Linguistic analyses of Verbal Humor In Persian

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ABSTRACT: Study of humor has attracted the interest and attention of researchers for centuries. In recent years, the study of humor occupies an important place in linguistics and researchers present different theories. This research was done by analytic-descriptive method. In this research, we studied the one hundred of Persian jokes. The most parts of these jokes are taken from Internet sites, thus after exploring all the jokes, we omitted some of these jokes because of including obscene words and political, cultural and social reasons. In next step, we omitted dull jokes and among rest of the jokes, those who make fun of certain ethnicities omitted and we used instead, words like “that person”. Then these jokes were explored by General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH). This theory is presented by Raskin and Attardo in 1991. Under the GTVH, there are six parameters in which jokes can differ: script opposition, logical mechanism, situation, target, narrative strategy and language. The main focus of this research were on answering these questions: Is the GTVH appropriate for analyzing all Persian jokes? And also which kind of these parameters are more than the others in Persian jokes? The results of this research with utilization of descriptive statistics showed that GTVH is quite satisfactory and useful for analyzing Persian jokes and among different kinds of script oppositions: smart/dumb opposition, among different kinds of logical mechanism: false analogy and among different kinds of narrative strategies: combination of descriptive and dialogue forms had the most affluence.

Key words: Humor, jokes. General Theory of Verbal Humor

INTRODUCTION

Humor has been around for as long as there has been humanity. In observing our behavior in daily life, we surely realize that humor represents a central aspect of our every day conversation. This is why the study of humor has attracted the interest and attention of researchers for centuries. Important philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle laid the foundations of humor research, a field that has been developing continuously ever since. Although Humor has been a neglected area in linguistics until very recently, In recent years the study of humor occupies an important place in research in linguistics.

Among the various kinds of humor, the focus in this work is on jokes. According to Ritchie, Jokes are methodologically convenient for the following reasons:

- There is a ready source of attested examples, since collections of jokes abound, and there seems to be relatively little dispute about the status of such items as jokes.
- Jokes are relatively self-contained and are typically re-used in a wide range of settings. This is not to deny that there are certain requirements before a joke is appropriate in a particular context.
- Jokes are small, which renders them more manageable for the analyst. (Ritchie, 2004:15)

among different linguistic-based humor theories, the humor theory emphasized here will be the general theory of verbal humor. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, we attempt to answer the following questions:

Is the GTVH appropriate for analyzing all Persian jokes?
Which kind of these parameters are more than the others in Persian jokes?

Theoretical Basis

The general theory of verbal humor (or the GTVH), formulated by salvatore Attardo and Victor Raskin, is revised and extended version of Raskin's Semantic Script Theory (SSTH) and of Attardo's five-level joke representation model.

The GTVH is focused on verbal humor and describes a joke as a construction of six knowledge resources which contain:
Script opposition, Logical mechanism, situation, target, narrative strategy and language.

**Script opposition**

Script Opposition is seen as the incongruity of the SSTH (Attardo, 2008). This is the one parameter that every joke will contain (Attardo, 1994). The script oppositions fall into three classes: actual vs. non-actual, normal vs. abnormal, and possible vs. impossible. The three classes are all instances of a basic opposition between real and unreal situations in the texts. These three classes of oppositions are then instantiated in more concrete oppositions (Attardo, 1994:204).

Raskin lists five of the most common oppositions: good/bad, life/death, obscene/non-obscene, money/no-money, and high/low stature (Raskin 1985: 113-114; 127). These oppositions are seen as “essential to human life” (Raskin, 1985: 113); they certainly are very basic, but the difference in level of abstraction between the three basic types of opposition and the five instantiations should be noted. While it is unlikely that any culture would present a different list of three types of basic opposition, it is perfectly likely that different cultures would show quite a different type of lower-level instantiation.

**Logical Mechanism**

Logical Mechanism is the parameter that brings the two opposing scripts together (Attardo, 1994). Attardo et al. (2002, 18) give the list of all the known LMs: role reversal, vacuous reversal, garden-path, almost situations, inferring consequences, coincidence, proportion, exaggeration, meta-humor, role exchanges, juxtaposition, figure-ground reversal, analogy, reasoning from false premises, parallelism, ignoring the obvious, field restriction, vicious circle, potency mapping, Chiasmus, faulty reasoning, self-undermining, missing link, implicit parallelism, false analogy, Cratylism, referential ambiguity.

**Situation**

Situation includes all the “’props’ of the joke: the objects, participants, instruments, activities, etc.” (Attardo, 1994:24). Like Script Opposition, a joke will always have a Situation, but some jokes will emphasize it and others will disregard it (Attardo, 1994).

**Target**

Target is the individual/object/idea being made fun of – the “butt of the joke” (Attardo 1994:224). The names of people or groups of people that have humorous stereotypes associated with them are used here. If the joke is not aggressive and doesn’t necessarily make fun of something, it has “an empty value” at this level (Attardo, 224).

**Narrative Strategy**

Narrative strategies can be divided into three general types:

Descriptive: It consisted narrative, expository (essentially side remarks and descriptions of characters or situations as fact) or a combination of these two.

Dialogue: It consisted monologue (produced by one character, dialogue (conversation between two or, very seldom, several characters), thoughts (inner monologue), text (e.g. a menu, graffiti) or a combination of these.

Combination: It consisted of any combinations of the two first types (Aromaa, 2011).

**Language**

Language consists of the linguistic choices supporting the decisions made in other Knowledge Resources (Attardo, 2008). It is the parameter in charge of not only the wording and syntax of the joke but also how the different elements of the joke are arranged (Attardo, 1994).

**Method and Data collection**

This research was done by analytic-descriptive method. In this research, we studied the one hundred of Persian jokes. The most parts of these jokes are taken from Internet sites, thus after exploring all the jokes, we omitted some of these jokes because of including obscene words and political, cultural and social reasons. In next step, we omitted dull jokes and among rest of the jokes, those who make fun of certain ethnicities, omitted and we used instead, words like “that person”.

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Findings

Is the GTVH appropriate for analyzing all Persian jokes?
In order to answer this question, we investigate all six knowledge resources in Persian jokes and results showed that GTVH is appropriate for analyzing all Persian jokes. Which kind of these parameters are more than the others in Persian jokes?
IN script opposition parameter: dump/non dumb script had a most frequency.

Figure 1. Frequency of script opposition parameter In logical mechanism parameter: false analogy mechanism had a most frequency.

Figure 2. Frequency of Logical Mechanism parameter In narrative strategy, combinations of the two narrative and dialogue had a most frequency.
Frequency

![Graph showing frequency of narrative strategy parameters]

Figure 3. Frequency of Narrative Strategy Parameter

CONCLUSION

The present study attempt to evaluate how well the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) apply in the Persian jokes.

Results showed that the GTVH appropriate for analyzing all Persian jokes and in script opposition parameter: dump/non dumb script, In logical mechanism parameter: false analogy mechanism and In narrative strategy, combinations of the two narrative and dialogue had the most frequencies.

REFERENCES


