Playing-on-Words as a Strategy of Making Famous Comic TV Shows: Mind Your Language as a Sample

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Abstract :

Wordplay is created by exploiting features of languages and depending on ambiguity of meaning. This research tries to investigate two main goals, one general and another specific. The general goal is to investigate how playing-on-words is created in TV-shows and how it contributes differently in making different sorts of comic shows. The specific goal, on the other hand, is to investigate the use of this linguistic phenomenon in a famous comic TV show named Mind Your Language.

Mind Your language is analyzed following Delabastita (1996) and Bloomfield's (2007) models of forms and functions of wordplay respectively. For the aim of figuring out the general goal, the research refers to a previous study made on the use of wordplay in an animated comic show named The Simpsons and discusses the difference between the two, concerning show type and the way wordplay contributes in each.

The research concludes the following: (i) playing-on-words is an essential strategy for comic TV show making and it contributes differently in different shows ,(ii) almost all forms of wordplay are used in Mind Your Language,(iii)sometimes an intended move is required in words/expressions to make them work and create a wordplay such as an intended mispronunciation to form homophones, (iv) an instance of wordplay can serve more than one function and telling jokes is the main function that all of them serve in comic TV shows, (v) and finally a playing-on-words can serve an educational function, that is, it can be a good way to spread language knowledge.

Keywords: wordplay, humor, Mind Your Language, puns, comedy, The Simpsons

1- Introduction :

Playing on words (or wordplay) is a form of language that creates humor. Humor is what makes people laugh or feel amused. So, wordplay is a form of language that can make people feel amused and laugh and, thus, it can be used to make comic TV shows. However this is not the

only function that wordplay serves. Wordplay is a kind of ambiguity in language that cannot be easily understood. It requires a particular knowledge and attention from the audience/participant. But, it is still used intensively in everyday communication. This study tries to investigate how such a form of language (wordplay) can help to make big comic TV shows of different kinds that attract people of different interest. It also tries to investigate the forms and the functions of wordplay that are involved in comic TV show making, specifically Mind Your Language show.

The current research hypothesizes that (i) language can independently amuse people ,(ii) wordplay is sometimes used as a secondary means of comedy when other linguistic phenomena (like Irony , insinuation , etc.) and/or non-linguistic phenomena(sign language , face expression , etc.) are used intensively in the first place to amuse people , while other times it is used as the main means to make comedy, and (iii) different forms of wordplay and different functions are involved in making "Mind Your Language".

In order to prove the study hypotheses, two models are selected to investigate wordplay use in Mind Your language**.** Firstly, Delabastita (1996) is employed in investigating forms of wordplay because he asserts in his definition that wordplay can result from exploiting different sorts of language features. This point is necessary for the data chosen (Mind Your Language) because different features of English language are expected to be exploited in the show. Secondly, Bloomfield's (2007) classification of wordplay functions is employed.

The study analyses two randomly selected episodes (episode1/ season1 and episode1/season 2) from Mind Your Language. This show is chosen because it differs from other kinds of comic shows in two points which are: (i) the setting (an adult educational college), and (ii) the style of comedy created, which depends almost totally on playing on words. After analyzing Mind your language, a reference will be made to a previous study in the discussion part to discuss some existing kinds of comic TV shows and the place of wordplay in each of them.

2- The Comedy Language

The comedy language is the form of language that has the quality of being amusing. It makes people laugh. It is a form of communication that aims at amusing people. It amuses not only those who participate in the communication, but even those who are not involved directly in the verbal communication. Willi (2014:173) states that the comic text is directly addressed only rarely because it entertains and makes laugh an audience "that does not take part in the verbal exchange" as it is the case in the TV shows. However, comedy takes different forms through cultural diversity. Frale (2010:6) says that, in the same piece of writing, comedy

can cross or fail to cross cultural and social boundaries. Sturges (2010:2) describes comedy as something embedded in culture and ubiquitous. Thus, understanding and defining it is necessary. To reach an understanding of the concept comedy, it requires an identification of the broad domain of humor.

3- Humor

Humor is something ubiquitous in societies and can be seen as an integral part of people life. Turning on TV or serving the internet, many comic series or shows can be found. Humor is what makes people laugh and feel amused, but what makes people laugh is not that easily defined. Attardo (1994:3) asserts that it is difficult to agree on a pretheoretical definition of the term humor and how it can be divided into categories like humor, comedy and ridiculousness. In fact, there are a lot of theories talking about humor and trying to see how it functions. A simple (but not thorough) definition of humor can be the one represented by Attrado (ibid) which states that humor is the potential or the feature that is found in something or someone that makes people feel amused or funny.

Palmer (1994:3) defines humor as "everything that is actually or potentially funny, and the process by which this funniness occur". Humorous language is the one that communicates a "comic idea", that is an idea which is funny. A humorous or comic expression/word, as Finegan (1999:6) mentions, has three parts: expression, meaning, and context.

Words and their intonation are the expression part. "Words" refers to the intended humorous bit that is communicated. The expression part of comedy language is the twisting process, that is, to give an idea and then change it to another. The twisting process can be done as well by saying a word that makes audience comprehend it in one way and then change it into another. Intonation can also communicate comedy as a part of the expression part. The way a word or expression is pronounced decides how funny it can be. (Frale, 2010:15) So, intonation and the twisting of the words can connect two ideas which are not originally connected. This connection will result humor. Thus, humor and comedy is mostly based on connecting ideas which are not apparently connected by means of words themselves or intonation.

Meaning is the second part of language, that is, the second part in any comic expression. Sometimes, a word or expression is humorous and comedy because of the meaning of the word itself. However, to convey comedy by means of meaning, expression part (the word itself and the intonation) is still necessary and involved. In this case, the expression part will be a method to deliver the comic meaning (Finegan, 1999:7)

Context is another important part of the humorous language just as the meaning. It can be one reason why audience may feel amused.

Sometimes the context is essential in adding the humorous taste to an expression and deciding audience interaction (Frale, 2010:22). However, the main point of the humor is the meaning (part one). What constructs meaning is the expression (part two). Humor is interfered by the meaning via context (part three). The three parts are mostly interrelated and work together to communicate a comic idea.

Meyer (2000:310) views humor as "social phenomenon", in the sense that humor is much effective with a group of people. A person watching a comic TV show will laugh more if s/he watches with group of people interacting together with the show and laughing.

4- Humor Vs. Drama

Simply stating, humor is what makes people laugh or/ and feel amused. Frale (2010:6) says that audience's feeling and laughing and the way they are directed to the amused direction are what distinguishes drama from comedy. Though laughing is the dividing line, comedy and drama function the same in number of ways. The distinction is very slight; it can be seem only in a "tone".

An expression can be humorous at one time and dramatic at another according to the "tonal shift". Frale (ibid: 6-7) explains the idea with examples:
- "A man while on drugs is fascinated by a bus. In his drug induced delirium , he is hit by the bus" (Drama)
- "A man while on drugs falls in love with a bus. He is hit by the bus." (Comedy)

The structure in the examples above can be seen as the same. However, when a shift in the tonal occurs, particularly in the part related to the man's feeling towards the bus, the situation shifts between being painful and being absurd and humorous. The point lies in that suffering is being interacted with differently in comedy. Things which might be really painful, sad, embarrassing, mistaken in life can be humorous and funny because of comedy. Thus, comedy and drama are distinguished depending on the way the idea is presented. (p.8)

5- Theories of Humor

A best understanding of humor can be reached through exploring its theories. Meyer (2000:311) says that humor origination in mind is explained comprehensively through three major theories. Those theories are: the relief theory, the incongruity theory and the superiority theory.

The theory of relief sees the reason for people experiencing laughter and humor lies in the sense of reducing stress .Humor helps people both physically and psychologically. That is, the theory believes that humor results from "a release of nervous energy" (ibid). This theory has a psych-physiological nature as it believes in the physiological release of tension. It is initiated by Freud (1991) who believes that mental energy

and pressure are released by humor. He also believes that humor relieves people from embarrassment.

The incongruity theory, on the other hand, believes that humor results from some kind of violation or surprise. That is, when people get surprised or see that an accepted pattern is violated, they laugh (Wilkins and Eisenbraun, 2009:352). Attardo (1994:48) explains the idea saying:

> The cause of laughter in every case is simply the sudden perception of the incongruity between a concept and the real objects which have been thought through it in some relation.

This theory states that people must know some typical patterns of reality in order to be able to notice the difference. The audience or the participant must have in mind two different views: one is the originally known pattern and another that violates the known pattern (Wilkins and Eisenbraun, 2009:352).However, though this theory does not define or mention the psycho-physiological effects of humor, it does not mean that it refuses this fact. Humor has a great effect on people psychology and physiology.

Superiority theory, according to Wilkins and Eisenbraun (ibid), deals with the negative or faulty causes of humor. It purposes "that laughing at faulty behavior can reinforce unity among group members". Attardo (1994:50) says, long before Wilkins and Eisenbraun, that humor according to this theory is a method used to correct "deviant behavior" by societies. However, Meyer (2000:314) mentions that this theory believes that people laugh because they have the feeling of "superiority". That is, they laugh because they suddenly in a particular situation feel that they are better than the others.

Attardo (1194:48) says that this theory shows the aggressive side of humor. People laugh at each other's weakness, mistakes, embarrassing situations, stupidity, cruelty, follies, faults and tragedies. That is why the superiority theory has been criticized by some scholar.

6- Functions of Humor

Theories of humor give a great insight into explaining the functions of humor. Any humorous word or expression can have more than one function and can be explained according to more than one theory. Meyer (2000:316) says that humor function:

> can be clarified by developing an effect-based taxonomy of humor, moving beyond the theories of humor origin. It is important to recognize that, however humor originates, its effects in a message can vary based upon other variables that mediate the humor.

According to the quote above, humor is affected by some variables such as the audience or the participants themselves and the situation or the context. A said-to-be humorous expression can be humorous for some people and not for others. Even more, the same expression or word is humorous in a situation and is not in another.

According to Meyer (2000) humor has four functions: (i) Identification: humor helps in building social relationships and supporting them which results from people's acceptance and laughing to each other's funniness. It "builds group cohesiveness" (p.318). (ii) Clarification: Humor is employed to increase the chance of getting much attention and being memorable which result from the unexpectedness of the humorous expression or word. That is why it is known that people on media are more likely to pick up humorous contents (p.319). (iii) Enforcement: humor is used to enforce social norms and to criticize with keeping some kind of identification (p.320). (iv) Differentiation: humor is used to show distinctions, that is, to indicate that a person, a group or a society is different from another (p.321)

7- Word Play

A vast linguistic source to make humor is playing on words. Wordplay is defined by Delabastita (1996:128) as

> the general name for various textual phenomena
> in which structural features of the language used are
> exploited in order to bring about a communicatively
> significant confrontation of two (or more) linguistic
> structures with more or less similar forms and more
> or less different meanings.

Leppihalme (1997:142) points out that wordplay can be formed by different features of languages such as similarity in word forms, pronunciation, sometimes the number of different meanings that a particular word may have, syntactic structure or morphological structures. Wordplay is used intensively to make comic shows because people usually feel amused and enjoy watching such kind of language use. However, the current study tries to show how some of the shows use play-on-words as the base to make a whole TV show, such as the case of "Mind Your Language" which depends totally on playing on words. And, other times, wordplay is used as a secondary means to make comedy, that is, other means of humor are involved equally in the show as well

Suffice to say, wordplay is sometimes called with another name which is "puns". Giorgadze (2014:271) says that scholars are not consented on whether wordplay and pun are two words used interchangeably or they are two different things. Some of them believe that they are totally the same. Others state that puns are one kind of wordplay alongside with other phenomena such as malapropism,

spoonerism, wellerism, palindromes, onomatopoeia and other linguistic units. Thus, "wordplay can be discussed in its narrow and broad sense" (p.272). In the narrow sense, wordplay is equal to puns. However, wordplay (pun) cannot be thoroughly defined in a simple definition. That is why; there are few definitions for the concept.

Wordplay loses its function if it is explained. That is, it has to be understood naturally without the need to explanation if the intended effect is to achieve. However, wordplay has three functions according to Bloomfield (2007 cited in Darmawan, 2016:17-8). Firstly, it is used for the aim of amusing audience; *telling jokes* is the main function of wordplay. Secondly, wordplay is used as a form of euphemism, to convey unpleasant ideas in an acceptable way; it has the function of *breaking taboo*. Thirdly and finally, it has the function of "*rising serious effects*". That is, it is also used to express serious, sarcastic, emotional, or any important idea.

8- Forms of Wordplay

Wordplay is a form of ambiguity. It takes different forms and can be based on several linguistic phenomena. Delabastita (1996) categorizes wordplay into the following:

a- Phonological and graphological structure : numerous ways of creating wordplay are included within this category:

- Homonymy: one word having more than one meaning which are not related (same pronunciation and same spelling but different meaning) e.g. bank (Klein and Murphy, 2001:259).
- Homophone : two or more words having the same pronunciation (different meaning and different spelling but the same pronunciation) e.g. meat/meet (Yule ,2010:120)
- Homograph: two or more words with similar spelling but different meaning and pronunciation. e.g. bat (Klein and Murphy, 2001:259).
- Paronymy: Words drive from the same root, especially words from different languages. Crystal (2003:337) gives the example "French pont and Latin pons" which are two words from the same root with a slight difference. They are paronyms.

b- Lexical structure :

- Polysemy: words having different meanings which are related by extension e.g. head (Klein and Murphy, 2001:259).
- Idiom: " a group of words in a fixed order that have a particular meaning that is different from the meaning of each word on its own" (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary). e.g. Pull up your socks

c- Morphological structure: Delabastita (1996:130) provides an example to explain how wordplay is created by morphological features. The example provided is as follows :

-A: "Is **life** worth living?"

- B: "It depends upon the **liver**."
In the example above, B has created a new word in English using the –er derivation and the pre-existing word "live" to form an "incorrect" word which means someone who lives. The resulted word (liver) makes the humorous effect.

    d- Syntactic structure: wordplay can result from the ambiguity of the syntactic structure of the expression. A famous and good example to clarify is "old men and women" which confuses the listener/reader for having two different semantic interpretations.

9- Mind Your Language

The data chosen for this study is of a particular kind. Mind Your Language is a comic show , but it differs from other comic shows in that its setting is in an educational place and it , thus , meant to be totally depending on playing on words to make comedy. This show is first broadcasted in 1977. Stuart Allen, who is from London, is the director and the show is produced by London Weekend Television.

The show consists of 4 seasons broadcasted between 1977 and 1986. The overall episodes are 42 and each one is a 20-25minutes long. It talks about a group of foreigners from different countries that are welling to learn English Language. They are taught by a teacher named Mr. Jeremy Brown in an adult education college. Many funny situations happen during their struggle to learn the new foreign language, English.

Mind Your Language is chosen because it is found to be a special kind of TV shows because its setting is in an educational place which gives it a different nature. Such kind of data is not analyzed before. It is rich of language use humorously. Also, it is one of the most famous comic TV shows. It is still (from 1977 and till now -2019) watched intensively by comedy lovers. This is proved by the high number of views and likes for the episodes on youtube.com.

For the current study aims, two episodes are chosen randomly with only taking into consideration a variation in the seasons. That is, each episode is selected from a season: The episodes selected are:
-Episode1/season 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GDNffH4XHyI
-Episode1/season2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iPI7wkWuXLE

10-Methodology

Playing on Words as a Strategy of Making Famous Comic TV Shows is the first part of the study title. It indicates the use of wordplay in making comic TV shows in general. That is, the study does not only investigate the use of a form of language, i.e. wordplay, specifically in just one TV show. It rather tries to cover the idea of language as a means of making different types of comic TV shows in addition to investigating one show in specific. However, instead of analyzing more than one TV shows, the study tries to set a methodology that can make use of a

previous study on wordplay in reaching one of its goals. There are few previous studies on wordplay. One related previous study is found; it is investigating the use of wordplay in an animated comic TV show (The Simpsons)

The current study is going to analyze thoroughly "Mind Your Language" as the main sample for the use of a form of language to make comedy. A thorough analysis of the new data (Mind Your Language) will be made. Later, after discussing the outcomes of analyzing Mind Your Language, a discussion will be done to compare between the new data (Mind Your Language) and the previous study data (The Simpsons).Before doing that, a summary for some main points, to provide a general clarification, for the previous study will be represented separately under the title of "Previous Research".

Mind Your Language will be analyzed following two models. The first model is Delabastita's (1996) classification of the types of wordplay. The second model is Bloomfield's (2007) categorization for the functions that playing on word may serve. Only two selected episodes are going to be analyzed.

11-Previous Research

A Stylistic Analysis of Wordplay in the Simpsons Series is the title of a thesis written by Alflan Darmawan in 2016. It explores two points: firstly, the different forms of wordplay used in the data (The Simpsons) and, secondly, the functions that they serve. The data of the study is six episodes of a comic show named "The Simpsons" which is an adult animated sitcom.

The study follows two models in conducting the study, one for the analysis of forms of wordplay and the other for function investigation. Leech's (1968) classification is used to analyze wordplay form and Bloomfield's (2007) classification to analyze wordplay functions. The thesis concludes that (i) all the types of wordplay are found in the series, some of them more than the other, and (ii) all the functions of wordplay are found too. However, Telling jokes is the most occurring function in the episode while braking taboos is found to be the least used.

12-Analysis

Two episodes from Mind Your Language are analyzed below:

Table (1): Mind Your Language Analysis /Season1/Episode1

Season 1 : episode 1					
No.	Extracted speech		Form	Function	Explanation
1	**-Ali:** I am hoping to be *unrolled*		Homophone	Telling jokes	The show starts its first comic scene with wordplay when Ali, a

Season 1 : episode 1					
No.	Extracted speech		Form	Function	Explanation
	- Mrs. Courtney : you mean you're hoping to be _enrolled_	1:09			new student, comes to the head manger to sign up in the English class. Ali is not good in English, so he mispronounces the word "enrolled" in a way that makes it sound like "unrolled" resulting a funny change in the meaning. While enrolled means to sign up, unrolled means to spread out. The wordplay is resulted from an exploit of some phonological features of the language.
2	**Ali-** Like it say in your _sillybus_	1:15	Homophone	Telling jokes	Ali wants to refer to the word "syllabus" which means the academic document those summaries the main points of a curriculum; he mispronounces the word making it to sound like "silly-bus" which has a different meaning raising comedy.
3	- **Mrs. Courtney**: Turn left -**Ali :** Turn left -**Mrs. Courtney**: _Right_ -**Ali:** You are confusing me. _Left or right_? - **Mrs. Courtney**: Left**!**	1:51	Homonymy	Telling jokes	Because of the different meanings that the word "right" have (one meaning is the opposite of left and the other meaning is a synonym for correct), a play on words is created.
4	-**Ali:** l am not going where l am looking -**Mr. Brown**: No, no! l wasn't looking where l was going!	2:17	Syntactic Structure	Telling jokes	Mr. Brown, the teacher, tries to correct the mistake that Ali made, but he does not clarify his intention. He, instead, just repeats the correct form of the sentence that Ali

Season 1 : episode 1					
No.	Extracted speech		Form	Function	Explanation
	-**Ali** : That makes the two of us				said incorrectly, so it turns to sound like he is just speaking to him, not correcting his sentence structure.
5	- **Mr. Brown:** 1 am _Brown_ - **Ali:** Oh, no - You are committing a mistake -**Mr.Brown:** Mistake? -**Ali:** Yes, you are not brown! We are brown! You are _white_	4:45	Homonymy	Telling jokes	As Mr. Brown introduces himself to students, wordplay is created. The word "Brown" can mean two things. Students have thought that "Brown" refers to a color and that the teacher is talking about skin color, while he has been talking about his name and introducing himself.
6	-**Max:** 1 walk with _sheeps_ -**Mr.Brown**: You walk with sheeps? - A shepherd! You work on a farm -**Max:** No, no, no! Not farm Sheeps. Big sheeps – -**Mr. Brown:** Ah, _ships_ -	6:27	Homophone	Telling jokes	As a try to describe his job, Max mispronounces the word "ships" making it sound like "sheep" which they are two totally different things. The laugh arises when the audience recognizes the mispronunciation.
7	-**Max:** Yes, Sheeps, Tonkers - _Tonkers_! -**Mr. Brown:** Ah, _tankers_	6:51	homophone	Telling jokes	Another mispronunciation is made by Max when he was trying to elaborate his idea about what is his job. He unintentionally pronounces the word as similar as to a taboo word (tonker) when he tries to refer to (tankers).
8	**Giovanni**: No, not a waiter. A cookada – **Mr. Brown**: A _cookada_? Giovanni : 1 cookada	7:41	Morphologic al structure	Telling jokes	Giovanni wants to say that he is a chef, but he does not know the exact word. He forms a word by combining the English word (cook) with (ada) which seems to be

Season 1 : episode 1					
No.	Extracted speech		Form	Function	Explanation
	raviolo, daspaghetti, cookada everything **Mr. Brown:** _A chef_				coming from his first language (Italian)
9	**Ranjeet** :l am _Sikh_ – **Mr. Brown:** Oh dear l hope it's not contagious! Perhaps you ought to come back when you're better? **Ranjeet**: l do not comprehend the gist of your conversation **Mr. Brown:** You said you were _sick_	10:52	Homophone	Telling jokes	As opposite to the previous cases, the misunderstanding and the mistake in the scene which generates wordplay arises from the teacher himself. Mr. Brown misunderstands Ranjeets speech when the latter refers to his religion (Sikh). Mr. Brown thinks that Ranjeet is saying that he is "sick"
10	**Juan:** sí! _Tree laggers_ – **Mr.Brown**: You lag trees? **Juan**: Sí, 1 Jeentonic, 2 whisky, coka tree laggers **Mr, Brown: Three** _lagers_. You work in a bar!	12:32	Homophone	Telling jokes	As Mr. Brown tries to interfere what Juan means by "Tree laggers", he hits wordplay. Mr. Brown first thinks that the expression meant is "lagging trees"; a comic scene is meant at the moment when the intended word is known for the audience "Three lagers".
11	**Jeovanee:** l'm going to - How you say - _knock his bloody block off_ **Max:** We see who's _bloody blocka is knockered off_	15:12	Idiom	Telling jokes	Jeovanee uses an idiom to say that he is going to beat up Max. Max does not understand the figurative meaning of the idiom; he understands it literally and replies according to that.
12	**Mr. Brown**: Ali, 'you are' - You are **Ali**:You are	20:40	Syntactic Structure	Telling jokes	Mr. Brown, the teacher, asks Ali to give him a sentence starting with "you are". The request

Season 1 : episode 1				
No.	**Extracted speech**		**Form**	**Function**	**Explanation**
	waiting for me to speak an answer **Mr.Brown**: Well done! **Ali**: Unfortunately, l am not understanding the question				seems ambiguous for the foreign student, so he tries to tell the teacher, which in turn says it in an unclear way. The teacher thinks that Ali is giving him the answer (You are waiting…) as the sentence starts with "you are". Finally, the wordplay (and the comedy) is clarified with the last line of Ali (I am not understanding …)

Table (2): Mind Your Language Analysis /Season2/Episode1

Season 2 : episode 1					
No.	**Extracted speech**		**Form**	**Function**	**Explanation**
13	**Mr.Brown**: Ta, is she _in_? **Ta:** l've creamed out your _bin_	1:38	Homophone	Telling jokes	As a different case of wordplay, the effect in this situation arises as a result of mishearing. Ta has problems with hearing, so he understands "in" as "bin". The two words have a kind of pronunciation similarity. The context has had a role in creating the effect too; Ta has been cleaning ground.
14	**Zoltan:** _Hungry_ **Mr. Brown:** You want something to eat? – Hungry? **Zoltan**:_Hungary_	2:17	Homophone	Telling jokes	Zoltan that he is "Hungarian" which seems close in pronunciation to the word "Hungry". Because of Zoltans mispronunciation, Mr. Brown thinks that Zoltan is hungry and wants to eat something.
15	**Ranjeet:** Like Roberty Bruce say lf <u>at first you are not</u>	4:19	Syntactic structure	Telling jokes	Mr. Brown, the teacher, intends to complete an idiom a student said. He just says the completion

Season 2 : episode 1					
No.	Extracted speech		Form	Function	Explanation
	succeeding , try, try **Mr. Brown**: Again! **Ranjeet:** lf at first you…. **Mr. Brown:** Never mind				"Again" which sounds like a request to the student, as if the teacher asking him to repeat what he was saying. The ambiguity arises because of the unclear language that the teacher has used. He should have said the whole sentence "*lf at first you are not succeeding, try, try again*" if he has wanted it to sound clear and not funny.
16	**June**: I teach him **Mr. Brown:** That would be like *the blind leading the blind* **June:** Blind He not see!	7:12	Idiom	Telling jokes	When June volunteers to teach one of his new colleagues English, Mr. Brown says an idiom (the blind leading the blind) which means that it is impossible because they both know nothing about English. June does not understand that it is an idiom and it is figurative. He understands it literally which results comedy.
17	**Ingrid** :l *here come to English learn* – **Mr. Brown:** I come here to learn English **lngrid** : We together sit	7:38	Syntactic Structure	Telling jokes	Again, Mr. Brown, the teacher, tries to correct a mistake made by a student without clarifying his intention enough. He, instead, just repeats the correct form of the sentence that the student said incorrectly, so it turns to be sounding like he is just speaking to her, not correcting the sentence structure. Ingrid thinks that Mr. Brown means that he has come there to learn too. In this scene, the context has a role too. Mr. Brown looks young enough to look like a student which

No.	Extracted speech		Form	Function	Explanation
Season 2 : episode 1					
					has supported Ingrid's misunderstanding.
18	**Mr. Brown:** what is your job? **lngrid** :*Au pair* **Mr. Brown:** which *pair*?		Homophone	Breaking taboo + Telling jokes	MR. Brown plays on words by saying "which pair" as a reply to Ingrid saying that her job is "Au pair" (meaning : nursemaid) . Ingrid shows off her attractive body, and Mr. Brown seems unable to resist so he pays on words saying "which pair" directing his eyes to her breasts
19	**MR. Brown**: 1 want much more effort from all of you You must all *pull your socks up* ■ (a student pulls his socks up)	11:36	Idiom	Telling jokes	An idiom is misunderstood by the students creating comedy. Students think that the expression "pull up socks" is a literal expression. They do not get the figurative meaning which is to make more effort.
20	**Taro:** Went on fishing holiday **Mr. Brown**: Good, did you *catch* anything? **Taro:** *Catcho heavy coldo*	13:11	Polysemy	Telling jokes	Wordplay is created from the different meanings that the word "Catch" conveys. Mr. Brown asks Taro whether he has caught a fish or not; the latter misunderstands him saying that he has catch a cold. It seems that Taro does not know the different contexts that the word catch can be used in.
21	**Mr. Brown:** Did you enjoy your *break* Ali? **Ali:** 1 am not *breaking anything* -	13:20	Homonymy	Telling jokes	Similar to case of the polysomic word "catch", a play on word is made through the homonymous word "break". Ali does not know that break can mean different things; it can refer to both "holiday" and "shatter".
	Su Lee: Spent time *lighting*	13:53	Homophone	Telling jokes	A long series of humor is made through the

No.	Extracted speech		Form	Function	Explanation
Season 2 : episode 1					
22	**Mr. Brown**: Lighting what? Su Lee: Lighting book				character "Su Lee". She is made to have a problem in pronouncing the /r/ sound. She pronounces every /r/as a /l/ because she is Chinese. Chinese (Mandarin) has no /r/ sound. In this scene, she pronounces "writing" as "lighting" which is a completely different word.
23	**Ali:** he speak *Hungryarian*	18:37	Morphologic al structure	Telling jokes	A play on words is made by Ali by adding wrong affixes to the word "Hungarian" forming a whole new word to express his idea, referring to the Hungarian language.
24	**Ingrid:** Swedish girls are the *beautifullest*	19:12	Morphologic al structure	Telling jokes	Ingrid adds the "est" to the adjective "beautiful" to describe degree which raises laugh.
25	**Ta:** Are you sure that you got the right *cucumber*? **Mr. Brown**: Cucumber? **Ta**: The *number*	20:13	Homophone	Telling jokes	Because of the match of the half part of the word "cucumber" with the word "number" , with excitement Ta says the former instead of the latter making a word play.

13-Discussion

The heavy use of "playing on words" strategy in Mind *Your Language* show has made itself too clear through the analysis of the two episodes in the tables above. Each episode of the show is 20-25 minutes, and 25 instances of playing on words are found in only two episodes. Comparing the number of words/expressions found with the total time of the two episodes, one of the study hypotheses gets verified. That is, a comic TV show can be made depending MAINLY on a linguistic phenomenon such as wordplay on the first place. It is necessary to mention that not only these two episodes, but also all the episodes of the

show similarly make heavy use of this strategy. The analysis of the two episodes stands for the whole show.

Moreover, exploiting some features of English language in a specific intended way by the show makers seems to be crucial in making comedy in TV show using playing on words as a strategy to raise laugh. All the wordplay of the homophone type are created by a kind of intended mispronunciation of a word in a way that makes it similar to another existing one that differs in meaning (11 instances). That is, they are not originally homophones, but it is the intended mispronunciation (exploiting phonological features of English Language) is what makes them homophones. Also, a kind of morphological exploiting is found to create new words with humorous effect (3times). On the other hand, ambiguity is exploited too. The other forms of wordplay are created because of a kind of ambiguity in the expression or the structure, such as lexical ambiguity (3 idioms, 1 polysemy), syntactical ambiguity (4 times) and phonological and graphological ambiguity (3 homonyms).

Concerning the function of playing on words, the main function that all the instances of wordplay in comic TV shows and specifically in Mind your Language serve is telling jokes. The main reason when the show maker is using wordplay is to make audience laugh and feel amused because this is the above all goal of any comedy TV show, still not the only goal. Also, though it is not mentioned in the analysis tables, those playing on word instances can also be functioning as a funny educational means. The show might be a good way to increase vocabularies and language knowledge for those who have interest in English and trying to learn more words and vocabularies. This function might be part of raising serious effects function or it might not. Either way , the study finds it necessary to refer to this , second, function of the use of playing on words in Mind Your Language because the show is being watched by both native and foreign audience and as the show calls for a specific interest in English language and how languages may work. This in turn proves the fact that playing on words can serve more than one function at every single use (as it is mentioned above that the examples found in Mind your Language can be both functioning as "telling jokes" –to amuse- and educational – to teach-).

However, one instance of breaking taboo function is found in the two episodes of the show when the teacher tries to distract his inability to resist the beauty and attractiveness of one of his students, a young attractive lady (see wordplay 18 – Au pair/ which pair). This also proves that although wordplay is mainly used to amuse audience in such kind of TV shows, they can serve other functions too at the very same time.

Finally , by considering a previous study that has been conducted about the use of wordplay in an adult animated TV show, a reference to

the different kinds of comic TV shows that language can be used in as a means to achieve specific goals (making comedy first and then other goals) can be made. The differences between Mind Your Language (the current study data) and The Simpsons (a previous study data) are as follows:

Table (3): Mind Your Language & the Simpsons Differences

Mind Your Language	The Simpsons
A life-action series	An adult animated series
The setting is educational, that is the focus on language is the basis for the story.	The setting is a fictional town and family and people's life
aimed at specific type of audience	To everyone
Depends Mainly (yet not only) on playing on words in the first place.	Depends equally on wordplay and other comedy strategies (linguistic and non-linguistic).

The table shows that wordplay can contribute differently in making different kinds of comic TV shows. However and suffice to say, Mind Your Language requires or attracts a specific sort of audience. It requires an audience who is aware, at least to some degree, of what wordplay is and an audience who knows some good English too.

14-Conclusions

The study has concluded the following:

1- Playing on words is an essential strategy for TV show making. It contributes in a special way in rising laugh. It can be used as the basis for a whole TV show and also it can be used as a secondary means along with or equally to other linguistic and non-linguistic means of making comedy.

2- All the forms of playing on words can be utilized in making TV shows.

3- Playing-on-words can be created by a sort of intended mispronunciation. Some words are not originally homophones, but comic makers make a slight change in the pronunciation to make it sound like another existing word causing meaning twisting.

4- Raising jokes is the main function that wordplay serves and wordplay can be functioning more than one function at one time. It can be source of amusing and a means of breaking a taboo at the same time or amusing and conveying a kind of knowledge.

5- Playing on words can be a good means to convey knowledge about language to others.

15-Reference

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التلاعب اللفظي كوسيلة لصناعة البرامج التلفزيونية الكوميدية : اعقل لغتك انموذجا

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الملخص :

ان التلاعب بالالفاظ يتم من خلال التحكم بالمميزات التي تمتلكها اللغة وعن طريق الاعتماد على خلق غموض في المعنى. ان هذا البحث يسعى لتحقيق هدفين رئيسيين. احدهما هدف عام/شامل والاخر هدف خاص/محدد. الهدف العام يكمن في سعي الدراسة لاكتشاف كيفية التلاعب بالالفاظ في البرامج التلفزيونية عامة وكيفية مساهمة هذه الحالة اللغوية (التلاعب بالالفاظ) في صنع برامج تلفزيونية بانواع مختلفة. اما الهدف الخاص/المحدد فهو السعي لدراسة التلاعب اللفظي تحديدا في برنامج "اعقل لغتك". يتم تحليل برنامج "اعقل لغتك" باستخدام منهجين حيث يسعى احدهما لبيان اشكال التلاعب اللفظي وهو يعود لديلاباستيتا (١٩٩٦). و يسعى الاخر لاكتشاف وظائف التلاعب اللفظي وهو يعود لبلومفيلد (٢٠٠٧). و لغاية تحقيق الهدف الاول (العام) لهذه الدراسة ،تتم الاشارة لدراسة سابقة حول التلاعب اللفظي في برنامج عائلة سمبسون حيث يتم مناقشة الفرق بين البرنامجين ونوعية اعتمادية كل برنامج على التلاعب اللفظي. وقد توصل البحث الى النتائج التالية : ١- يعتبر التلاعب اللفظي من الوسائل اللغوية المهمة لصناعه البرامج الكوميدية وهو يساهم بطرق مختلفة في البرامج المختلفة. ٢- تقريبا، ان جميع اشكال/انماط التلاعب اللفظي مستخدمة في برنامج "اعقل لغتك". ٣- ان التلاعب اللفظي في اغلب الاحيان يتطلب نوعا من الحركة اللغوية المقصودة (خطأ مقصود) لتحقيق النتيجة المطلوبة مثل التلفظ غير الدقيق لجعل كلمة تشبه الاخرى وتحقيق التلاعب اللفظي. ٤- يؤدي التلاعب اللفظي اكثر من وظيفة في ان واحد وان اهم وظيفة له هو"التاثير الكوميدي". واخيرا ، يمكن للتلاعب اللفظي ان يؤدي وظيفة تعليمية كأن يكون وسيلة لتعليم لغة معينة

الكلمات المفتاحية : التلاعب اللفظي ، حس الفكاهة ، اعقل لغتك ، تورية ، هزلي ، كوميدي، عائلة سامبسون