

Predrag Niketić
University of Niš

USE OF PERSONAL NAMES IN ENGLISH AND SERBIAN CANNED JOKES

Abstract: This paper discusses the linguistic strategies used in manipulating personal names to achieve a humorous effect in English and Serbian canned jokes. The analyzed corpus includes 42 English question/answer jokes and 28 Serbian one-liners. Jokes in both languages are based on the lexical ambiguity of personal names, whether given names or surnames. The ambiguity involves a semantic and a syntactic aspect. Homophony and nouns are the primary sources of humorous ambiguity in both languages. However, the interpretation of Serbian jokes requires not only lexical disambiguation but also other pragmatic strategies: syntactic disambiguation and saturation.

Key words: English jokes, Serbian jokes, personal names, wordplay, pragmatics

Introduction

It is commonly known that personal names carry their own meaning, in addition to referring to a particular person. Naming conventions vary across different societies and cultures, but they also incorporate some similarities, which is particularly noticeable among the European and Occidental cultures, whether on the European or other continents. This is largely due to a mass-scale spread of Christianity and colonization by powerful European countries. Thus,

“[b]y the twentieth century, the pattern of personal naming was firmly and definitively fixed. The second, last or family name was invariable and passed from father to legitimate children. Within countries the pool of family names was closed. Some new names were introduced by immigration but these confirmed to the prevailing

norms in function and often form. First and (and “middle”) given names continued to be bestowed at birth and selected from an accepted repertoire, but this repertoire expanded and the rules or conventions by which names were allotted to individuals changed. Transmission of names within families gave way to the following of fashion.” (Wilson 1998: 316)

This naming convention applies, to a greater or lesser extent, to both the Anglophone cultures and the Serbian culture.

Personal names, or anthroponyms, are studied within anthroponomastics, a branch of onomastics. The majority of English and Serbian names can be traced back to their historical origins. For instance, the English female given name *Alice* has the following origin: “From the Old French name *Aalis*, a short form of *Adelais*, itself a short form of the Germanic name *Adalheidis* (see **ADELAIDE**). This name became popular in France and England in the 12th century” (www.behindthename.com). Serbian given names with old Slavic origins are usually derived from words whose meaning is easily identifiable from the name itself. One example is the Serbian male given name *Predrag*, composed of the adjective *drag* (*precious*) and a superlative prefix (Grković 1977: 160). There are also numerous English and Serbian given names adapted from the same biblical, commonly Latin, Ancient Greek, or Hebrew origins, e.g. *Peter/Petar*; *John/Jovan*; *Elijah/Ilija*; *Helen/Jelena*; *Elizabeth/Jelisaveta*.

Semantically, personal names inherently do not carry any humorous properties and connotations. However, given a proper context, personal names can be used to achieve a humorous effect. In terms of verbal humour, this is especially evident in canned jokes, where the personal name represents the source of the humour but is not itself the target of the joke. There are two very different joke patterns in English and Serbian that utilize personal names for humorous effect based on their linguistic properties. This paper discusses the two joke patterns and the different properties of the English and the Serbian language that are exploited to achieve such an effect.

English and Serbian canned jokes with personal names

It could be argued that canned jokes are the prototypes of verbal humour, as they are entirely language-based. The present discussion focuses on specific sub-types of canned jokes, namely question-and-

answer jokes in English and one-line jokes, better known as one-liners, in Serbian. If canned jokes can be regarded as prototypes of verbal humour, then the said shorter joke types arguably represent prototypical jokes.

The English jokes used in this discussion were selected either from a printed anthology of jokes *Man walks into a bar: the ultimate collection of jokes and one-liners* (Arnott and Haskins 2004) or from the Internet, while the Serbian one-liners were selected exclusively from the Internet, as these jokes are yet to be included in a Serbian joke anthology and they appear to be a relatively recent phenomenon (ten or so years). The discussed joke corpus comprises 42 English question-and-answer jokes and 28 Serbian one-liners, as presented below. For ease of reference, the jokes will be referred to using the first letter of the name of their given language followed by the number under which they are listed, e.g. E15 or S21.

Analysis of English and Serbian jokes

The present analysis is based on the incongruity-resolution model of humour, which represents a general understanding of humour commonly applied in humour studies, including linguistic studies of humour. The model was formally introduced by American psychologist Jerry Suls (1972). It emphasises the resolution of incongruity introduced by the joke punch line as the trigger for the humorous effect. Ritchie (2004: 59) succinctly described this notion:

“A joke is analysed as being in two main parts: the initial portion of text, the *set-up* [...], and the second part, the *punchline*. The set-up creates no particular incongruity that the audience is aware of, but the punchline, at least initially, does not make immediate sense. However, a way is found to allow the punchline to be congruous (the resolution).”

Thus, in a joke such as

I tried sniffing coke once, but the ice cubes got stuck in my nose
(Arnott and Haskins 2004: 142)

the setup is the part preceding the comma, while the punchline is the underlined part following the comma. The punchline introduces the incongruity (*ice cubes*), as the setup leads the joke recipient to believe that *coke* refers to *cocaine* through the use of the verb *sniff*. According to the pragmatic Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995), communication represents constant balancing between the positive cognitive effect of

the information received and the mental effort required to experience as positive an affect as possible. For the abovementioned joke to make sense, i.e. to produce a positive cognitive effect, which is the humorous effect in this case, the recipient needs to expend somewhat greater mental effort in order to obtain the ‘reward’ of understanding the joke and potentially enjoying its humorous effect. In our example, the mental effort involves the pragmatic inferential strategy of lexical disambiguation of the word *coke* as referring to the soft drink *Coca-Cola*, since it is commonly served with ice cubes. Francisco Yus (2016: 95), a relevance-theoretic humour scholar, observed that

“the speaker knows that there are other alternatives that the hearer had not considered, let alone been aware of. Then, the speaker produces a *cognitive dissonance*,¹ an incongruous element that surprises the interlocutor who, at that moment, is busy making sense of the information that she is processing. Surprised at this incongruity, the hearer will search for a possible resolution. At this stage, the hearer acknowledges that she has been deceived, that is, had followed the interpretive steps sought by the speaker, and this fact, coupled with the cognitive satisfaction of seeing that the incongruity is reconciled, leads to some humorous entertainment.”

Lexical disambiguation will be the core inferential strategy in the following analysis of English and Serbian name joke interpretation.

English Q/A jokes

- 1) What do you call a man hanging on a wall? Art.
(Arnott and Haskins 2004: 376)
- 2) What do you call a man in a catapult? Chuck. (Ibid: 377)
- 3) What do you call a man in a mailbox? Bill. (Ibid.)
- 4) What do you call a man under a car? Jack. (Ibid.)
- 5) What do you call a man with a government subsidy? Grant. (Ibid.)
- 6) What do you call a man with a seagull on his head? Cliff. (Ibid.)
- 7) What do you call a man with no arms and no legs in a swimming pool?
Bob. (Ibid.)
- 8) What do you call a woman with a beach on her head? Shelly. (Ibid.)
- 9) What do you call a girl on the horizon? Dot. (Ibid: 378)
- 10) What do you call a man with a rabbit on his head? Warren. (Ibid.)

¹ A term coined by Leon Festinger (1957)

- 11) What do you call a guy who makes jokes all the time? Josh.
- 12) What do you call a girl with sausages on her head? Barbie.
- 13) What do you call a man buried in a garden? Pete. (Ibid: 376)
- 14) What do you call a man in a cooking pot? Stu. (Ibid: 377)
- 15) What do you call a man sitting in a hole? Phil. (Ibid.)
- 16) What do you call a man with a sackful of stolen goods over his shoulder? Robin. (Ibid.)
- 17) What do you call a man with no legs? Neil. (Ibid.)
- 18) What do you call a man with sports equipment on his head? Jim. (Ibid.)
- 19) What do you call a man in a pile of leaves? Russell. (Ibid: 378)
- 20) What do you call a woman who lives in a back street? Ally.
- 21) What do you call a guy who is a lookout for the Coast Guard? Seymour.
- 22) What do you call a guy who smells like a cow? Barney.
- 23) What do you call a guy who's been attacked by a lion? Claude.
- 24) What do you call a guy with no arms and no legs and covered in fur?
Harry.
- 25) What do you call a girl lying in the middles of a tennis court? Annette.
- 26) What do you call a girl who makes hamburgers? Patti.
- 27) What do you call a girl who likes to go sailing? Gail.
- 28) What do you call a girl who gambles all the time? Bette.
- 29) What do you call a girl who has to be helped around a lot? Carrie.
- 30) What do you call a guy with no arms or legs that lies on the floor?
Matt.
- 31) What do you call a girl with a laptop on her head? Adele.
- 32) What do you call a lady with one leg? Eileen. What do you call a
Chinese lady with one leg? Irene. (Ibid: 376)
- 33) What do you call a guy who likes to see sunrises? Don.
- 34) What do you call a female magician? Trixie. (Ibid.)
- 35) What do you call a man who runs up large debts? Owen. (Ibid: 377)
- 36) What do you call an Italian with a rubber toe? Roberto. (Ibid: 378)
- 37) What do you call a woman with a computerised piano on her head?
Cynthia. (Ibid.)
- 38) What do you call a French man in sandals? Philippe Philoppe.
(Ibid: 160)
- 39) What do you call a girl who is an astronomer? Stella.
- 40) What do you call a girl who likes to play hide-and-go-seek? Heidi.
- 41) What do you call a man who's not religious? Godfrey.
- 42) What do you call a Mexican who lost his car? Carlos.

English question-and-answer jokes follow the pattern “*What do you call a person who does something or has a certain characteristic? (Personal name)*”. The question is the joke setup, whereas the name used in the answer is the punch line. Typically, the given name is employed in such jokes, with only one example presented here utilizing both a given name and a surname (E38). Shortened versions of given names are also commonly used, e.g. E14 and E15. Furthermore, English names are prevalent among the jokes, with only a few examples of non-English names (E23, E36, E38, and E42).

The humour in English name jokes stems from the ambiguity of the names, which can alternatively be interpreted as having different meanings, thus creating a humorous effect. Parallel activation of both meanings is required for the humorous effect to be achieved. The interpretation of these jokes works on two levels – pragmatic/semantic and pragmatic/syntactic.

The pragmatic-semantic level involves the disambiguation of several semantic relationships found in the English joke examples above. These include (1) capitonymy, where the names differ formally from their intended alternatives only in that they are capitalized, and they also differ in meaning due to capitalization; (2) homophony, where the names are pronounced the same as their intended alternatives, but are written differently; and (3) paronymy, where the names are written or pronounced similarly to their intended alternatives. Naturally, these relationships are more apparent in the written forms of the jokes, whereas they are only implicit if the jokes are told orally. An example for each category is provided below, followed by the categorization of all 42 example jokes according to the semantic relationship between the name and the alternative interpretation.

(1) Capitonymy

E1: What do you call a man hanging on a wall? Art.

Art is another common English name, usually short for *Arthur*, and in this joke it represents the capytonym of the alternative interpretation *art*, denoting the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination. The alternative interpretation is triggered by the use of the phrase *hanging on a wall* in the setup, since paintings usually hang on walls and they may be said to be the prototypical examples of art.

(2) Homophony

E18: What do you call a man with sports equipment on his head?
Jim.

Jim is a common English name, usually a shortened form of *James*, but the use of *sports equipment* in the setup is supposed to suggest to the recipient the alternative interpretation *gym*, which is a homophone of *Jim* and a shortened form of *gymnasium*, a large room used for a variety of indoor sports.

(3) Paronymy

E35: What do you call a man who runs up large debts? Owen.

The setup introduces the phrase *to run up large debts*, which triggers the alternative interpretation of the name *Owen* as a form of the verb *owe*, presumably *owing*, since it bears the most similarities to the name both in pronunciation and in writing.

The 42 joke examples are distributed according to the three categories as follows:

Capitonymy: E1 to E12;

Homophony: E13 to E32;

Paronymy: E32 to E42.

The categorization of three of the jokes requires further explanation.

As noticeable in the categorization, joke E32 *What do you call a lady with one leg? Eileen. What do you call a Chinese lady with one leg? Irene* includes cases of both homophony and paronymy, since it essentially contains two jokes. Homophony is present in the first joke – *Eileen / I lean*, while the second joke employs paronymy of the first part – *I lean / *I rean*, as a ridicule of the difficulty East Asian people have in pronouncing the *l* consonant. Arguably, the joke can be split into two separate parts, with each being humorous on its own, but the humorous effect is presumably intensified if the jokes are presented as a single unit.

Joke E12 *What do you call a girl with sausages on her head? Barbie* utilizes capitonymy based solely on the Australian English slang word *barbie*, referring to *barbecue*.

Joke E33 *What do you call a guy who likes to see sunrises? Don* employs paronymy to achieve a humorous effect because the pronunciation of the name *Don* /dɒn/ and its intended alternative interpretation *dawn* /dɔ:n/ only differs in vowel length. However, in some English-speaking parts of the world, specifically in the western United States, the name *Don* is commonly pronounced with a long vowel, which would then place it in the category of homophony.

The pragmatic/semantic analysis suggests that homophonic relationships are used more frequently (19 cases) than capitonymy (12

cases) and paronymy (11 cases) to achieve a humorous effect in jokes with given names as punch lines.

With regard to the pragmatic/syntactic level of joke interpretation, the alternatives to the names used in the example jokes correspond to five different syntactic categories: nouns, noun phrases, verbs, verb phrases, and adjectives. An example of each is provided below.

Noun: What do you call a man with a seagull on his head? Cliff.
[*cliff*]

Noun phrase: What do you call a girl lying in the middle of a tennis court? Annette.

[*a net*]

Verb: What do you call a guy who's been attacked by a lion? Claude.
[*clawed*]

Verb phrase: What do you call a guy who is a lookout for the Coast Guard? Seymour.

[*see more*]

Adjective: What do you call a guy with no arms and no legs and covered in fur?

Harry. [*hairy*]

The categorization of English example jokes according to the syntactic categories utilized to disambiguate the names is given below.

Noun: E1, E3-6, E9-10, E12-14, E18, E20, E26-27, E30, E33-34, E37-38;

Noun phrase: E25, E31, E36, E42;

Verb: E2, E7, E11, E15-17, E19, E23, E28-29, E35, E40;

Verb phrase: E21, E32;

Adjective: E8, E22, E24, E39, E41.

Number-wise, nouns are by far the most frequent as alternative interpretations for names (19 cases), followed by verbs (12), adjectives (5), noun phrases (4), and verb phrases (2). Combined with the semantic-level analysis, the implication is that the humour in English name jokes is usually based on homophony between the name and another noun.

Serbian one-liners

Serbian one-liners follow a more complex pattern than the English Q/A name jokes:

“*Svako / Svi (W) [glagol] X, samo (je) Y Z*”
[Everyone / All W [verb] X, only Y (is/verb) Z],

where **W** = subject, e.g. *all people*; **X** = object/verb complement **Y** and **Z** = given name/surname, not necessarily in that order; and **Z** can sometimes double as a verb. The complexity of Serbian name jokes is reflected in their syntactic structure, which creates not only semantic but also syntactic ambiguity. As with the English jokes, the humorous effect in Serbian jokes also depends on a parallel activation of two alternative meanings. The names used in jokes contain both the given name and the surname, but the order in which they are presented depends on which part of the name carries the humorous ambiguity. These jokes differ from the English jokes in the type of name they exploit. Whereas the English jokes use common given names to achieve a humorous effect, the Serbian jokes exclusively contain the names of real or fictional famous people, whether current celebrities or well-known figures from the past, globally famous or limited to Serbia and former Yugoslavia. Jokes about celebrities are common and their aim is usually to either ridicule them or exaggerate some of their traits. Yet, in these jokes, celebrity names are used merely as a linguistic tool to produce a humorous effect and are not by any means intended to comment on the person mentioned. It should also be noted that foreign names are transliterated in Serbian.

The 28 examples of Serbian jokes are listed below with their English translations, including the alternative interpretation. For practical purposes, the terms ‘given name’ and ‘surname’ for the **Z** component in the translations are abbreviated as ‘GN’ and ‘SN’, respectively. Parts given in parentheses are not written in Serbian due to ellipsis, but are provided in the translations for clarity.

- 1) Svi imaju svoj stav, samo Gavriilo Princip.
[Everyone has an opinion, only Gavriilo (adheres to a) SN/principle]
- 2) Svi voze juga, samo Rahela Ferari.
[Everyone drives a Yugo, only Rahela (drives) a SN/Ferrari car]
- 3) Svi smo mi loši, samo je Anica Dobra.
[All of us are bad, only Anica (is) SN/good]
- 4) Svi voze BMW, samo Harison Ford.
[Everyone drives a BMW, only Harrison (drives a) SN/Ford car]
- 5) Svi ljudi vole Zemlju, samo Bruno Mars.
[All people love the Earth, only Bruno (loves) SN/planet Mars]

- 6) Svi vole so, samo Džastin Biber.
[*Everyone likes salt, only Justin (likes) SN/pepper*]
- 7) Svi nose grudnjak, samo Dado Topić.
[*Everyone wears a bra, only Dado (wears a) SN/crop top*]
- 8) Svi voze svoj auto, samo Neda Ukraden.
[*Everyone drives their own car, only Neda (drives a) SN/stolen one*]
- 9) Sve su žene lisice, samo je Josipa Lisac.
[*All women are vixens, only Josipa (is a) SN/fox*]
- 10) Svi kupuju hleb, samo Leo Mesi.
[*Everyone buys bread, only Leo SN/makes his own*]
- 11) Svi piju pivo, samo Ružica Sokić.
[*Everyone drinks beer, only Ružica (drinks a) SN/small juice*]
- 12) Svi puše marlboro, samo Džeјms Bond.
[*Everyone smokes Marlboro, only James (smokes) SN/Bond Street cigarette brand*]
- 13) Svi idu obuveni, samo Hugo Bos.
[*Everyone walks with their shoes on, only Hugo (walks) SN/barefooted*]
- 14) Svi su stolari, samo je Mišo Kovač.
[*Everyone's a carpenter, only Mišo (is a) SN/blacksmith*]
- 15) Svi sipaju benzin, samo Vin Dizel.
[*Everyone uses petrol, only Vin (uses) SN/diesel fuel*]
- 16) Svi su generali matori, samo je Ratko Mladić. [
[*All generals are old, only Ratko (is a) SN/young fellow*]
- 17) Svi zovu hitnu, samo Vasko Popa.
[*Everyone calls the paramedics, only Vasko (calls the) SN/priest*]
- 18) Svi jašu konje, samo Karleuša Jelena.
[*Everyone rides a horse, only Karleuša (rides a) GN/deer*]
- 19) Svi vole Džerija, samo Nikolić Toma.
[*Everyone likes Jerry, only Nikolić (likes) shortened GN / Tom, the cartoon cat*]
- 20) Svi vole Inter, samo Gurović Milan.
[*Everyone likes Inter, only Gurović (likes) GN/Milan football club*]
- 21) Svi dolaze pozvani, samo Ivanovi
- 22) Bane.
[*Everyone is invited, only Ivanović shortened GN / shows up uninvited*]
- 23) Svi su bezobrazni, samo je Ibrahimović Zlatan.
[*Everyone is rude, only Ibrahimović (is) GN/golden*]

- 24) Svi piju jelen, samo Tolstoj Lav.
 [Everyone drinks Jelen beer, only Tolstoy (drinks) GN 'Leo' / Lav beer]
- 25) Svi su kauboji, samo je Konjević Šerif.
 [Everyone's a cowboy, only Konjević (is a) GN/sheriff]
- 26) Svi čitaju novine, samo Abramovič Roman.
 [Everyone reads a newspaper, only Abramovich (reads a) GN/novel]
- 27) Svi poklanjaju ruže, samo Big Lale.
 [Everyone gives roses, only Big (gives) shortened GN / tulips]
- 28) Svi su akademici kvarni, samo je Ćosić Dobrica.
 [All academics are rotten, only Ćosić (is a) GN/goody two-shoes]
- 29) Sve ljude je bilo baš briga, samo je Baloteli Mario.
 [No one gave a damn, only Balotelli GN/cared]

Essentially, the humorous effect relies on the disambiguation of the last element in the joke, which can be either the given name or the surname. On the pragmatic/semantic level, almost all of the above examples exploit homophony for humorous effect. Due to phonemic orthography of the Serbian language, true homophones are fairly rare, but one common group of homophones includes personal given names, e.g. the female name *Dunja* and the fruit *dunja* (quince). They are homophonous only as the result of name capitalization, which implies that such examples are simultaneously cases of capitonymy. There are only three examples among the Serbian jokes that are not capitonyms but true homonyms, again due to Serbian orthography. Namely, joke S5 triggers the alternative interpretation of the surname *Mars* as the *planet Mars*, which is also capitalized in Serbian, joke S19 triggers the alternative interpretation of the given name *Toma* as the accusative case of the cartoon cat's name *Tom*, while joke S20 triggers the alternative interpretation of the given name *Milan* as the name of the Italian football club *AC Milan*, again capitalized in Serbian.

On the syntactic level, Serbian jokes also offer different parts of speech as alternative interpretations of the names, namely nouns, verbs, and adjectives. In addition to the absence of noun and verb phrases, the difference from the English jokes is the prevalence of nouns as alternatives, with only three instances of verbs as alternative meanings (S10, S21, S28) and only four instances of adjectives (S3, S8, S13, S22). However, the examples exploiting nouns as alternatives can be further sub-categorized due to declension of Serbian nouns indicating different cases. The nouns

in these examples are prevalently in the accusative case, whenever the final element is preceded by an action verb, although only implicitly in Serbian; only five examples contain alternative interpretations as nouns in the nominative case, whenever the third person singular of the linking verb *be* ('*je*') is used and not complemented by a verb or an adjective.

The syntactic complexity of Serbian jokes requires additional pragmatic inferential strategies for successful interpretation, namely change of logical form (see e.g. Yus 2016: 147-149) and saturation (see Recanati 1993: 243). Change of logical form is actually syntactic disambiguation or syntactic rearrangement of the joke, while saturation involves the addition of an element or elements to the logical form, which is necessary in order to obtain a full proposition. Let us analyze two variants of the Serbian jokes, one with a noun in the nominative case and one with a noun in the accusative case.

S16: Svi su generali matori, samo je Ratko Mladić.

[*All generals are old, only Ratko (is a) SN / young fellow*]

According to the pattern, the second part of the joke, following the comma, requires additional inferential strategies for successful interpretation. If the said part is understood in its primary meaning, where the final element denotes the actual given name/surname of the person in question, then the clause would be considered ungrammatical. When translated literally, the part *samo je Ratko Mladić* would take the form *only Ratko Mladić is* (the original Serbian sequence is *only is Ratko Mladić*, because Serbian word order is less constrained than English). For this utterance to be grammatical something else needs to be added, which calls for saturation: [*samo je Ratko Mladić*] [*another adjective/noun*]. Addition of another adjective or noun would make the utterance grammatical, but the intended humorous effect would be lacking. Complete interpretation requires the joke recipient to change the logical form of [*only Ratko Mladić*] [*is adjective/noun*] to [*only Ratko*] [*is Mladić*]. Together with the disambiguation of *Mladić* – *surname* and *mladić* – *a young fellow*, a complete interpretation is now made.

S19: Svi vole Džerija, samo Nikolić Toma.

[*Everyone likes Jerry, only Nikolić (likes) shortened GN / Tom, the cartoon cat*]

The same principle applies to the instances with the accusative case, only now the saturation requires the addition of a verb or verb phrase: [*only Nikolić Toma*] [*does something*], specifically [*only Nikolić Toma*] [*likes someone else*], which is the initial logical form. However, after it has been changed, the intended parallel interpretation [*only Nikolić*] [*likes Tom*] is arrived at.

In both cases, the original joke form is ungrammatical because it either partially (nominative case) or completely (accusative case) lacks the verb phrase. In the former, the final element (GN/SN) has to be associated with the linking verb *je* to form a full verb phrase, while in the latter, the entire action verb from the first part of the joke needs to be added before the final GN/SN element. It can be argued that the humorous incongruity in most Serbian name jokes lies in the ungrammaticality of one meaning and the unexpectedness of the alternative meaning.

The only instances that do not require any additional strategy aside from the lexical disambiguation are the jokes that already use verbs as alternative interpretations (S10, S21, S28) – they are grammatical as originally presented. This notion is also noticeable in the English translations, since only the three said jokes do not contain a linking or action verb in parentheses.

Joke comparison

Despite their obvious differences and the initial appearance that the only thing they share is the use of personal names, the English and Serbian joke patterns actually bear several similarities. First of all, they both include lexical disambiguation of names as an inferential strategy and furthermore rely on the parallel activation of both meanings, without the alternative meaning taking precedence over the first, more explicit, meaning. Secondly, the ambiguity in both joke patterns relies heavily on homophony and capitonymy. Thirdly, both joke patterns use both domestic and foreign names, the latter being transliterated in Serbian, to yield a variety of word plays. Finally, the alternative meanings in both joke patterns involve the three major parts of speech: predominantly nouns but also verbs and adjectives to a varying extent.

In view of their similarities, it is valid to raise the question of whether the two patterns are interchangeable between the two languages. The transfer of the English name joke pattern into Serbian has already been proven feasible, as evidenced by the following example:

Kako se zove ložač u krematorijumu? Spale. (Stojadinović 2009: 75)
[*What do you call a man who works in a crematorium? Nickname / present tense 3rd pers. pl. of the verb “incinerate”*]

On the other hand, the transfer of the Serbian pattern into English seems highly improbable due to syntactic incompatibilities. This is further corroborated by the fact that such examples cannot be found in either printed or online sources, and by the translations offered in this paper, suggesting that the syntactic constraints of the English language prevent a successful transfer of the Serbian name joke pattern, which bases its humour on both lexical and syntactic ambiguity. Nevertheless, the ambiguous use of personal names in both languages could indicate that, if properly explained, the jokes can be appreciated by the non-native recipients as well.

Conclusion

This paper discussed the use of personal names in English and Serbian canned jokes. The analysis of two different name joke patterns, one in each language, revealed that both patterns utilize word play that relies on the ambiguity of personal names. The humorous effect was shown to be accomplished through lexical disambiguation and, in Serbian jokes, through other inferential strategies as well. Joke patterns in both languages exhibited versatility in terms of grammatical phenomena that they incorporate. Due to their rich grammatical content, it is reasonable to assume that the name jokes can be used as valuable instructional tools, primarily for second language instruction. Some studies have already highlighted the benefits of using humour as an aid in second language learning (see Bell 2005, 2009; Strawhorn 2014). For instance, vocabulary building notwithstanding, the English jokes would also be well suited for semantics, morphology, and phonology lessons, while the Serbian jokes would also be fitting for semantics, syntax, and morphology. Furthermore, since the jokes follow set patterns, they could be used to instigate a more creative use of language among students, who would be encouraged to look for multiple meanings in personal names and create jokes of their own, thus improving their L2 competence, not only linguistically but also socially and culturally. The high level of patternization in English and Serbian name jokes would also partially surmount such individual obstacles as one's 'sense of humour' or, as Amy Carrell (1997) called it, joke competence and humour competence. The analysis presented in

this paper represents an introductory investigation covering some of the linguistic intricacies of specific joke types. However, further research, both theoretical and practical, is required to determine how well such jokes would fare in a classroom environment, which is in part what motivated this discussion.

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Predrag Niketić

UPOTREBA LIČNIH IMENA U GOTOVIM VICEVIMA NA ENGLESKOM I SRPSKOM JEZIKU

Sažetak: U radu se analiziraju različite lingvističke strategije koje se koriste za manipulisanje ličnim imenima zarad ostvarivanja humorističnog efekta u engleskim i srpskim gotovim vicevima. Konkretno, manipuliše se vlastitim ličnim imenima, a u srpskim vicevima i prezimenima. Engleski vicevi u kojima se kao poenta vica koriste lična imena imaju formu pitanje/odgovor, dok su srpski vicevi formulaični izjavni iskazi koji se nazivaju jednoredni vicevi. Iako svako lično ime ima svoje značenje, koje proučava antroponomastika, to značenje samo po sebi nije humoristično, već se vicevi na oba jezika zasnivaju na leksičkoj dvosmislenosti, koja sadrži semantički i sintaksički aspekt. Homofonija i imenice su primarni izvori humoristične dvosmislenosti među analiziranim vicevima na oba jezika. Igre reči u engleskim vicevima uključuju još i kapitonimiju i paronimiju, dok se u srpskim vicevima homofonija može paralelno tretirati i kao kapitonimija. Međutim, tumačenje srpskih viceva zahteva ne samo leksičko razdvoznačavanje, već i druge pragmatičke inferencijalne strategije, i to sintaksičko razdvoznačavanje i kompletiranje. Svrha analize datih viceva je da se utvrde jezički aspekti koji se eksploatišu zarad humora, kako bi kasnije mogli da se primene u podučavanju engleskog ili srpskog kao stranog jezika.

Ključne reči: engleski vicevi, srpski vicevi, lična imena, igra reči, pragmatika