventured that this structure creates the dualism of meaning on the basis of reference, i.e. its meaning as used by Kramer (to refer to his apartment), and as a placeholder name, to refer to any backward, insignificant or isolated town in the middle of nowhere:[15]

(8) [The door to Kramer's apartment.]
1. George: Kramer.
2. Kramer: Yeah.
3. George: What-what are you doing?
4. Kramer: Oh, I'm putting up Frank's screen door. This beauty's got a little life in her yet.
5. Jerry: What do you need it for?
6. Kramer: [Closing door] The cool evening breezes of Anytown, USA. (SSN)

Metanalysis, or reinterpretation of the way a word or a phrase is divided syntactically (Partington 2006: 125; Attardo 1994: 132) was also noticed during corpus analysis. The examples 9 and 10 illustrate the way metanalysis is used to create humor. In line 3 (example 9), by eliminating (pseudo)prefix *de*, (pseudo)basis *filed* continues to exist as a nonce structure which generates humor. A similar process can be noticed in example 10:

(9) [Evelyn's house. Charlie used to date Tommy's daughter Olivia whom he dumped without explanation. Olivia shows up unexpectedly with Tommy at Evelyn's house.]
1. Charlie: Anyway, Tommy seems like a real nice guy. I am very happy for you. Goodnight.
2. Evelyn: Charles. You are not going anywhere. This man is very important to me. Now, we are going to have a nice dinner, you are going to be charming and Tommy will remain oblivious to the fact that you defiled his daughter.
3. Charlie: Hey, she wasn't exactly filed when I met her. (THMCFM)

(10) [Debra is in the kitchen with the children. Ally is at the table, and the twins are in their high chairs. Ray enters with two takeaway bags. Hands a bag to Debra.]
1. Debra: [gets a burger box out of the bag.] What took you so long?
2. Ray: Oh, the fast food employees. You know, last week when I was in Montreal, the employees there are bilingual. Over here, they're not even lingual. (ELRWLD)

The pun in line 11 is based on a mimetic process of conversion of the adjective *occasional* into the noun (*an*) *occasional*. The process is imitative of the adjective-noun pair *usual – a* (*the*) *usual*:

(11) [Nemo's Pizzeria. Bernie and Ray are seated at the table.]
1. Waitress: Hi. Something to drink first?
2. Bernie: Uh… beer.
3. Ray: It's a little early.
4. Bernie: I like it with pizza. But I don't know. [to waitress] What do you think I should have cos I'll change it.
5. Waitress: I drink eight glasses of water a day.
6. Bernie: Water. I'll have water. A pitcher of water.

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7. Waitress: And you?

8. Ray: Yea, okay, water. I'll just start with a glass though. [To Bernie] And then what? We're going to have the usual?

9. Waitress: I just started on Saturday, nobody has a usual yet.

[Bernie and Ray laugh.]

10. Ray: It's four slices, everything on it.

11. Waitress: That should be an occasional. (ELRLDT)

4.3. Lexical ambiguity

Lexical puns exploit polysemy and complete homonymy. Unlike contextually productive polysemy, our corpus yielded a smaller number of instances of wordplay based on complete homonymy.[16] Complete homonymy occurs when unrelated meanings are signaled by the same linguistic form (Cruse 2006: 80). Sitcom humor frequently draws on proper nouns for this purpose. Since they do not carry lexical meaning, such lexemes are frequently involved in a type of local homonymy (Brone 2008: 2045), i.e. pertaining to one particular episode (or more) of a sitcom. In the example below, proper noun *Buck Naked* (line 2) is a complete homograph and homophone of the set phrase *buck naked* (not wearing any clothes):[17]

(12) [Jerry's apartment. Jerry is unpacking groceries and George comes in.]

1. George: I just thought of a great name for myself, if I ever become a porno actor.

2. Jerry: Oh yeah, what? Buck Naked?

3. George: Yeah, how did you know that?

4. Jerry: You told me that already like two months ago. (STO)

A bit controversial is the following example. What can be seen in line 2 can be interpreted as a reversed process compared to example 12. The ambiguity is generated by contrasting the pronouns *no one* and *nowhere*, with their proper noun interpretation:[18]

(13) [Frasier is in his bed, dreaming.]

1. Frasier: Hello, Seattle, this is Dr. Frasier Crane. Who's our first caller, Roz?

2. Roz: We have no one from nowhere.

3. Frasier: Very amusing, Roz. (FFS)

The rest of the examples from the corpus generate humor on the basis of polysemy. A word which has "more than one distinct, established sense is said to be polysemous" (Cruse 2006: 133). Ambiguity is most often generated by juxtaposing different, dictionary-registered senses, as is illustrated in the examples below. Pitman's and Peggy's intended meanings of the lexeme *satisfaction* (adequate response, compensation vs. fulfillment of sexual needs) are here contrasted to create humor. Similarly, Alan's wordplay in

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[16] The controversial relationship between polysemy and homonymy is often brought to attention in literature (see, for instance Ermida 2008: 64).

[17] Also traceable to Joshua Milton Blahyi, also known as General Butt Naked.

[18] The context points in the direction of this interpretation. In that regard, we believe that the use of capital letter was necessary (see example 8). If this interpretation holds, *Noone* could also be considered as an example of morphologically based ambiguity, since its creation would have to rely on some sort of word- formation process. In that case, place name *Nowhere* would be based on the conversion of a pronoun into a noun.

line 3 is based on the opposition of the two senses of the lexeme *screw* (engage in sexual activity vs. mistreat or exploit through trickery or unfair actions):

(14) [The doorbell rings. Peggy goes to answer it. Peggy opens the door to one of the neighbors, Mr. Pitman. Pitman walks in, carrying a small dog.]
1. Pitman: My dog's been soiled, Bundy. I demand satisfaction.
2. Peggy: Me too. Good luck. (MWCBDI)

(15) [Charlie enters the living room with a magazine and a drink. He sits. He realizes he is uncomfortable, and pulls out the Gameboy from behind the cushion.]
1. Charlie: Oh, cool.
[Alan enters.]
2. Charlie: Hey, that was quick.
3. Alan: Yea, like every other time Judith screwed me. (THMNSNW)

Frequently, meaning opposition is generated on the basis of the descriptive and figurative (or idiomatic) uses of the word. Such is the case with the two senses of the lexeme *on top of* (on the highest surface of something vs. in control) in line 6. Phrasal verbs are particularly suitable for this purpose, as can be seen in the example 17 with the lexeme *get away* (to take a holiday away from the place where you normally live vs. to escape from someone who is chasing you):

(16) [Daphne's dream. A knock at the front door. Daphne answers to a gorgeous brunette in a tan bikini.]
1. Daphne: Hello.
2. Woman: I'm here about the cable problem?
3. Daphne: Oh, I don't know anything about that.
4. Niles: [rushing back in] I'll handle this, Darling. [suggestively] Cable's out in the bedroom.
5. Woman: [sultry tone] Well, let's see what you've got going on in there.
[Niles takes her hand and beamingly leads her back.]
6. Daphne: Bless him. He's on top of everything around here. (FFS)

(17) [Mary and Steve came to complain about the music blaring from Kelly's room. The music starts blaring again, as Peggy puts her hand to her forehead.]
1. Marcy: Peggy, it sounds like you need to get away.
2. Peggy: I thought about that, but Al and the kids would just hunt me down and drag me back.
3. Marcy: No. I meant a vacation. Hire a babysitter and take off for the weekend. (MWCMWC)

Whether phrasemes or set phrases are lexical units is still a controversial issue, as is the issue of the criteria that should be applied in order to identify a certain structure as a fixed expression (see Burger et al. 2007). For the purposes of this paper, lexical puns are stretched to cover the so-called *semantic phrasemes* (see Mel'čuk 1998, 2007), which include idioms, quasi-idioms, and collocations. The main reason is that such constructions are said to be *word-like structures*, and not *sentence-like structures* (see Cowie 1998), i.e. *pragmatemes* (see Mel'čuk 1998, 2007), which are therefore not included in this discussion.

We already mentioned complex prepositions and phrasal verbs as one type of such fixed expressions (see examples 16, 17). Of other word-like structures, compound nouns are particularly productive for humorous purposes, due to their formal and semantic peculiarities (see Burger 2007). For instance, the inapplicability of the principle of compositionality is evident in the compound noun *sick day* which cannot be transformed into a postmodified structure **a day which is sick*. However, Elaine's wordplay is based on the decomposition of this expression, with the resulting change in meaning:

(18) [Jerry's apartment. Elaine is complaining about people at work.]
1. Jerry: What is so bad about having a little piece of cake?
2. Elaine: It is the forced socializing. I mean, just because we work in the same office, why do we have to act like we're friends?
3. Jerry: Why aren't you there now?
4. Elaine: I had to take a sick day. I'm so sick of these people. (STF)

A very similar strategy is exemplified below. All the idiomatic structures in examples 19-21 are subjected to the same process of meaning decomposition, or literalization, which causes their new interpretations (see Norrick 2007: 303):

(19) [Niles is sitting at a table, reading some papers and choking up. He gets control of himself and takes a sip of coffee. Roz comes in, and he breaks down again.]
1. Roz: So how's it coming?
2. Niles: I'm afraid I poured so much emotion into this speech I don't know if I can say it all without crying.
3. Roz: Oh, that's okay. Women like a man who isn't afraid to shed a few tears.
4. Niles: Last time I got all the way through it, I got dehydrated. (FP)

(20) Al: I know that er, Kelly has sewn a few wild oats, among God knows what other things, but I cannot knowingly allow my Pumpkin to marry a rogue and a scoundrel! (MWCHMM)

(21) [Al is sitting in the basement watching TV. Bud comes down the stairs.]

1. Bud: Dad, I need to talk to you. The University just put me on probation.
2. Al: Way to go, son! What did you do? Paint the school mascot? Put on a panty wig?
3. Bud: I was caught ... having sex in the school library.
4. Al: All right! That's my boy!
[He gets up, walks over to Bud and starts shaking his hand.]
5. Al: Who's the lucky girl?
6. Bud: You're shaking her...
7. Bud: Dad, I'm gonna be tried by the university deans! I might not be able to graduate! Could you give me a hand?
8. Al: Obviously, you have too many as it is! (MWCBHB)

5. CONCLUSION

The main focus of the present paper were structural aspects of lexical puns in sitcom discourse. The analysis shows that wordplay in sitcom discourse, as elsewhere, "turns out to be complex and multifaceted both structurally and functionally" (Partington 2006:

142). However, despite relative complexity, repetition of punning patterns seems to be a common denominator for all the sitcoms used as corpus. These findings could be used as a step forward in the direction of determining the degree of sophistication (quality) of humor (Partington 2006; Raskin 2008).

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List of Sitcoms and episodes used as corpus
1. Married With Children:
   Married without Children (MWCMWC); Bud Hits the Books (MWCBHB); Buck Can Do It (MWCBDI); Do Ya Think I'm Sexy? (MWCDTS); How to Marry a Moron (MWCHMM)
2. Two and a Half Men
   Did you Check with the Captain of the Flying Monkeys? (THMCFM); An Old Flame With a New Wick (THMOFNW); I Can't Afford Hyenas (THMCAH); No Sniffing, No Wowing (THMNSNW); Pilot (THMP)
3. Frasier:
   The Proposal (FP); Caught in the Act (FCIA); I'm Listening (FIL); Boo! (FB); Freudian Sleep (FFS)
4. Everybody Loves Raymond
   In-laws (ELRIL); Standard Deviation (ELRSD); Win, Lose or Draw (ELRWLD); Turkey or Fish (ELRTF); Look, Don't Touch (ELSLDT)
5. Seinfeld
   The Hot Tub (SHT); Serenity Now (SSN); The Frogger (STF); The Betrayal (STB); The Outing (STO).

LEKSIČKA IGRA U HUMORISTIČKIM SERIJAMA

Olja Jojić

Savremena lingvistika naklonjena je teoriji inkongruentnosti, po kojoj humor nastaje kao rezultat percepcije nesklada između očekivanja i stvarnosti. Od svih oblika humora, igra reči najbliža je takvom viđenju humora, budući da su u pitanju u pitanju jezički zavisni oblici humora, koji se grupišu oko dva semantički nepodudarna značenja. U ovom radu daje se opis leksičke igre u specifičnom kontekstu diskursa sitkoma. Prateći Simpsona (Simpson 2003), leksička igra posmatra se kao jedna od nekoliko vrsta igre reči, kao oblika humora koji se zasniva na dvosmislenosti. Klasifikacija se vrši na osnovu prirode lingvističkog aktivatora. U radu se primenjuje deskriptivno-analitički metod.

Ključne reči: *leksička igra, igra reči, diskurs sitkoma*