Linguopragmatic Features of Persuasive Power of Satire Based on *Private Eye* Magazine

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Abstract

This paper focuses on investigating linguopragmatic features of persuasive power of satire in British media discourse. The material for the research includes 56 texts of randomly chosen articles from British satirical Private Eye magazine (2019-2021). Qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis were applied to distinguish linguistic, stylistic, and pragmatic means of persuasion used in the analyzed paper. Relevance theory was used to outline interpretational procedure of satire and cognitive dissonance theory was applied to explain the mechanism of satire's power of persuasion implementation. The paper establishes that persuasive power of satire is an outcome of successfully realized critical and ludic functions of satire. Critical function of satire is realized with the help of linguopragmatic means which are capable of highlighting discrepancy between a desired and a current state of affairs, thus evoking cognitive dissonance, whereas ludic function of satire is realized by means of creating humorous effect. Linguopragmatic means of satire's critical function implementation include echo utterances, metaphors, repetitions, hyperboles, precedent related phenomena, and adjectives with negative connotative meanings accompanied by linguistic means of negations. Ludic function of satire is realized by wordplay techniques such as homophones, onomatopoeias, rhymes, acronyms, puns, neologisms, slang, pseudonyms, and sobriquets. Interpretation of these linguopragmatic means requires more processing efforts but causes a significant increase in cognitive effects.

Keywords: Satire, persuasion, critical function, ludic function

Introduction

The mass media plays a significant role in informing the society about latest news, commenting on vital decisions that can affect millions of people's lives, and subsequently "creating and strengthening public opinion" on certain issues (Ejeri et al., 2014, p.637). Moreover, in the world of unlimited access to various media resources, the power of persuasiveness in media discourse is vital. This is because media is currently shifting its priorities from objective current affairs coverage to influencing readers' mental sphere, their views and values, and ultimately persuading them into acceptance of certain subjective points of view and beliefs. Amongst all the available means of persuasion, satire is one of the least explicit, yet the most emotionally driven means of shaping public opinion. Satirical language, which is a significant component of human communication, is an effective means of persuasion by means of mocking satirical targets and producing a comic effect for readers who agree with a satirical message (Simpson, 2003).

Since satire is targeted at political institutions of paramount importance and the persons whose decisions can affect the lives of millions of people, satirists have to be very cautious when choosing the words for criticism because they have to fulfill two mutually exclusive tasks. On the one hand, they have to make their criticism obvious enough for the vast majority of readers to detect it, and, at the same time, they have to encrypt the message well enough to avoid being sued by the targets of criticism. This is why the satirist applies linguistic, stylistic, graphic, and contextual means which serve as ostensive stimuli that help the satiree to infer implicitly expressed dissociative attitude of the satirist to the current state of affairs while at the same time evoking humorous response from the readers.

Hence, the aim of the current research paper is to demonstrate how the persuasive power of satire is manifested through its ludic and critical functions in contemporary British media discourse. To achieve this aim, the following tasks have to be completed: providing a general definition of the term "persuasion"; establishing the mechanism of the realization of satire's persuasive power in *Private Eye* magazine; exploring critical and ludic functions of satire as two ways of achieving a persuasive effect of satire; and investigating linguopragmatic means which create critical and ludic effects of satire.

Literature Review

While being a ubiquitous covert method of social and political critique, which appears in a variety of mediums such as books, satirical newspapers, political cartoons, films, and television shows (Nilsen et al., 2008; LaMarre

et al., 2009; Skalicky et al., 2015; Zykun, 2016; Skalicky, 2018), satire has been neglected in terms of the attention paid to it within linguistics and pragmatics. Most conceptualizations of satire are based on the classical approach of literary criticism (Abrams, 1999; Grey et al., 2009; Burton, 2010; Condren, 2012; Maslo, 2019).

Literary critics claim that satire uses laughter as a weapon to diminish or derogate a subject and evoke attitudes of amusement, disdain, ridicule, or indignation towards it (Adams, 1999). According to Condren, satire is "a form of public discourse that invites critical judgment of some sociopolitical folly, absurdity, or contradiction" (Condren, 2012, p.388). Maslo considers satire to be neither completely subjective nor arbitrary, "it is a reflection and a reminder of the moral norms that are disregarded at a certain instance" (Maslo, 2019, p.232). Burton believes that "satire does not directly change the mind of the target, but instead influences public opinion by encouraging discussion of the revealed hypocrisy" (Burton, 2010, p.26). Grey et al. (2009) suggests that satire can provide meaningful political criticism, and it can also encourage audiences to scrutinize and question politics instead of simply consuming it from authoritative sources.

Within the framework of this research, satire is defined as a modern persuasive form of humorous discourse which generates critical attitude to personal and social follies (Yurchyshyn, 2021). Persuasion is viewed as "a communicative process to influence readers by means of creating contrast between the text's message and the recipients' "existing repertoire of information, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences" which "has the effect, when it is successful, of resulting in a reaction such as "I never saw it that way before" (Jowett, 2012, p.32-33).

According to Salisu et al. (2016), the main goal of satire is to "safeguard normative boundaries of society by denouncing societal follies and promoting standard of social norms and values of a given society".

Thus, persuasive power of satire is defined as media effects on readers' mental sphere (their opinions and assessments) with the view to influence recipients' behavior and attitudes for the benefit of addressers. Moreover, this research does not see persuasion as a mere toleration of "an expressed point of view because of the presence of some peripheral cue". However, it presupposes that "the advocated position is accepted only after careful scrutiny of the message and after application of whatever other information the receiver can bring" (Ajzen, 1992, p.9) In order to achieve this aim, the satirist not only appeals to the satiree's rational thinking, but he/she also uses techniques of emotional impact realized by linguopragmatic means which is capable of creating comic effects.

Linguistic means of persuasion were subjects of researches in different genres. For example, according to the research of Qaisiya et al. (2015) on

feminist discourse in public speeches, it has been empirically proven that linguistic means such as use of contrast, use of monologue and rhetorical questions, use of parallelism and references to personal experience, and research-based data can increase persuasive power of speeches. Pogacar et al. (2018) also investigated linguistic means of persuasion in advertisements, and it is assumed that high congruity can strengthen the effects of linguistic devices while moderate incongruence can have positive effects in the case of more elaborate information processing. Furthermore, incongruity theories provide theoretical background for recent empirical work on cognitive effect of humor on the basis of humor's "compatibilities with concepts such as mental models, schemas, and associative networks in memory" (Nabi et al., 2007; Young, 2008). The importance of applying humor for persuasive communication was also empirically proven by Young (2017) who argued that if "humor can playfully present information or argument without eliciting a negative audience reaction, then employing it could be a promising way to incite attitude change" and at the same time "reduce counter argumentation or argument scrutiny".

In terms of this research, persuasion is considered to be an ultimate result of successful "discursive practice between participants of the satirical triad (the satirist, the satiree and the satirical target), which may lead to drawing the satirist and the satiree closer while at the same time distancing the satiree and the satirised target" (Simpson, 2003, p.8). Thus, persuasive function of satire is realized by a range of linguopragmatic means which are able to affect the satiree's beliefs, attitudes, values, intentions, motives, and behavior.

Methodology

While viewing persuasion as an umbrella term of the impact that satire has on readers, this research therefore establishes that persuasive power of satire in British media discourse is realized by means of successfully fulfilled *critical* and *ludic* functions of satire. Within the framework of this research, the critical function of satire presupposes appeal to logical argument while the ludic function implies appeal to emotions. Critical and ludic functions are considered as dominant ones since these two functions define the very concept of satire as a means of expressing critical attitude with the help of humor.

For the analysis of persuasive power of satire, 64 issues of British satirical *Private Eye* magazine have been analyzed (2019-2021). Out of these 64 issues, 48, 658-word corpus of 56 articles on important sociopolitical topics such as corruption, incompetence, nepotism, human rights abuse, misdeeds of powerful and famous individuals, journalistic misconducts, conflicts of interest, and hypocritical behavior of newspapers have been selected. The corpus was investigated manually without appeal to any software. In order to understand how persuasive effect of satire is achieved, qualitative research

method has been used. The working hypothesis indicates that the persuasive power of satire is manifested through the combination of critical and ludic functions of satire. Therefore, the main criterion for corpus selection was the presence of linguopragmatic means that produces humorous effect either in titles or in the body paragraphs since these are the means of expressing the ludic function of satire. On the other hand, the critical function should be present by default in a magazine of this format.

Both qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis have been carried out in the study. Qualitative content analysis focused on distinguishing typical linguistic, stylistic, and pragmatic means used by the satirist in these articles in order to help the reader identify the satirist's dissociative attitude while, at the same time, evoking humorous effect. These means include the following: *repetitions, metaphors, hyperboles, euphemisms, adjectives with strongly negative connotative meanings accompanied by linguistic means of negations and different techniques of wordplay such as homophones, rhymes (alliteration, assonance, consonance), puns, neologisms, slang, acronyms, pseudonyms, and sobriquets*. In order to demonstrate how critical and ludic effects are achieved, the satirical articles mentioned above on social and political topics which contain at least one vivid example of each of the linguopragmatic means listed above have been selected for further detailed discourse analysis. Discourse analysis was conducted to determine cognitive effects achieved by the author when using these linguopragmatic means.

Critical function of satire is explored on the basis of Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger, 1957). This suggests that "the presence of a cognitive inconsistency of sufficient magnitude will evoke an aversive motivational state – dissonance – that drives cognitive work which is aimed at reducing the cognitive inconsistency" (Harmon-Jones et al., 2019, p.99). The satirist uses an array of linguopragmatic means which help him/her to point at the gap between the desired and the actual state of affairs (Yurchyshyn, 2020, p.209). This research claims that discrepancy between implicitly expressed characterization of the current situation and *contextual source A*, i.e., general encyclopedic knowledge of a reader (Yus, 2016, Yurchyshyn 2020), invokes a cognitive dissonance which then triggers cognition to form a critical view on the current state of affairs.

Furthermore, this research also claims that ludic function of satire is a successful outcome of incongruity resolution and is realized through linguopragmatic means that create a strong cognitive effect while, at the same time, evoking positive emotions in the form of laughter. In this article, ludic effect is believed to be the result of successful interpretation of numerous wordplay instances that involve several layers of punning. Relevance theory is applied to explain the mechanism of humorous effect formation in satire. Relevance theory states that communication ought to "be assessed in terms of

cognitive effects and processing effort: 1) other things being equal, the greater the positive cognitive effects achieved by processing an input, the greater the relevance of the input to the individual at that time; 2) other things being equal, the greater the processing effort expended, the lower the relevance of the input to the individual at that time" (Wislon et al., 2004, p.609). When techniques of wordplay are used, the processing effort will inevitably seem to rise (thus causing a decrease in relevance), yet the cognitive effects will increase drastically (thus leading to an increase in relevance).

Findings and Discussion

Linguopragmatic means of the realization of the *critical function* of satire include repetitions, metaphors, hyperboles, euphemisms, and adjectives with strongly negative connotative meanings which is accompanied by linguistic means of negations used to characterize behavior, traits of characters or decisions which triggered criticism. Apart from that, a satirist never expresses criticism explicitly, but appeals to echo utterances (Quirk, 1985) which help the reader recognize a certain situation which provoked criticism. For instance, in the following article, written shortly after six people were stabbed by a 25-year-old Libyan male refugee named Khairi Saadallah in Forbury Gardens, Reading, Berkshire in United Kingdom which resulted in three fatalities at the scene and three other victims seriously injured, MI5 became the target of criticism for failing to prevent the crime despite the fact that the terror suspect was on MI5 watch list.

"We must <u>learn the lessons</u> we were going to learn last time and the time before that" says Downing Street

AFTER the latest terror attack committed by a person known to MI5, Downing Street said that it had <u>to learn the lessons</u> which it hadn't learnt from the last terror attack carried out by a person known to the security services, or the attack that took place before that.

"Clearly, <u>the lesson</u> we must <u>learn</u> this time round is why we didn't <u>learn the lesson</u> last time to stop a tragic event like this happening again." (Private Eye, 3 July – 16 July 2020, p.32)

The satirist criticizes both MI5 for their failure to take bold action even though the suspect in the ***Reading terror attack*** was known to them, and the executive authorities for their nonfeasance and inaction. Nevertheless, the satirist does not express criticism explicitly but tries to create a cognitive dissonance even in the title of the article by showing contrast between the ideal situation *(we must learn the lesson)* and depiction of reality *(didn't learn) the lesson we were going to learn last time and the time before that*), where the word combinations ***last time*** and ***the time before*** indicate that failure to learn the lesson is an example of poor work done by the executives. Moreover, the

phrase *"we must learn the lesson"* is an echo of a typical reaction of Downing Street 10 and MI5 in all the cases of negligence or inactivity which led to drastic consequences. The whole article is written in the form of echo utterance *repetitions* that highlight the fact that in real life neither conclusions are drawn nor lessons are learnt, and the phrase *"we must learn the lesson"* has turned into a cliché which is repeated like a mantra in each case of a debacle.

Consequently, in order to infer implicitly expressed critical attitude meant by the satirist, a reader ought to take into account all the ostensive stimuli that show the drawbacks of a current situation, and after juxtaposition the satiree can recognize the intended critical attitude.

With the view of providing more cognitive effect, the satirist often appeals to metaphors for characterization of satirical targets. In some cases, the author uses metaphors in the title of the articles to emphasize certain traits of character which provoke critical attitude. Quite frequently, the satirist appeals to precedent related phenomena which possess a wide range of associations and are familiar to the whole linguocultural communities (Velykoroda, 2019) to make the characterization more vivid and less explicit at the same time. For example, in the article about British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's fiancée and senior advisor Carrie Symonds who is the first unmarried partner of a prime minister to reside at Downing Street 10 *(Why do men always call powerful women Lady Macbeth? Asks Lady Macbeth (Private Eye, 5 March – 18 March 2021, 30),* the satirist uses a precedent related name *Lady Macbeth* to depict Miss Carrie as an ambitious, power-hungry, tough, and manipulative woman without direct appeal to any of these adjectives with strongly negative connotations.

The satirist also appeals to echo utterances of creative metaphors previously used by the satirical target to form background for characterization of a current state of affairs. In the following example, the author characterizes the consequences of Brexit with the help of an echo utterance of British prime minister's words said shortly before lifting quarantine restrictions: *"…Boris: Yes, folks, spring has come and we can see in the sunshine the **crocus of hope poking through the frost of despair**. Or is it **the Crocus of shit poking through the Lord of Frost of Brexit***?…"* (Private Eye, 5 March – 18 March 2021, p.27). Having formed prime element of this article by means of an echo utterance, the satirist then transforms this echo utterance to form dialectic element of satire linking prime and dialectic element with the help of a pun ***Lord Frost of Brexit*** (Lord Frost is the Minister of State at the Cabinet Office who has served as Chief Negotiator for Exiting the European Union from 2019 to 2020, and as the Prime Minister's Europe Adviser from 2019 to 2021). This pun serves as a stylistic hook (Simpson, 2003), and it functions both as a linking element between prime and dialectic and as a means of ludic function realization.

Another means of showing contrast between real and desired state of affairs is a metonymic satirical method of negation accompanied by adjectives with strongly negative connotative meanings. The satirist invokes cognitive dissonance by providing evidence of crimes in forms of negative sentences. For instance, in the following article, the satirist uses negation to express critical presentation of Russia's president Vladimir Putin's external policy.

"No Russian interference in elections – report confirms

*By Our Political Staff **Mo Scow** and **Vlad E Vostok,** with additional reporting by **Peter Zburg"***

*Following months of speculation, it has been revealed that **there is** absolutely **no interference in elections** by the Russian people, and Vladimir Putin can just **carry on doing** exactly what he wants **as undemocratically as he likes.***

*According to a spokesman for Putin, "This proves conclusively that Vladimir is **not** a **manipulative power-crazed despot**, using his position to influence international elections – he's far more concerned with what's going on in his own country. And that's **clinging on to power and cash**, regardless of whether he's called President or Prime Minister." A government minister said, "As soon as I heard this news, I resigned from the government – because **that's what Vladimir told me to do**."* (Private Eye, 24 January – 6 February 2020, p.28)

In this article, the author characterizes Mr. Putin's traits of character by negating strongly unfavourable attributes of his personal traits *(notamanipulativepower-crazeddespot)* while at the same time providing detailed description of his typical work style ***(using his position to influence international elections, carry on doing** exactly what he wants **as undemocratically as he likes, clinging on to power and cash, what Vladimir told me to do).*** Negative particle which is ***not*** together with numerous puns ***(Mo Scow, Vlad E Vostok, Peter Zburg)*** is an example of a metonymic method of introducing a dialectic element of satire which highlights discrepancy between Putin's denial of election interference and description of the methods used by the president to maintain power. This vivid incongruity causes cognitive dissonance and helps the satiree to recognize implicitly expressed critical attitude to Putin's methods of ruling, which strongly contradict ethical norms and principles that are supposed to be followed by a leader of any country.

Therefore, the satirist uses a range of linguopragmaic means which helps the satiree to identify a strongly negative characterization of certain personal and social fatuities which triggered criticism. The author uses metaphors, repetitions, precedent related phenomena, and adjectives with negative connotative meanings accompanied by linguistic means of negations to

emphasize inconsistency of an ideal state of affairs and a present one. By implicitly appealing to commonly accepted norms and values through echo utterances, the author makes this incongruity more obvious for readers and thus invokes critical attitude towards the satirical target. Hence, critical function of satire is realized by appeal to logical arguments provoked by cognitive dissonance.

Ludic function of satire is commonly realized by means of wordplay. The satirist appeals to techniques of wordplay which are capable of creating a comic effect by suggesting multiple meanings and creating incongruity. Thereafter, the reader is supposed to find a resolution in order to acquire the intended humorous effect. Since incongruity resolution presupposes a linear processing of satirical utterances until some form of dissonance turns up (Curso, 1997), it fits the relevance theoretic model of comprehension (Sperber et al., 1995, 2004).

According to relevance theory, readers engage in a mutual parallel adjustment during the interpretation of every piece of an utterance comprising of a satirical text, which is involved in determining the explicature, i.e., intended explicit interpretation, deriving possible implicatures, i.e., implicated premises and conclusions, and accessing as much contextual information as required (contextual assumptions) in order to achieve relevant interpretive outcomes for explicature and implicature. This chunk-by-chunk processing is usually predicted and manipulated by the humorist so as to generate humorous effects (Yus, 2017). While interpreting examples of wordplay, the readers are expected to engage in inferential procedures such as disambiguation and *ad hoc* concepts formation in order to derive explicature. This is combined with contextual information and used as a premise for the derivation of implicatures. When techniques of wordplay are used, the processing efforts needed for successful satire interpretation are expanded. Meanwhile, in order to compensate for such a lot of processing effort, the satirist uses linguopragmatic means which are capable of producing even more cognitive effect.

Ludic function, which is realized by appeal to language play, is achieved by means of the following techniques: 1) techniques that involve the phonetic characteristics of words (homophone, onomatopoeia, rhyme (alliteration, assonance, consonance)); 2) techniques that involve the letters (acronym); 3) techniques that involve semantics and the choosing of words punning (pun, neologism, slang); and 4) techniques that involve the formation of a name (pseudonym, sobriquet). These techniques of language play, which presuppose ambiguity and presence of double meaning, help the satirist involve the satiree in the process of solving a riddle where the solution in the form of final implicatures has such a strong cognitive effect that it compensates for making a lot of effort.

1) *Techniques that involve the phonetic characteristics of words*
a) *Homophone*

In order to implement ludic function of satire, the satirist applies phonetic properties of homophones. This has a significant interpretation that results in a strong cognitive effect. For example, in the article about a famous British shoe designer Vivienne Westwoods's radical change of mind concerning her attitude towards Brexit, the satirist appeals to homophones *sole* and *soul* in the title *"Selling her sole"* (Private Eye, 11 January – 24 Jan 2019, p.5). More so, the satirist uses this homophone as a part of a transformed idiom "*Selling her soul to the devil"* to form the prime of this satirical article. The homophone *sole (soul)* strengthens the cognitive effect of both the title and the article. Another satirical article's title is created with the help of a homophone *Coad of Etiquette* (Private eye, 3 May – 16 May 2019, p.5), where the satirist uses homophones *Code* and *Coad (code of etiquette) (Emma Dent Coad)* to express dissociative attitude towards Labour MP for Kensington, whose unethical actions triggered satirical criticism. Here are a couple of other examples of headlines formed with the help of homophones *(Sick Decisions (to seek decisions – sick decisions)* (Private Eye, 5 March – 18 March 2021, p.10), *Keir Hardly* (*Care* – Sir *Kair* Starmer) (Private Eye, 5 March – 18 March 2021, p.11))

The following satirical article dedicated to implicit characterization of Boris Johnson *""I came face to face with a cheater", says cheetah"* (Private Eye, 22 February – 7 March 2019, p.26) features wordplay created by homophones *cheater* and *cheetah.* Usage of these homophones helps the satiree to infer numerous weak implications intended by the satirist to hint at their dissociative attitude towards the satirical target.

b) *Rhyme*

The satirist frequently uses rhymes in headlines of the articles which deal with serious topics such as instances of corruption, poor professional competence of authorities or healthcare issues. Here are some examples of satirical articles' headlines formed by means of assonance: *Barmy Army* (Private Eye, 11 January – 24 Jan 2019, p.5), *What a Gray day* (Private Eye, 11 January – 24 Jan 2019, p.14), *Name Game* (Private Eye, 4 December – 17 December 2020, p.13), *Eye Spy…* (Private Eye, 6 March – 19 March, p.17), *Blame and Shame* (Private eye, 17 July – 30 July 2020, p.9), *Non-Funny Money Business* (Private eye, 11 September – 24 September 2020, p.12), consonance *"Catch-up" Catch* (Private eye, 3 July – 16 July 2020, p.10), *Careless on Care* (Private Eye, 3 April – 23 April 2020, p.11), *Cash and Carrie* (Private Eye, 6 March – 19 March, p.7), *Unknown Unknowns* (Private Eye, 11 September – 24 September, p.9), and *Cops Cop It* (Private Eye, 24 April – 7 May, 2020, p.10). Use of rhymes in headlines helps the satirist to

draw readers' attention to these articles and accompany investigative articles with faint humorous effect.

  c) *Onomatopoeia*

  In order to draw readers attention to short articles on serious topics connected with corruption and power abuse, the satirist also applies onomatopoeia mostly in headlines such as **TikTok Schlock** (Private Eye, 22 May – 4 June 2020, p.7), **Huff, Puff…** (Private Eye, 30 April – 13 May 2021, p.12), **Quacks** of Doom (Private Eye, 24 April – 7 May 2020, p.17), and **Yes, It's Pro-Phew-Mo!** (Private Eye 10 January -23 Jan 2020, p.29) The headlines formed this way produce ludic effect which increases the cognitive effect and slightly smoothes covert criticism.

  2) Techniques that involve letters

 a) *Acronyms*

  In order to intensify the ludic effect, the satirist frequently appeals to acronyms. For example, in the following article, the satirist applies acronyms to implicitly criticize bureaucracy in the U.K.

Acronym News

  Much attention has been paid to the membership of SAGA, i.e., the committee that is responsible for giving scientific advice in emergencies to the Cabinet Office's which is unimprovably named COBRA. However, there are also other committees that are spawning faster than Boris Johnson.

  SAGA itself consults NERTAG, which is the NEW and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group. It also receives advice on modelling from SPI-M, i.e., the Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling, and on behavior from SPI-B. The latest ad-hoc group has been created to advise SAGA about the effect that children have on the epidemic. Thus, the scientists have decided to call it SPI-Kids (Private Eye, 8 May -21 May 2020, p.16).

  These acronyms point to a satirical target and at the same time help the satirist to create ludic effect.

  3) Techniques that involve semantics and the choosing of words punning

 a) *Puns*

  Attardo defines puns as "phenomena that involve the "significant" facet of the sign which they are part of in a relevant sense (Attardo, 1994, p.109). Since puns are a play on words, they can be considered a form of linguistic humor. Due to their amusing nature, puns are able to soften a situation and make it less serious and more memorable. In satirical texts, puns are the most frequently used linguopragmatic means of creating ludic effect. The satirist appeals to puns in headlines such as **Deja-View** *(Deja-Vu)* (Private Eye, 19 March – 1 April 2021, p.18), **Freight Expectations** *(Seaborne* **Freight** *+*

Great expectations) (Private Eye 11 January – 24 January, p.5), and ***Brookworm (Dorothea Brook +bookworm)*** (Private Eye, 19 March – 1 April 2021, p.23) in the lead paragraph:

> ***"Raab Human Rights Commitment***
>   *by our Middle East Correspondent **Dee Capitated"***
>   *Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has rubbished suggestions that the UK's decision to resume arms sales to Saudi Arabia just twenty hours after placing a number of Saudi officials on a human rights sanctions lists was a **farcial U-Turn*** (Private Eye 17 July – 30 July 2020, p.32), as well as in body paragraphs (…*The new political map of Britain After the Euro Election shock, the Eye offers an easy-to-understand guide as to how the parties will reform to lead the nation to a brighter, if slightly more complicated future…**The Brexitories**, **The Leave Corbynistas**, **The Remain Corbynistas**, **Liberal Changeocrats***… (Private Eye, 31 May – 13 June 2019, p.27). Furthermore, the satirist often creates prime of a satirical article by punning names of most well-known British newspapers, which serve as visual and graphic ostensive stimuli to help the satiree easily recognize satirical prime. For instance, ***The Daily Rishigraph (The Daily** Tele**graph** + **Rishi** Sunak)* (Private Eye, 17 July – 30 July, p.29), ***Nursery Times (Nursery Rhymes +The Times)*** (Private Eye 23 October – 5 November, p.32), and ***The Daily Borisgraph (The Daily** Tele**graph** + **Boris** Johnson)* (Private Eye, 11 January – 24 Jan 2019, p.24). Apart from that, the satirist tends to pun fictional names of the authors of these satirical articles (*by our media Staff **Vladimir Putin-Whatever I tell you*** as the author of the article titled *"Russia Today Gets Behind Alex Salmond"* (Private Eye 8 February – 21 February 2019, p.26), "*High Street Welcomes Back Coronavirus" by Our High Street Correspondent **Ken Tagious*** (Private Eye 19 June – 2 July 2020, p.30)) to hint at the necessity to look for extra implicit meanings in the text. Puns can also frequently be seen on magazine's covers (*Happy **Nuke** Year (**Happy** New **Year** + **Nuke**)* (Private Eye, 10 January – 23 January 2020), *Scotland at War Yes, It's **Holyrude (Holy**wood +**Rude)*** (Private Eye 5 March – 18 March 2021), *Lockdown returns Yes,* It's ***Deja Flu (Déjà** vu + **Flu)*** (Private Eye 6 November – 19 November 2020).

To intensify humorous effect, the satirist frequently appeals to transformation of precedent-related phenomena which are capable of creating ludic effect (Velykoroda, 2017) to form puns. Puns created in such a way increase cognitive effect since components of such puns are rich in associations which are not dismantled in puns. Nonetheless, in most cases, they are preserved and combined in order to invoke more cognitive effect. For example, a pun ***Megxit** (**Meg**an Markle + **B**re**xit)*** (Private Eye, 19 March – 1 April 2021, p.26) is capable of creating stronger cognitive effect due to more implicatures, which are derivable after appealing to all the available contextual

assumptions (i.e., contextual source A – background information about all the peculiarities of Brexit and contextual source C – knowledge about recent events) in the process of interpretations (Yurchyshyn, 2020). There are numerous puns created by means of transforming a precedent-related phenomenon such as ***Brexitanik (Brex**it + **Titanic)*** (Private Eye, 22 February – 7 March 2019, p.27), ***The Brexas Chainsaw Massacre (Brex**it+***The Texas Chain Saw Massacre)***, (Private Eye, 19 April – 2 May 2019, p.25), and ***Captain Mayvel (Captain Mar**vel+*Theresa **May)*** (Private Eye, 22 March – 4 April 2019, p.25).

  b) Neologisms

Neologisms created by the satirist are also mostly created by means of transforming precedent-related phenomena. For example, ***Booster Bozza (Booster** + **Bo**ris Johnson) and **Brexmas (Bre**xit +*Chris***tmas***) Private Eye, 21 December – 9 Jan 2020).

  c) Slang

Slang is a semantic technique of punning which is always used in Private Eye's column written by a fictional parodist Glenda Slagg. Her writing style is a pastiche of some female British columnists and it is characterized by abundance of slang. For example, in the following short article, there is a slang word in every sentence. *Why aren't the Sussexes on **telly** anymore? Just wondering. Marvelous Ms Markle's a natural for the **gogglebox** – and Hirsute Hunky Harry could charm the pants off this hard bitten **hackette** – if she was wearing any!!!??? (I told you to write about something else. Ed)* (Private Eye, 19 March – 1 April 2021, p.29)

  4) Techniques that involve the formation of a name
  a) Pseudonym

      Using pseudonyms helps the satirist to perform not only a ludic function but also involves the readers in decrypting the real names hidden under these pseudonyms, thus increasing cognitive effect. In the following example, the satirist appeals to numerous pseudonyms to form both prime and dialectic elements of satire: *Hooray! Another **Bozza** election triumph in the bag, snatching victory from the jaws of defeat! In the words of **St Margaret of Assisi**, "Rejoice! Rejoice! Gloat! Gloat! Gloat!" I told you the public weren't interested in anything about wallpaper, sleaze, PPE, cronyism, corruption or who runs the country. In the words of that other great Tony, **St Tony of Blair**, it's "Vaccination, Vaccination, Vaccination!" Our stonking election tsunami proves conclusively that "I am the greatest one vaccination Tory" ever! See what I did there? It's the **Bojo Banter** that the public love. They don't care about anything else. They love me and that's all that matters…"(*Private Eye 14 May – 27 May 2021, p.27). The satirist expresses dissociative attitude towards the public's political preferences and the main priorities of the politicians who managed to gain people's support by pseudonymizing two of

the most prominent politicians of their time – Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair, nicknaming them *St Margaret of Assisi* and *St Tony of Blair* respectively. Moreover, the author does not create Thatcher's pseudonym by chance *(Margaret Thatcher + St Francis of Assisi)* but he hints at Margaret Thatcher's quote of St Francis of Assisi on her 1979 election victory. To increase the ludic effect, the satirist transforms echoes of these two eminent politicians' mottoes which represent their key priorities in the position of the prime minister: *"Rejoice! Rejoice! Gloat! Gloat! Gloat!"("Just rejoice at that news and congratulate our forces and the marines. Good night gentlemen. Rejoice."* – Thatcher's words said to reporters in 1982 outside Downing Street 10 after her defence secretary said Britain had recaptured South Georgia from Argentina) and *"Vaccination, Vaccination, Vaccination!" (Our top priority was, is and always will be education, education, education* – Tony Blair's speech on education at the University of Southampton in May 2001). Furthermore, the author uses pseudonyms such as *Bozza* and *Bojo Banter* to nickname current prime minister of the U.K. Boris Johnson. This highlights the fact that the fun loving nature of the prime minister serves as the main reason of winning the public's affection despite examples of Boris Johnson's recent mishaps.

   b) Sobriquet

A sobriquet is a nickname that is sometimes assumed, but often given by someone else that is descriptive in nature. This means that it implies additional characterization of the satirical target (Hugh, ed. Britannica, 1911). For example, using pseudonym *Lady Macbeth* to refer to Boris Johnson's fiancée and a senior advisor Carrie Symonds (*Why do men always call powerful women Lady Macbeth? Asks Lady Macbeth* (Private Eye, 5 March – 18 March 2021, p.30), the satirist involves the reader in resolving incongruity and thus creating ludic effect. While interpreting such a sobriquet, the satiree forms an *ad hoc* concept of LADY MACBETH which is formed as a result of overlapping and interaction of attributes associated with Carrie Symonds and a prominent Shakespearean character. This *ad hoc* concept enables the satirist to highlight similarities between the satirical target's typical traits of character, such as ambitiousness, persistence, determination and cold-heartedness, and the literary character whose name was applied to pseudonymize the satirical target accompanied with a range of contextual effects which can be retained as a wide range of weak implicatures.

Thus, ludic function of satire is realized with the help of wordplay techniques that involve phonetic, semantic, stylistic and pragmatic characteristics of words. In order to create ludic effect, the satirist appeals to homophones, rhymes acronyms, puns, neologisms, slang, pseudonyms, and sobriquets. While interpreting satirical texts, the reader engages in the

processes of disambiguation and ad hoc concept formation in order to infer additional implicatures with strong cognitive effect.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following conclusion can be drawn:
Persuasive power of satire is viewed as a successful fulfilment of critical and ludic functions of satire, which results in affecting readers' views, values, attitudes and behavior. Therefore, the satirist appeals to linguopragmatic means such as metaphors, repetitions, and precedent related phenomena which saturate, attenuate or negate instances of corruption, incompetence, nepotism or personal misdeeds. This makes them more visible and less possible to be ignored and thus highlights discrepancy between the desired and current state of affairs. Moreover, these linguopragmatic means are not used in isolation, but they overlap to cause cognitive dissonance and reinforce critical function of satire. Utterances that contain critical elements are solidified by linguistic means of ludic function realization which include various techniques of wordplay used both in titles and in body paragraphs to engage readers in searching for multiple hidden meaning. These techniques are applied with the aim of involving readers in incongruity resolution which is supposed to create humorous effect. In terms of relevance theory, the interpretation of these techniques requires more processing efforts. Nonetheless, the use of these linguopragmatic means leads to a drastic increase in cognitive effect and thus strengthens persuasive power of satire.

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