



The Functions of Puns in “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland”

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ABSTRACT

What makes literary texts attractive to the reader is its ability to convey meanings through different indirect ways known as literary devices. These function as techniques adding aesthetical effects to the text. One of many devices is wordplay--a figure of speech used by people as part of their everyday communication. This research paper aims at exploring the relation between wordplay, particularly puns, and discourse. For that end, Lewis Carroll’s “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland” was selected in order to explore the functions of puns in literary texts. The puns present in the text were analyzed semantically for pun classification and pragmatically, with the help of the Relevance Theory, for the function identification of puns. Adopting the qualitative methodology, this paper is a descriptive analytical study that analyzed text samples of the ninth and tenth chapters of Carroll’s work with the use of discourse, semantic, and pragmatic analyses. The results showed that the functions of puns found in the two chapters were of five kinds: creating humor, showing mastery over language, provoking the reader, drawing the attention to certain phenomena, and satirizing social practices.

INTRODUCTION

What makes literary texts attractive to the reader is its ability to convey meanings through different indirect ways known as literary devices. These linguistic devices function as techniques adding aesthetical effects to the text. One of many devices is wordplay, which is a figure of speech used by people as part of their everyday communication. Kuchařová (2013) states that wordplay is commonly found in literary texts or newspapers for the purpose of drawing the reader’s attention or creating humor. The study adds that while consisting of various forms including irony, sarcasm, puns, etc., wordplay is usually used to add an ambiguous effect to the text. Having such a great effect on texts, this research paper attempts to shed light on the relation between wordplay and literary discourse. The main objective of this study is to explore the functions and roles of wordplay on literary texts. For that end, a pragmatic analysis of puns will be applied on the text of Lewis Carroll’s masterpiece Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland.

Delabastita (1996) defines wordplay as a linguistic phenomenon where linguistic structural features are violated to create confusion between two linguistic structures with similar forms and

different meanings with the use of semantic and pragmatic effects. The study categorized wordplay with accordance to phonology, morphology, lexicon, semantics, pragmatics and syntax. It also claims that due to such a variety in the classification; it can sometimes be very hard to decide to which category a wordplay belongs. Therefore, the context is of a paramount importance to the analysis of wordplay, especially puns. However, according to Kabatek (2015), the phenomena of wordplay are constructed by traditional and cultural patterns along with the ability to manipulate words with the use of certain linguistic features. In other words, the ability to produce utterances depends on the speaker's knowledge of language as well as his/her knowledge of discourse traditions (Koch, 1997 as cited in Kabatek, 2015). In addition, the study holds that the effectiveness of wordplay, including puns, stems from the part of surprise when new and unexpected elements are delivered.

The pun is defined as a rhetorical device used for creating intended ambiguity through the use of similar words or phrases such as homophonic words. By the use of puns, a word, a sentence or even a discourse can involve two or more different meanings, and accordingly different interpretations. Thus, the study argues that the rhetorical effects created by puns result from the ambiguities entailed by words in the text. Having such an ability to add an extra sense to the original meaning of the text, the pun can have many different discursive functions, such as humor, persuasion, brevity, satire, riddles, and the like (Gan, 2015).

Delabastita (1996) classifies puns into eight main categories: the homophonic puns (non-synonymic word pairs that sound alike but have different meanings), the homographic puns (two words that are written the same but have different sounds and meanings), the homonymic puns (words which are spelled and pronounced alike), the compound puns (phrases with more than one pun), the recursive puns (the second aspect of the pun relies on the interpretation of an element in the first aspect), the visual puns (the pun aspects are substituted by a picture as used in cartoons), the onomastic puns (made by names such as the name "Kaufmann"), and finally the idiomatic puns (made of idioms).

However, another literary device that can be confused with puns or wordplay is double entendre which is a phrase that holds two meanings with the use of puns along with other figures of speech. Unlike homophonic puns or paronomasia, the double meaning of *entendre* comes from polysemy or in other words from the combination of a literal meaning and another figurative meaning (Goth, 2015). The double *entendre* functions as a token of wit in comic writing because it manipulates the meanings of words and phrases through the use of two different but related meanings.

Many of recent studies have used Delabastita (1996)'s classification of puns in their analyses. For example, Kuchařová (2013) explored wordplay in the American sitcom named "Friends". She categorized puns according to this model and compared the use of puns in "Friends" with those of the Czech translations in the dubbing and subtitles, and produced a better translation. The results of the study showed that wordplay in "Friends" was mostly constructed by using morphological mechanism, especially conversion and blending. According to the analysis, the most difficult forms of wordplay were those made of polysemy. However, no syntactical wordplay was found. Interestingly, it was found that idiomatic forms were easier to translate due to the existence of Czech equivalents. The study concludes that while the translation is not totally identical, the formal and functional aspects of puns are generally preserved.

Bader (2014) analyzed some pun expressions published in two Jordanian Arabic daily newspapers linguistically and culturally while comparing English and Arabic puns. Seventeen examples of wordplay selected from a large corpus of data collected over a period of two months were presented and analyzed according to the classification of Delabastita (1996). The study found many homographic, homonymic, onomastic types of puns. Based on a comparison between pairs of words in English and Arabic used for the production of puns, he found that some humorous puns and many others, on the contrary, had the opposite function to humor because they were associated with recent tragic events in the Arab World, especially in Syria. The paper concludes that the study of pun is mainly concerned with the relation between form and meaning, intention and understanding, and semantics and pragmatics.

In an attempt to figure out whether the functions of puns are the same across languages, Attardo (2018) has reviewed some of the universal aspects of humorous wordplay including phonological mechanisms, semantic oppositeness, different types of ambiguity, and so on. The results of the literature review indicated that puns and wordplay were universal because of the violations of universal structural rules of language and the universality of the linguistic mechanisms used to produce puns. However, the study refutes the argument suggesting that puns are universal in the sense that each culture has a literary genre identical to the Western culture's puns including the same associations with humor. The study perceives puns as multifaceted phenomena unnecessarily associated with humor.

With regards to the functions of puns, Gan (2015) opines that puns have many different functions in utterances. The study analyzes how the humorous effects of puns are constructed and how the audience comprehend the humor of puns. To that end, the study adopted Sperber and Wilson's (1986) Relevance Theory, which suggests that in order to understand a pun, the reader needs to analyze the speaker's utterance in a context. The results were consistent with the Relevance Theory in the sense that when the context contradicts with the reader's usual interpretation, s/he reconstructs a different assumption with the help of his/her encyclopedic knowledge. Such external knowledge is combined with the lexical and logical information in the text to order to be able to infer the utterance's real implicit meaning, which accordingly leads to the understanding of the embedded humor in the pun. The study provides evidence on the validity of the Relevance Theory in this regard. The analyses of some of examples, texts selected from advertisements, conversations, and riddles have revealed that the first surface meaning of the pun could be either declined or merely used to obtain extra contextual effects implied by the speaker. The results also showed that the comprehension process was centered on searching for the best relevant interpretation, while involving cognitive selection and modification of the audiences' first assumptions about utterances in order to figure out the implied meaning of the secret wordplay.

Bauer (2015) calls this as secret mysterious wordplay because it stays unnoticed for a while before being figured out. When a secret wordplay is noticed, it enhances the meaning of the text. The study focuses on examples from English literature and attempts to answer how a secret wordplay is made and what its functions are. It draws the attention to the perception that a wordplay is a scalar phenomenon: the less clear a wordplay is, the stronger it is. He opines that in order to analyze a secret wordplay, four aspects should be taken into consideration: linguistic features, its contextual integration, its communicative functions, and its social functions. He distinguishes between open and secret wordplay: a more or less obvious pun may need very little text, but secret wordplay as a rule requires embedding, which exists in literary texts. The study also claims that secret wordplay is not much different from allusion and at the same time is not the same as it is

because when allusion is involved in wordplay, something is done to it, usually by means of homophony, paronomasia, and the other familiar techniques of wordplay. The study states that wordplay is effective because it violates the semantic rules of coherence, which brings about laughter, surprise and sudden insight. The study highlights the role of the secret wordplay in the differentiation between world knowledge and word knowledge claiming that coherence depends on world knowledge, but wordplay relies on word knowledge.

Kullmann (2015) examined the communicative functions of wordplay in two literary works, namely Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing" and Lewis Carroll's "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" and suggested that wordplay had a communicative and social function. The study argues that wordplay functions as a demonstrator of wit, a tool of mastering language, and a creator of humor and playfulness. The study claims that the wordplay used by the Wonderland characters in Carroll's books form a great challenge to Alice resulting in displaying and developing her social skills. For Kullmann, the wordplay used in "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" has a teaser or provocative function.

However, Thaler (2016) argues that wordplay can play many other different functions in different discursive contexts. Analyzing 19 varieties of functions based on results of past studies, she has demonstrated that wordplay can be used to entertain the reader and create humorous effects, to show one's mastery of using language, to attract the reader's attention, to show politeness, to provoke emotional feelings, to contribute to social stability, to provoke the reader, to support one's argumentation, to give aesthetic pleasure, to imply ideas which are too inappropriate to say explicitly, to question social taboos, to condense information, to gain approval of others, to foster memorization, to establish or maintain in-group solidarity, to promote the student's motivation towards language learning, to exclude certain hearer groups, to produce satirical comedy, and to embarrass out-group members.

Nevertheless, many other deeper intended messages can be inferred by the reader through the use of language, including of course wordplay and other variant linguistic means. All the above mentioned functions play on the surface level of meaning and do not dig into the deep meaning of the speaker. For example, Huici (2015) argues that criticizing the Victorian Age was one of the implied objectives of Lewis Carroll's masterpiece of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland". By analyzing Carroll's work politically and historically, the article shows how British imperialism and judicial system are satirized in the novel. In addition, the article argues that Carroll criticized the social and cultural relations in his novel which is a representation of the Victorian society. The study shows how Carroll shed light on the political, cultural, and social relations as well as the rigid educational system of Victorian Britain through delivering odd conversations among the Wonderland characters. More interestingly, the study holds that Carroll through the means of comedy, one of which is definitely the use of wordplay and puns, criticizes different aspects of Victorian society, most prominently politics, judicial system and education.

Given that, the significance of this research lies in its objective to look for the functions of wordplay that would reflect the speaker meaning and may unveil some implied messages.

METHODOLOGY

Research design and materials selection

Adopting the qualitative methodology, we investigated the relationship between the use of wordplay and literary discourse under the framework of the Relevance Theory in the text samples of the ninth and tenth chapters of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. This literary work was particularly selected because it is a well-known novel for the use of wordplay, verbal humor, and irony, and it has also been widely used in literature as a good text for linguistic analysis, especially at the levels of semantics and pragmatics. The reason of focusing only the ninth and tenth chapters of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" is that most of the wordplay in Carroll's work are presented in these two chapters; moreover, analyzing the whole work would take a lot of time and space which are insufficient in this paper.

Data analysis

We applied two different analyses techniques in this study. The first one was Discourse Analysis (DA), which is the linguistic approach that allows researchers to study spoken and/or written discourses by looking into the context of the text under investigation including elements such as the social and cultural context, the time and place in which the text was produced, and the meaning of the text in consistence with the semantic and pragmatic implications. Linguists study languages in use and examine language usage through the study of text as well as the social and cultural context that surrounds the text since the language use represents different views of the world and offers distinctive representations of social identities depending on social relationships (Brown and Yule, 1983; Van Dijk, 1985).

In order to understand the pragmatic implications of wordplay in Alice's book, the second technique we applied was the Relevance Theory by Sperber & Willson (1986), which provides insights on the ability of communicators to establish relevance by attracting the audience's attention and to present an explanation of the humor function of puns. We believe that understanding puns needs a process that requires the audience to exert efforts in order to figure out the deliberate wordplay and to realize its implied meaning with appreciation of the speaker's manipulation of words. Gan (2015) asserts that this theory is concerned with human cognitive activity and explains how people exert inference effort to understand the intended meaning. Communicators pay attention to the concerns that are more relevant to them in comparison to others. Drawing the attention of the hearer or listener occurs only when the value of the information is appreciated by the audience. This means that the speaker's utterance will be interpreted in accordance to what is relevant to the audience. In other words, the theory holds that in order for a conversation to be successful, the speaker needs to draw the hearer's attention and in order to maintain relevance, utterances must be put in a clear context that allows for the intended interpretation. If the audience fail to comprehend the context, the utterance will not be interpreted correctly, resulting in a negated relevance principle. However, if extra effort is made to understand the context, the intended meaning of the utterance will be reached. This means that communicators may need to exert additional effort in order to comprehend the context, meaning, and the humor of puns (Gan, 2015).

Procedure

Based on the above mentioned classifications and functions of wordplay and puns, we examined the relation between wordplay, particularly puns, and discourse. The focus was on “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland” in order to explore the functions of puns in literary texts. The puns found in the book were analyzed semantically using Delabastita (1996)’s categorization of puns for classification. Other categories such as allusion and secret wordplay that are not included in Delabastita’s classification were considered as well. Then, the puns were examined pragmatically with the help of the Relevance Theory to identify the functions of puns while taking into consideration Thaler (2016)’s varieties of wordplay functions.

RESULTS

To analyze the functions of lexical puns found in the ninth and tenth chapters of “Alice’s Adventures in Wonder Land”, we applied discourse and pragmatic analyses to identify the relation between the use of wordplay and literary texts with the help of the Relevance Theory. First, we read the chapters thoroughly to identify the lexical puns; then we classified them according to Delabastita (1996)’s categorization as well as other categories unlisted under the study such as allusion and secret wordplay. Finally, we analyzed these puns according to the Relevance Theory.

We identified 20 puns in total in the ninth and tenth chapters:

Pun 1. “...flamingoes and mustard both bite.” (Carroll, 1995, p.38)

The pun here which is homonymic is used by playing on the word *bite* which has two different senses in this phrase. The first meaning of the verb is to use teeth to cut something or someone and the second meaning is a strong or sharp taste of food. The resulted effect of using this pun is creating humor and wit as well as showing mastery over the use of language. This example of pun can be confused with double entendre because the pun is made of polysemy with the two different meanings leaving the statement with ambiguity.

Pun 2. “There’s a large mustard-mine near here. And the moral of that is—“The more there is of mine, the less there is of yours.” (Carroll, 1995, p.38)

A homonymic pun is also produced here by using the word *mine* which means a hole in the ground where valuable substances such as gold or coal are found. The second meaning is the first singular possessive pronoun. The rhetorical effect resulted here is creating humor as well as showing mastery over the use of language. After exerting extra efforts as suggested by the Relevance Theory, it can be inferred that this pun serves a function of satire; Carroll’s objective here can be seen as criticizing the Victorian morals and social norms that appreciate the power of economy and money value. Following the Relevance Theory, which calls for interpreting texts with consideration of its social, political and cultural backgrounds, it can be claimed that Carroll is satirizing the Victorian people who were known for morality and ethical conduct. Therefore, he is likely criticizing the imperialist power over economy which gave birth to the moral that the more money one has the more his/her value is. By using this pun, Carroll criticizes the principles of the Victorian capitalist society where people competed over properties and profit while at the same time power and money were not evenly and equally distributed among people, but rather confined to the possession of monarchs and those in authority.

Pun 3. “We called him Tortoise because he taught us” (Carroll, 1995, p.40)

This pun is made of allusion because Carroll played on the phonological features of the phrase *taught us* by the use of paronomasia through the creation of the name *Tortoise* which in the British pronunciation sounds the same as taught us. However, according to Delabastita’s classification, this pun falls under the category of onomastic puns. By mixing the meaning of *Tortoise*, the name of an animal with a thick hard shell, and that of *taught us* which means the exact literal meaning of the phrase, Carroll created a sense of humor and highlighted the linguistic features of word formation. However, another pragmatic function can be inferred here which is satire. By using rhetorical devices, particularly puns, Carroll manages to criticize the Victorian educational system which exaggerates the role of the teacher.

Pun 4. “Reeling and Writhing” (Carroll, 1995, p.40)

Carroll produced these two allusive puns *reeling* and *writhing* as school subjects that the animal characters in the novel once had by hinting at normal school subjects: reading and writing. To *reel* means to move from side to side while about to fall when standing and to *writh* means to make large twisting movements with the body. Hence, a great sense of humor definitely results from such playing on words. However, by linking the two meanings: the acts of moving and twisting and the acts of reading and writing (as school subjects), Carroll is again criticizing the Victorian era’s educational system through humor and satire.

Pun 5. “...and then the different branches of Arithmetic– Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision”. (Carroll, 1995, p.40)

Carroll produced the allusive pun *ambition* as one of the basic operations of mathematics as an animal school subject, by hinting at the normal operation of addition. While *ambition* means a strong wish to achieve something, and *addition* means one of basic mathematical operations: the process of adding numbers together, Carroll draws the attention to the relation between the concept of increase and wishing for achievements. By the use of wordplay, Carroll provokes the reader to think about the sense relations that exist between the two terms. Doing so, he sheds light on the morals of the Victorian people who appreciate materialistic accomplishments and the increase of money making. Therefore, he is satirizing the Victorian people’s tendency towards estimating the human value by the ambition for more economic achievements and collecting money.

Pun 6. “...and then the different branches of Arithmetic– Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision”. (Carroll, 1995, p.40)

Carroll produced the allusive pun *distraction* as one of the basic operations of mathematics as an animal school subject, by hinting at the normal operation of subtraction. While *distraction* means something that prevents someone from giving their attention to something else, and *subtraction* means one of basic mathematical operations: the process of removing one number from another, Carroll draws attention to the relation between the concept of distraction and subtraction. By the use of wordplay, Carroll provokes the reader to think about the sense relations that exist between the two terms. By doing so, he satirizes the Victorian era’s educational system. As a mathematics lover, Carroll was calling for educational reform especially of the teaching of geometry in schools of England (Montoito, 2015). Given that, by playing on the meanings of

subtraction and distraction, Carroll can be interpreted as implying that children in English schools were distracted with the educational approaches adopted for teaching mathematics and geometry.

Pun 7. “...and then the different branches of Arithmetic– Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision”. (Carroll, 1995, p.40)

Carroll produced the allusive pun *uglification* as one of the basic operations of mathematics as a school subject, by hinting at the normal mathematical operation: multiplication. While “*uglification*” can be interpreted as the act of making something ugly, and *multiplication* means one of the basic mathematical operations: the process of multiplying numbers, Carroll draws attention to the relation between the two concepts. By the use of this pun, Carroll provokes the reader to think about the sense relations that exist between the two terms as if he were highlighting the ugly aspect of multiplication, which here represents a symbol for money growth. In other words, Carroll might be “uglifying” the Victorian average man’s keenness on making and growing money on the expense of social emotional relations. However, he also satirizes the Victorian era’s education in which mathematics is detached from reality and needs to be reformed (Schneider, 2010) as if it carries the epithet “ugly”.

Pun 8. “...and then the different branches of Arithmetic– Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision”. (Carroll, 1995, p.40)

Carroll produced the allusive pun *derision* as one of the basic operations of mathematics as a school subject by hinting at the normal mathematical operation: division. While *derision* means the situation in which someone or something is laughed at and considered stupid or of no value, and *division* means one of the basic mathematical operations: the process of dividing numbers, Carroll draws attention to the relation between the two concepts. By the use of wordplay, Carroll provokes the reader to think about the sense relations that exist between the two terms as if he is highlighting the silly aspect of the English old approaches to teach mathematics which need to be reformed through the pun function of satire (Schneider, 2010).

Pun 9. “The Gryphon lifted up both its paws in surprise. ‘What! Never heard of uglifying!’ it exclaimed. ‘You know what to beautify is, I suppose?’ ‘Yes,’ said Alice doubtfully: ‘it means–to–make–anything– prettier.’ ‘Well, then,’ the Gryphon went on, ‘if you don’t know what to uglify is, you ARE a simpleton.” (Carroll, 1995, p.40)

Carroll produced the allusive pun *uglify* by the use of antonymy through the opposite of the verb he created “to uglify”: to beautify. While *uglify* can be interpreted, as claimed in the text, to make something ugly, and beautify means to make something beautiful, Carroll draws attention to the relation between the concept of *uglification* and *beautification*. Using this pun, Carroll provokes the reader to think about the sense relations that exist between the two terms. This indicates that Carroll is urging the reader to figure out the relation between language and logic. Again, Carroll here satirizes the Victorian era’s education in which mathematics, literature and logic were detached from reality. As concerned with studying the relation between mathematical logic and nonsense literature, Carroll was able to draw balance between the two fields (Schneider, 2010).

Pun 10. “Well, there was Mystery,’ the Mock Turtle replied, counting off the subjects on his flappers, ‘–Mystery, ancient and modern...” (Carroll, 1995, p.40)

Carroll produced the allusive pun *Mystery* by hinting at *History* as a school subject. While *mystery* means something strange that has not yet been understood, and *history* means the study of the past, Carroll draws attention to the relation between the two concepts. By playing with words, Carroll provokes the reader to think about the sense relations that exist between the two terms. This indicates that Carroll is urging the reader to figure out the relation between mystery and history. Again, Carroll here satirizes the Victorian era's education in which history was far away from truth. He is arguing that history cannot be understood as it is an absurd and ambiguous concept following a trend of criticizing history and literature prevailed during the Victorian age.

Pun 11. "...with Seaography: then Drawling—the Drawling-master was an old conger-eel that used to come once a week... (Carroll, 1995 p.40)

Carroll produced the allusive pun *Seaography* by hinting at *Geography* as a school subject. While "Seaography" can be interpreted as the study of the sea, as implied in the text, and geography means the study of the features and systems of the earth's surface, Carroll draws attention to the relation between the concept of seaography and geography. By the use of wordplay, Carroll provokes the reader to think about sense relations that exist between the two terms and draws the attention to the relation between language and logic.

Pun12. "...then Drawling—the Drawling-master was an old conger-eel that used to come once a week..." (Carroll, 1995 p.40)

Carroll produced the allusive pun *drawling* by hinting at *Drawing* as a school subject. While drawling means a slow way of speaking in which the vowel sounds are made longer, and drawing means the art of drawing, Carroll draws attention to the relation between the two concepts. By the use of linguistic devices such as wordplay and pun, Carroll provokes the reader to think about the sense relations that exist between the two terms and highlights the relation between art and laziness during the Victorian period in which art was associated with laziness and was given a less value than other paid professions. Therefore, it can be argued that Carroll is criticizing the Victorian society for underestimating the value of art.

Pun 13. "...He taught us Drawling, Stretching, and Fainting in Coils." (Carroll, 1995 p.40)

Carroll produced the allusive pun, stretching, by hinting at Sketching as a school subject. While stretching means to cause something to reach, often as far as possible in a particular direction, and sketching means the art of making a simple and quickly made drawing, Carroll draws attention to the relation between the concept of stretching and sketching. By the use of wordplay, Carroll provokes the reader to think about the sense relations that exist between the two terms. Again, Carroll highlights the relation between art and laziness during the Victorian period in which art was less valued than other paid professions in the Victorian imperialistic capital system. Therefore, Carroll is again criticizing the Victorian society for not appreciating the profession and value of art.

Pun 14. "...He taught us Drawling, Stretching, and Fainting in Coils." (Carroll, 1995 p.40)

Carroll produced the allusive pun, *fainting in coils*, by hinting at *Painting in oils* as a school subject. While fainting means to feel weak, or about to become unconscious, and painting means the art of painting, Carroll draws attention to the relation between the two concepts. By playing

with words, Carroll provokes the reader to think about the sense relations that exist between the two terms. Again, Carroll satirizes associating art with weakness by the Victorian people in which artists were seen as of weak and lazy personalities due to the isolation from social activities taking place in the busy life of the Victorian society.

Pun15. “That’s the reason they’re called lessons,’ the Gryphon remarked: ‘because they lessen from day to day.’ (Carroll, 1995 p.40)

Carroll produced the homophonic pun *lessons* by the phonological features between the two words *lessons* and *lessen*. While *lessons* is the plural form of the noun *lesson* which means a period of time in which a person is taught about a subject or how to do something, and *lessen* means to become or make something smaller in amount or degree, Carroll draws attention to the linguistic and logical relation between the two words. By the use of wordplay, Carroll provokes the reader to think about the sense relations that exist between the two words and draws attention to the relation between language and mathematical logic. Moreover, Carroll here is satirizing Victorian old approaches to mathematics through depicting the concept of negative numbers as nonsense to Alice, who mainly represents the Victorian people (Schneider, 2010).

Pun 16. “Do you know why it’s called a whiting?’ ‘I never thought about it,’ said Alice. ‘Why?’ ‘It does the boots and shoes.’ the Gryphon replied very solemnly” (Carroll, 1995 p.41)

Carroll produced the homonymic pun *whiting* by the use of allusion through hinting at the sense of whitening by reduction of some phonological aspects making “whiting” means whitening. While *whiting* means a kind of fish, and *whitening* means the process of making something white, Carroll draws attention to the linguistic and logical relation between sense and form. By the use of wordplay, Carroll provokes the reader to think about the sense relations that exist between the two words and draws attention to the relation between language and logic. However, it can be argued that this pun also functions as satirizing the Victorian era where people were given the names of their professions in consistence with the rise of industry and the growth of the capital society where they competed over work.

Pun 17. “Why, what are your shoes done with?’ said the Gryphon. ‘I mean, what makes them so shiny?’ Alice looked down at them, and considered a little before she gave her answer. ‘They’re done with blacking, I believe. ‘Boots and shoes under the sea,’ the Gryphon went on in a deep voice, ‘are done with a whiting. Now you know.’ (Carroll, 1995 p.42)

Carroll produced the allusive homonymic pun *blacking* by the use of allusion through hinting at the sense of blackening through the reduction of some phonological aspects. Moreover a new pun is created by the use of antonymy between blacking and whiting. *Blacking* allegedly means the process of making something black, and *whiting* is the process of making something white. Carroll may have specifically chosen these colors: black shoes for Alice and white ones for the undersea animals. Since black is the absence of color and symbolizes evilness and Alice represents the Victorian Society, he may have wanted to make attributions to the absence of morality in those days. Moreover, by preferring white (the color of purity) boots and shoes for the undersea world, Carroll may have tried to express his longing for the illumination of the society.

Pun 18. “Soles and eels, of course,’ the Gryphon replied rather impatiently: ‘any shrimp could have told you that.” (Carroll, 1995 p.42)

Carroll produced the homonymic pun *soles* by the use of polysemy. While *soles* means a kind of fish, it has another meaning: the bottom part of the foot, which makes it more logical to be used as a substance to make shoes. By playing with the two meanings of the word, Carroll draws the attention to the linguistic and logical relation between sense and form. By the use of language and particularly wordplay, Carroll shows mastery over language and provokes the reader to think about sense and logic relations in the use of language.

Pun 19. “Soles and eels, of course,’ the Gryphon replied rather impatiently: ‘any shrimp could have told you that.” (Carroll, 1995 p.42)

Carroll produced the homonymic pun *eels* by the use of allusion through hinting at the sense of *heels*. While *eels* means a kind of fish, it has another meaning which is the rounded back part of the foot, which makes it rational to be associated with shoe making. By playing with the two meanings of the words, Carroll draws the attention to the linguistic and logical relation between sense and form. By the use of wordplay, Carroll shows mastery over language and provokes the reader to think about sense and logic relations in the use of language.

Pun 20. “They were obliged to have him with them,’ the Mock Turtle said: ‘no wise fish would go anywhere without a porpoise.’ ‘Of course not,’ said the Mock Turtle: ‘why, if a fish came to me, and told me he was going a journey, I should say “With what porpoise?”’ ‘Don’t you mean “purpose?”’ said Alice. (Carroll, 1995 p.42)

Carroll produced the homophonic pun *porpoise* which means a mammal that lives in the sea, by the use of allusion through changing some phonological aspects of the word; hence, the meaning is changed to the sense of *purpose*, which means the reason of doing or having something, as suggested by Alice. By mixing humor and other linguistic features, Carroll proves his mastery over language and provokes the reader to think about sense and logic relations in the use of language.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study showed that among the twenty puns found in the ninth and tenth chapters of Carroll’s work, most of them were made of allusion (f=13). The other seven puns were distributed to five homonymic and two homophonic types. The functions of the puns present in the two chapters were consistent with the results of Kullmann (2015) which shows that the wordplay used in “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland” has a teaser or provocative function. Moreover, the results go in line with Huici (2015), who argues that criticizing the Victorian Age was one of the implied objectives of Lewis Carroll’s masterpiece of “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland”. The functions used in chapters nine and ten were of five kinds: creating humor, showing mastery over language, provoking the reader to think of linguistic and logical relations in the text while drawing the attention to certain linguistic, logical, or mathematical phenomena, and satirizing the Victorian social, political, and economic values.

Moreover, the results revealed that the use of puns is an effective linguistic tool that adds various distinctive effects on the text such as humor, satire, and many more among various literary devices. It is also implied that puns can be used as a functional critical device to comment on, criticize or reevaluate certain social practices and values. As seen in the results of this study, puns,

through its functional features, form a good method for writers especially in the field of literature because of its magnificent impact on the text as it allows writers to criticize aesthetically, humoredly, allusively, and politely many variant phenomena. Besides, the study of puns is of a great value and significance to linguists and researchers interested in examining the role of language in literary discourse due to the functional discursive features of puns and their semantic implications on the text. This analytical study of puns is also significant to language teachers who can use puns as good examples for phonological, morphological, and semantic distinction as language learners would likely enjoy playing with words and distinguishing their semantic implications. However, further studies are recommended in this field especially that this paper has shed light only on the ninth and tenth chapters of “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland”. Therefore, a future study of the complete work would be highly encouraged because of its richness in the use of wordplay, verbal humor, and irony.

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