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PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF HUMOROUS AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL CONVERSATION EXCHANGES

PRAGMATICKÁ ANALÝZA HUMORNÝCH KONVERZACÍ Z ŘÍZENÍ LETOVÉHO PROVOZU

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Attardo, S. (1994). *Linguistic theories of humor*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

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Abstract

The thesis studies humour in air traffic control (ATC) conversation exchanges and aims at answering the questions of its occurrence in such strictly professional discourse and finding patterns in it.

This is done through pragmatic analysis for which theoretical background is provided in the first part of the thesis. Phenomenon of humour is discussed according to Attardo (1994), and its three main theories are presented: incongruity, superiority, and release (Raskin 1985). Division is established between different instances of humour: canned and conversational jokes (Attardo, 1994) and externally humorous situations. Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle (CP) and its Maxims is described in detail and is related to humour. Focus is on the transgressions of the CP: mainly violation, flouting and infringing. Attardo's (1990) scheme of understanding a joke is adopted and modified for conversational humour. ATC language is introduced, and the analyses follow. Each consists of four parts: technical circumstances, humorous scheme, CP perspective, and theory of humour.

The analysed conversations are divided into two groups: internally humorous and externally humorous. The first are further divided based on the use of a specific shared knowledge of the external world and the second based on the theory better explaining them: superiority or incongruity.

With the focus on the internally humorous, the abilities and personality of the 'humourist' are proposed as crucial for the occurrence of humour with the main intention being to create more relaxed atmosphere (corresponding to the release theory of humour).

Key words: humour, theories of humour, Cooperative Principle, ATC, conversation, pragmatic analysis

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1. Introduction

Humour and laughter are inherent parts of people's everyday life – they laugh with their friends, families, and it is definitely not unusual that people simply laugh when they are alone as well. There are countless possible causes for laughter occurring in all manner of situations and places. Humour makes people feel more relaxed and generally has a significant impact on the atmosphere in the particular situation. A workplace is no exception to that – human interaction interlaced with jokes and laughter surely improves the whole work experience notably. This even includes such high-pressure workplace as an airport.

Pilots are obliged to closely interact with the controllers and vice versa, it is thus understandable that even they sometimes intersperse their communication with a little humour. At the same time, it is obvious that such events must not affect the functional goals of their exchanges. The main aim of this thesis is to answer the questions of how that is possible and what the actual humorous situations in such dialogues stem from by analysing real air traffic conversation exchanges.

First, however it is necessary to provide the essential theoretical background for conversations and humour itself. That is the aim of this first part of the thesis; it discusses the basics of theories of humour and describes the three basic types: incongruity, superiority, and release theories (Raskin, 1985). Additionally, the chapter also discusses a distinction between different instances of humour relevant for the analyses: canned jokes, conversational jokes (Attardo, 1994) and externally humorous situations. It should be noted that the scope of this thesis does not involve elaborating on the definition of humour or contributing to it, nor does it discuss in detail the methods of determining whether an utterance is humorous or not. The conversations analysed in this thesis are considered humorous and the goal is to describe them from the pragmatic point of view.

After the description of humour itself the focus is shifted towards establishing the pragmatic framework. Thesis by Čapková (2012), similarly focused on the relations between humour and pragmatic principles, provided the initial idea of what form such framework might have and served as general inspiration for the structure of the thesis, as well as a redirection to relevant literature. Thus, the present thesis describes the Gricean

framework (Grice, 1975) in conversation and its relation to humour. The Cooperative Principle is presented in general and significant focus is put on the manners in which a person can act against it as these are tightly connected to the presence of humour in human interaction. Throughout the thesis, there is focus on instances of conversational humour and there are attempts to project this into the description of the Gricean framework by using practical examples. The aim of the thesis is to examine the relationship between the Gricean framework and humorous situations occurring naturally and unexpectedly in human interaction. With regards to this, Attardo's (1990) scheme of understanding a joke is adopted and modified for conversational humour.

Along with the humour and pragmatic backgrounds, it is also important to provide basic information about the Air Traffic Control (ATC) language; this information is briefly presented in a separate chapter.

In the second half of the thesis, the analyses of the ATC conversations are presented. In total, transcriptions of ten conversations are analysed; certain transcription symbols are occasionally used in these transcripts and their list is provided in the introduction to the chapter. Every analysis consists of four sections: technical circumstances, humorous scheme, Cooperative Principle (CP) perspective, and theory of humour.

Technical circumstances introduce the aviation-related event occurring in the analysed conversation in simple terms.

Humorous scheme tries to describe the conversational exchange as a humorous event and applies certain terminology and scheme adopted before in the thesis.

The CP perspective describes the conversation from the point of view of Maxim transgression and its meaning in the specific situation.

Finally, the theory of humour section discusses the theories of humour explaining the analysed humorous conversation with regards to certain features of the conversation.

The aim is to classify the conversations, discuss potential patterns and explain the very occurrence of humour in such highly professional discourse.

2. Introduction to humour research

Due to the omnipresence of humour, it may appear in countless forms and shapes and when encountering the term *humour*, there is certainly some idea to occur in every person's mind.

However, as Attardo (1994) and historically other authors suggest, it is rather difficult to subdivide or even define the broad term. In his book *Linguistic theories of humor*, the author addresses various issues related to different approaches to defining or subdividing humour and elaborates on the struggles to establish precise limitations to the field. One of his notes on how the phenomenon is understood states this: "Linguists, psychologists, and anthropologists have taken humor to be an all-encompassing category, covering any event or object that elicits laughter, amuses, or is felt to be funny." (Attardo, 1994, p. 4). This only affirms how broadly it is possible to regard humour. A different statement which possibly even more distances itself from a strict definition or subdivision is the following, which relates the understanding of humour more to its social aspects: "If one puts aside the 'internal subdivisions' of humor and accepts a 'broad' reading of the concept, it follows that humor (or comic, etc.) is whatever a social group defines it as such." (Attardo, 1994, p. 9.). Attardo also refers to Raskin (1985) who also applied a very broad definition of humour in his research. The view of humour as being defined by a social group can possibly be related to the conversations analysed in the present thesis as these are viewed as humorous by a quite specific group of people (M. Sučková, personal communication, 17.05.2021).

After considering possible subdivisions of humour and eventually accepting Raskin's view, Attardo briefly addresses the issue of determining what is humorous and what is not with the focus on the potential problems of accepting laughter as a criterion. The author further inclines to Raskin's notion that: "The ability of the native speaker to pass judgments as to the funniness of a text is also part of his competence and, therefore, a formal linguistic theory is possible which models the native speaker's competence in this particular respect." (Raskin, 1985, p. 51). Attardo (1994) regards this as "a working definition of humor [...] further specified by the theories..." (p. 1) later discussed in the book. Thus, these theories try to find a more specific definition of the term *humour*, in

other words what is considered humorous, compared to the very general definitions presented above.

For the purposes of this thesis only the three most common types of such theories are considered, following Attardo's (1994) presentation these are: incongruity theories, disparagement/superiority theories, and release theories, all of which are described by Raskin (1985). A brief introduction of the separate theories follows.

2.1 Theories of humour

2.1.1 Incongruity theories

As summarized by Attardo (1994), the roots of the incongruity theories of humour can be tracked far into the past, even to Aristotle. However, Kant and Schopenhauer are mentioned as the main authors initially connected to the incongruity theories. Their approaches are marked as bases of the theories as they are seen now. Put simply, the incongruity theories explain humour as the difference between what is expected and what really occurs, or as the result of perceiving such difference. The following is, according to Attardo, a well-constructed definition of incongruity:

The notion of congruity and incongruity refer to the relationships between components of an object, event, idea, social expectation, and so forth. When the arrangement of the constituent elements of an event is incompatible with the normal or expected pattern, the event is perceived as incongruous. (McGhee, 1979, p. 6-7, quoted in Attardo, 1994, p. 48)

A practical example of humour according to the incongruity theories occurring in conversations can be puns, where, for example, one participant of a conversation exploits an unintended meaning of other participant's utterance and provides an incongruous answer, which may cause amusement.

Attardo also mentions the possible compatibility with the other two theories. Examples of this are provided in the following paragraphs.

2.1.2 Disparagement/superiority theories

Similarly to the incongruity theories above, these theories are stated to have their roots in distant history. Apparently, already Plato and Aristotle have recognised a certain

negative, aggressive aspect of humour. Thomas Hobbes is mentioned as having “formulated most forcefully the idea that laughter arises from a sense of superiority of the laugher towards some object” (Attardo, 1994, p. 49) – this seems to be quite a good definition of the scope of the superiority theories. Another mentioned approach to humour is accounted to Bergson, who sees humour as “a social corrective, i.e., used by society to correct deviant behaviour.” (ibid., p. 50). In other words, humour according to the superiority theories occurs when people, for example, view themselves as better than someone else and then laugh at their incompetence. As Attardo suggests, this type of humour might be viewed as “exclusive” (Ibid.), meaning that a closed group of people laughs together at someone who is an outsider.

Regarding the above-mentioned compatibility of humour theories, it can well happen that laughter may stem from a situation where something incongruous happens which at the same time indicates someone’s superiority.

2.1.3 Release theories

These theories identify humour as a tool that “‘releases’ tensions, psychic energy, or [...] releases one from inhibitions, conventions and laws.” (Attardo, 1994, p. 50). Freud is mentioned as the main proponent of the release theories. Interestingly, Attardo also notes that release theories account for “the ‘liberation’ from the rules of language, typical of puns and other word-play, and also for the infractions to the principle of Cooperation (Grice 1975, 1989) typical of humor at large”. (ibid.). The Cooperative Principle is discussed in detail later in the thesis.

In practice, for example, a pun can be used to lighten a stressful situation. This also proves the compatibility mentioned above as puns are usually associated with incongruity.

2.2 Instances of humour

As the aim of this thesis is to analyse humorous conversations a distinction should be drawn between different instances of humour possibly occurring in human interaction (that is “in context”). For the purposes of the present thesis, I adopted Attardo’s (1994, p. 295) classification and terminology which distinguishes between two different humorous phenomena: canned jokes and conversational jokes. The distinction is based

on the relation of the phenomenon to its context and is generally accepted. It should be noted the author himself states that although different, the line of distinction between the two is not fixed and describes the distinction as polythetic. The reasons for this unclear distinction are mentioned below along with the discussion of both instances. Conversation analysis is suggested by the author as a linguistic discipline very well suited for studying such humorous phenomena and its tools are also applied in the part of the thesis dedicated to the analysis of humorous conversations. Importantly, Attardo uses conversation analysis as a synonymous term with discourse analysis and thus for the purpose of the analyses in this thesis it is viewed in the same manner.

2.2.1 Canned Jokes

Attardo initially describes canned jokes as: "... a joke which has been used before the time of utterance in a form similar to that used by the speaker, such as those which are found in book, collections of jokes, etc.; its text does not depend on contextual factors [...] and is quite interchangeable with respect to context." (Attardo, 1994, p. 296). This well describes the nature of canned jokes in terms of relation to context. However, as suggested in the previous paragraph, the position of canned jokes on the spectrum of context relations can shift. Attardo mentions Zajdman (1991) as someone describing the possible different relations of canned jokes to their context. The relation can be strengthened and if used in a subtle manner for example, a canned joke's occurrence in a text may become rather inconspicuous.

Regarding the nature of the to-be-analysed conversations, canned jokes used in such an adjusted form that they are effectively indistinguishable from situational jokes are possibly the only type of canned jokes that might be encountered in those conversations, but even so it is not seen as highly probable. Attardo also suggests that conversational jokes may occur in more formal settings than the canned ones, and since conversations from a highly professional environment are analysed here, this only consolidates the position of conversational jokes as the more important instance of humour for this thesis' purposes.

An example of a canned joke:

‘Do you believe in clubs for young men?’ ‘Only when kindness fails’ (Attributed to W. C. Fields) (W. C. Fields, as cited in Attardo, 1990, p. 355)

2.2.2 Conversational Jokes

Regarding the relation to context, conversational jokes, again the prototypical ones, are virtually on the other side of the spectrum compared to the above-described canned jokes, or at least the canned jokes non-dependent on the context. Attardo provides the following definition: “A conversational joke is improvised during a conversation [*sic*] draws heavily on contextual information for its setup [...], as well as for the ‘*à propos*’ of the punch line; it is almost impossible to transfer it from one situation to another.” (Attardo, 1994, p. 296). This definition provides a sufficient image of conversational jokes as a phenomenon occurring rather spontaneously and building on the current situation. The term “conversational jokes” is viewed as synonymous with the term “conversational humour” in this thesis. Attardo mentions puns as a subset of conversational jokes. That, however, does not mean that they cannot occur as canned jokes (see the example above); the role of viewpoint is discussed later, in chapter 1.2.2. Generally, conversational jokes (or humour) might be viewed more as a collaborative effort of the participants than canned jokes. This is discussed in detail, for example, by Coates (2007).

The research on conversational and canned jokes, their differences, and similarities (in structure for example) and humour in general extends further but the information above provides sufficient theoretical background for the purposes of the present thesis.

2.2.3 Externally humorous situations

It is important to note that the conversations later analysed in the thesis may happen to be perceived as humorous only by an external observer. To explain: a situation can be considered *internally* humorous when one of the participants has the intention of amusing the other participants and succeeds; if, however, there is no intention to amuse, or if the attempt to amuse fails, the situation should not be viewed as internally humorous. It can, however, still be viewed as *externally* humorous by a detached observer; the humorousness of such phenomena is expected to be explained through the theories of

humour listed above and described similarly to other analysed conversations using the Cooperative Principle (Grice, 1975) (see below).

3. Grice's Cooperative Principle and the Conversational Maxims

Cooperative Principle and its four subcategories with their respective maxims were presented by Grice (1975) as general features important when creating “conversational implicatures” (p. 45). These represent the message conveyed not through the literal meaning of the words spoken or written, but rather through the meaning ‘behind’ those words.

The basis of the principle is the assumption that a conversation is a “cooperative effort” (p. 45) of all the participants; with this in mind, Grice presented the Principle as something the speakers in a dialogue respect in order to communicate clearly and formulated it as follows:

Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged. (p. 45)

Having defined the general principle, Grice further distinguished four categories and assigned “more specific maxims and submaxims” (p. 45) of conversation to each of those. The categories are:

1. Quantity
2. Quality
3. Relation
4. Manner

The categories are often referred to simply as the maxims (i.e. Maxim of Quantity, Maxim of Quality, Maxim of Relation and Maxim of Manner); the separate categories along with their specific maxims are considered in chapter 3.2 of the thesis.

Considering the above, the principle and its maxims may be viewed as a set of expectations the participants of a conversation have from one another (Dubinsky & Holcomb, 2011), or as an imaginary framework which is assumed to be in function by the participants if not signalled otherwise (Thomas, 1995); Thomas marks the latter as the Grice's originally intended manner of understanding of CP and its maxims. Thus,

regarding the lines above, it can also be viewed as a guideline for constructing utterances in such manner that they effectively carry the precise meaning of the words uttered, and, importantly, also for proper and effective perception of such utterances. However, these should really be viewed only as a set of expectations or basic guideline and not a set of strict rules for an efficient conversation. This coincides with the following statement from *Understanding Language Through Humor* (Dubinsky & Holcomb, 2011), which on the account of the maxims states:

They are not exactly laws rigidly governing conversation ([...] speakers depart from them frequently), but they do serve as a set of default expectations for most conversations. (p. 89-90)

The statement even suggests that the maxims are often disregarded by the speakers. That is due to the fact that maxims not only do not represent rigid rules requiring strict obedience to successfully communicate, but on the other hand, as suggested by Grice (1975), only by disregarding them in a certain manner a specific conversational implicature, or a specific pragmatic meaning, can be communicated.

One possible motivation for disregarding a conversational maxim is the entertainment of other participants of a conversation; this can be achieved directly by telling a (canned) joke to entertain other participants, by responding in an amusing fashion or by simply turning the dialogue in a humorous direction by disregarding the maxims. As mentioned in the introduction, focus here is specifically on this motivation. Individual humorous situations are generated by breaking different maxims in different manners. The manner of disregarding a maxim is particularly important and is discussed on the following pages.

The terms canned joke and conversational humour are defined above at the beginning of the thesis, what follows is the association of those terms to the here described phenomena.

3.1 Violation, Flouting and Opting out

Violation, Flouting and Opting out are the three distinct options of which a speaker can choose when intending to break a conversational maxim, for humorous purposes in this case, and each one of these is described in the following paragraphs and additional,

possibly less important types of maxim non-observance are provided towards the end of the subchapter.

3.1.1 Violation

Starting with violation and flouting, these two, although seemingly similar terms, differ significantly. While both involve breaking a maxim, violation means it is done “quietly and unostentatiously” (Grice, 1975), that is without the hearer knowing the speaker is disregarding a maxim. This is the case of numerous (canned) jokes, as suggested by Attardo (1990) in his article, while citing Grice:

Grice notes that by violating one of the maxims the speaker ‘will be liable to mislead’ (1975:49); and this is exactly the case in the text of a joke in a literal processing. The processing of a joke can be described (in theory-neutral terms) as the discovery of a second ‘sense’ in a text that had initially seemed to be headed in the direction of a ‘normal’ disambiguation. (p. 355)

Regarding the relation between the violation of the maxims and the ““unexpected”” (Attardo, 1990, p. 356) existence of the second sense, indicated in the quote above, Attardo described that the speaker/writer utilizes the violation with the intention to deceive or mislead the addressee into thinking that a ““normal”” (p. 356) reliable message is being communicated, while it is in fact arranged and manipulated.

Scheme of understanding a joke according to Attardo

Attardo (1990) then incorporated the process described above in a simple scheme of understanding a joke - at first the hearer believes the validity of the speakers utterance and constructs a sense from what is being said, this state remains until an element occurs, referred to as “the punch-line”(p. 356), rescinding the original interpretation and forcing the hearer to ‘retrace their steps’ through the utterance to a specific point (possibly the beginning) and to attempt to construct a new meaning of the utterance to correspond with the punch line.

3.1.2 Flouting

As Dubinsky and Holcomb (2011) suggest, along with other authors, contrary to mere violation, flouting means the speaker disregards the maxim ostentatiously, with the intention for the hearer to realize the maxim is being broken – as mentioned above, it is done in order to add another meaning to the message. Flouting with the aim of generating this additional meaning (a conversational implicature) was defined by Grice (1975) as a situation when “a maxim is being EXPLOITED” (p. 49, capitals in the original). In other words, flouting is utilized to communicate such meaning, ‘hidden behind’ the language, in vast majority of cases. Dubinsky & Holcomb (2011) also claim that in flouting occurs “the most creative utilization of the conversational principles” (p. 91).

The two authors also suggest that flouting is often related to humorous situations arising in conversations; the circumstances, however, are different compared to violation.

Conversational humour and an altered version of Attardo’s scheme

As mentioned above, the violation, and thus also the suggested scheme, are related to a specific form of canned jokes utilising the violation to deceive a hearer/reader. This might imply that for an unexpectedly humorous situation arising from a dialogue of more participants (a situation of conversational humour), the scheme above would require an alteration. The basis of conversational humour is almost certainly not rooted in the deception and thus the violation of maxims, but rather on flouting them through an unexpected response. Building on the structure of the scheme provided by Attardo (1990) and utilizing the discussion by Dubinsky & Holcomb (2011), it may be assumed that in the given case, the scheme might acquire the following form: The speaker formulates an utterance not containing any deceiving or invalid elements towards the hearer. They receive the message and understand the full meaning of it, but possibly discover a new, different sense in the words, originally unintended and perhaps even unnoticed by the speaker, and decide to answer in a manner appropriate to this second sense and thus flout the maxims. This might correspond to the punch line from the previous scheme, now forcing the initial speaker to review their utterance and discover the meaning intended by the responding hearer.

Although the schemes are similar, it is observed that in the case of the second one, the case of conversational humour, the roles are exchanged to certain extent – now, unlike in the joke, the hearer is the first to discover the second, unintended (or ‘hidden’) meaning in the received message and decides to refer to it in their response, forcing the speaker to backtrack their own utterance and uncover that meaning being referred to. The reaction of the speaker, however, may vary; as discussed in Attardo (1995), either laughter, delayed laughter or silence occurs as the reaction, each of which bears a different meaning. Further on, the thesis focuses mainly on the case of conversational humour.

Importance of viewpoint in the case of graphical/written jokes

Canned jokes can also occur in written or graphical form, e.g. a comic strip, where the humour stems from a dialogue of more participants, such as in this case:

‘Excuse me, do you know what time it is?’ ‘Yes.’ (Attardo, 1990, p. 355)

To determine whether this is a demonstration of violation, flouting, or possibly infringing (see chapter 3.1.5), the viewpoint is critical.

One possibility is to approach this problem from the side of the participants of the presented dialogue (one can even imagine such dialogue in real life) – then it clearly seems as an example of flouting as the participants are not trying to deceive each other anyhow, instead a sincere question is answered in an obviously flouting (or infringing) manner.

However, Attardo (1990) presents this as a canned joke and thus as an example of violation of maxims. In order to reach the same understanding of the situation, the whole dialogue must be considered as being produced by one person – its author. Indeed, it seems to make sense that in this case, it is the author who tries to deceive the reader of the dialogue by making it seem normal at first and then unexpectedly changing its direction and revealing that violation actually occurred.

3.1.3 Opting out

Opting out is the third option mentioned at the beginning of the subchapter and is an alternative for a speaker with no intention to violate or flout the maxims and the Cooperative Principle. A speaker can choose to opt out of a conversation by indicating

that they are unable or unwilling to cooperate in the manner required. Such situation may frequently occur, for example, when the speaker is asked an overly personal or inappropriate question. However, opting out may as well be utilised to generate a humorous situation in a conversation, as demonstrated on the following joke, attributed to Brian Kiley, excerpted from Dubinsky & Holcomb (2011):

I went to a bookstore today. I asked the woman behind the counter where the self-help section was. She said, ‘If I told you, that would defeat the whole purpose.’ (p. 91)

3.1.4 Clash of maxims

Besides the three main described manners of disregarding the maxims, there are, as mentioned at the beginning of the subchapter, additional, possibly less frequently appearing manners of maxim disregard. One of these is what Grice (1975) calls a “clash” (p. 49). When a speaker is faced with a clash of maxims they appear in a situation where they are unable to fulfil one maxim without breaking a different one. For example, as described in *Logic and Conversation* (Grice, 1975), they may be incapable of meeting “the first maxim of Quantity (Be as informative as is required) without violating the second maxim of Quality (Have adequate evidence for what you say)” (p. 49). A practical example from Grice, involves a situation where a person is asked for a detailed location of a place, somebody’s home, but because only an approximate one is known to them, they cannot provide the required amount of information in the response, without providing information for which there is no evidence from their side. Thomas (1995) connects the clash to flouting by proposing that it is a factor necessitating it. This possibly implies that clash is not a manner of maxim disregard itself but rather a cause for, presumably in most cases, flouting of the maxims. For the purpose of humour and this thesis, this phenomenon connected to maxim violation seems of modest importance.

3.1.5 Infringing

Additionally to clash, Thomas (1995) further commented on a manner of breaking a maxim called “infringing” (p. 74), which occurs when a speaker disregards or, more precisely in this case, does not succeed in meeting the maxims although there is no special implicature present that they would wish to convey through the utterance, nor do they

have any intention to mislead the hearer. It is a result of the speaker's "imperfect linguistic performance" (Thomas, 1995, p. 74), in other words, the speaker is unable to operate the language properly rather than choosing to produce, from the point of view of the maxims, a faulty utterance in order to create an implicature. There is a number of possible reasons for the speaker's potential inability to produce a message in agreement with the maxims; as Thomas (1995) suggests it may occur due to the speaker's incomplete grasp of the language, such as in the case of young children or people using a non-native language. Another possibility is that a speaker is rendered incapable of clear use of the language due to being nervous, intoxicated, or simply excited. Thomas (1995) also proposes that it may occur due to "cognitive impairment" (p. 74), or possibly even because the speaker simply does not use 'clear' language when speaking by their nature.

Considering the proposed connection of clash and flouting in the related paragraph above, it might be assumed that infringing could also be classified as a subcategory of flouting, as it involves blatant disregard of maxims; that, however, is not possible due to flouting being directly related to conveying a 'hidden' meaning which is not present in infringing. In other words, no conversational implicature is generated intentionally by the speaker in the case of infringing.

3.1.6 Maxim suspension

Standing aside from the mentioned maxim disregards there is one more type presented by Thomas (1995) – suspension of a maxim. This occurs in situations where the speakers do not anticipate the maxims to be met, which implies that there is no implicature created by their disregard.

3.2 Gricean maxims

After Grice (1975) presented the Cooperative Principle (CP), he suggested a possible distinction of four categories: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. According to Grice's (1975) own words, he was "echoing" (p. 45) the philosopher Immanuel Kant when differentiating the four categories. Presumably, Grice refers to Kant's (1781/1998) distinction of "four main logical features of judgments" (p. 9) presented in the book *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). To each one of the mentioned categories more detailed

maxims and submaxims are assigned, respecting of which should result in the participants operating in compliance with the CP as a whole; a thorough description of the categories and maxims follows.

3.2.1 Quantity

First of the four categories is the category of Quantity. It is concerned with the amount of information given by the participants of a conversation, in other words, with the volume of it contained in the speakers' utterances. There are two maxims included in this category:

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
(Grice, 1975, p. 45)

Fundamentally, it may be assumed the suggestion here is that the speakers should present, ideally, only an adequate amount of information when participating in communication events with others; the first maxim advises the speaker against providing insufficient information while the second warns against being excessively informative. Grice (1975) himself further argues about the importance of the second stated maxim of Quantity. He offers two possible reasons why it might be superfluous: first, it might be assumed that providing unnecessarily large amount of information is actually not in conflict with the Cooperative Principle but is only "a waste of time" (p. 46). He, however, opposes this argument by stating that it "may be confusing in that it is liable to raise side issues" (p. 46). Additionally, the hearer might believe there is a certain reason for the speaker to be overly informative and become misled due to that. The second, and potentially more important, reason for questioning the presence of the second maxim is that its effect is provided through the Maxim of Relevance (described below).

Grice (1975) provides a non-conversational analogy for each one of the four categories - for Quantity he presents this example:

If you are assisting me to mend a car, I expect your contribution to be neither more nor less than is required. If, for example, at a particular stage I need four screws, I expect you to hand me four, rather than two or six. (p. 47)

Dubinsky & Holcomb (2011) suggest that the element of flouting the maxims of quantity often has an important role in jokes and other humour. This can be observed in the following examples focused on the conversational humour:

When is the best time to go shopping? When the stores are open. (Dubinsky & Holcomb, 2011, p. 92)

Here the speaker is provided with an “obvious and uninformative” (p. 92) answer. It is suggested that this response can only be understood if taken as the respondent being sarcastic.

A similar example from the same source: the speaker asks, “Have you seen my car keys?” and receives an answer of “I’ve seen them.” (p.90) Although in this case the answer provides new information to the speaker it is still of no real use as it does not provide information about the specific location of the keys.

3.2.2 Quality

The category of Quality is the second of the four categories. It is focused on the truthfulness of utterances produced by speakers, which is manifested in its maxims. In fact, this category contains one “supermaxim” (Grice, 1975, p. 46) and two further, more detailed, maxims.

The supermaxim states this: “Try to make your contribution one that is true” (p.46), introducing the general expectation valid in conversations relatively well by itself. The two following maxims provide more exact information regarding what the speakers should avoid if they want to meet the Cooperative Principle:

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

(Grice, 1975, p. 46)

The first one, in other words, warns the speakers against lying through their utterances by intentionally providing information they believe is not true. The second one advises against presenting information which the speaker might believe is true, but of which they do not have real, or sufficient, proof.

Grice (1975) proposes that it may seem that certain maxims are of greater importance than others. In particular, the first Maxim of Quality is presented as crucial due to the fact that the introduction of other maxims depends on its fulfilment. Regardless of this, Grice (1975) suggests that in the case of generation of implicatures its function does not appear to be absolutely dissimilar to that of other maxims and thus should be regarded in the same way as the rest of the maxims. The non-conversational analogy provided by Grice in the case of quality is the following:

I expect your contributions to be genuine and not spurious. If I need sugar as an ingredient in the cake you are assisting me to make, I do not expect you to hand me salt; if I need a spoon, I do not expect a trick spoon made of rubber. (Grice, 1975, p. 47)

Similarly to the previous category, that of Quantity, it is suggested by Dubinsky & Holcomb (2011) that it is possible to find situations where flouting of the maxims of Quality is used to generate a humorous conversational turn. For example, it can be utilized to produce a sarcastic utterance such as in the following instance of conversational humour extracted from the sitcom *Frasier* and presented in the book by the above-mentioned authors:

NILES: Who knows why anybody does anything?

FRAISER: [*looks incredulously*] Remind me again what you do for a living.

(Dubinsky and Holcomb, 2011, p. 92)

As Dubinsky and Holcomb (2011) propose, *Frasier* is familiar with his brother Niles' job, but his response suggests otherwise. This is due to the fact that through sarcasm *Frasier* is attempting to point to the fact that Niles is a psychiatrist and therefore he should be the one possibly having the answer for the question, although rhetorical, posed in the dialogue.

3.2.3 Relation

The third category, Relation, includes only one, seemingly simple maxim: "Be relevant." (Grice, 1975, p. 46). As the maxim suggests, this category is concerned with the relevance, or connection, of what speakers say to the subject of conversation. Grice

(1975) himself stated that despite the simple construction of the maxim there are several issues hidden behind it, which he considers onerous; those include “questions about what different kinds and focuses of relevance there may be, how these shift in the course of a talk exchange” (p. 46), the question related to the acceptance of the fact that during a conversation the subject can be changed, and more. Again, Grice provides an analogy:

I expect a partner's contribution to be appropriate to the immediate needs at each stage of the transaction. If I am mixing ingredients for a cake, I do not expect to be handed a good book, or even an oven cloth (though this might be an appropriate contribution at a later stage). (Grice, 1975, p. 47)

The following example, from the sitcom *Frasier*, demonstrates how flouting of the relevance maxim may be utilized in conversational humour:

FRASIER: By calling her so many times, you give her all the power! You're much better off coming from a position of strength!

NILES: Don't pour that sherry on your shirt: it will stain.

FRASIER: What?

NILES: Oh, I'm sorry. I thought this was the portion of the afternoon where we give each other patently obvious advice.

(Dubinsky & Holcomb, 2011, p. 92)

In this dialogue, Frasier is trying to give advice to his brother Niles regarding his separately living wife. The response Niles provides to the advice is obviously extraneous, in other words, it has no connection to the subject of it and thus renders Frasier perplexed. Niles then explains that he was indicating that the advice provided by Frasier is of no real use as it is blatantly obvious and undesired, and that that is the relation between his answer and the advice itself. Dubinsky and Holcomb (2011) also suggest that in Niles's second contribution to the dialogue, he also flouts the category of Quality by saying what he knows is not true and therefore conveying the message of sarcasm.

3.2.4 Manner

The last of the four categories, Manner, is suggested by Grice (1975) not to be connected to the message of the utterance but rather to the form of it, which is a quality

distinguishing this category from the other ones. Similarly to Quality, Manner includes one supermaxim and additional, more specific, maxims. The supermaxim is of the following form: “Be perspicuous” (Grice, 1975, p. 46) thus providing a very general information on how to operate the language. The four supplementary maxims are focused on different phenomena which might result in breaking the supermaxim. Their form is the following:

1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
4. Be orderly.

(Grice, 1975, p. 46)

The analogy presented:

I expect a partner to make it clear what contribution he is making and to execute his performance with reasonable dispatch. (Grice 1975, p. 47)

Dubinsky and Holcomb (2011) propose a less complicated formulation of the maxim by simply suggesting to “Be clear” (p. 89) and recommending the speakers to “organize their thoughts, use shared vocabulary, etc.” (p. 89).

Attardo (1990), while commenting on this joke:

‘Do you believe in clubs for young men?’ ‘Only when kindness fails’ (Attributed to W. C. Fields) (W. C. Fields, as cited in Attardo, 1990, p. 355)

points to the fact that the second supplementary maxim of Manner (“Avoid ambiguity.” (Grice, 1975, p. 46)) is essentially violated by all “forms of verbal humor based on ambiguity, such as puns.” (p. 355). Puns would thus provide a good example of the mentioned maxim violation for comedic effect, but they could similarly be found occurring as a product of a dialogue of two speakers and thus, in fact, being a result of flouting of the maxim. Dubinsky and Holcomb (2011), however, provide examples where flouting of different maxims of Manner occurs and might also appear humorous to the hearer, or at least to an external one not participating in the conversation. Both of the following are, again, proposed as possible answers to the question “Have you seen my car keys?” (p. 90). The first potential response flouts the first maxim by being ‘obscure’:

I spied their glitterings on the four-posted eating platform. (p. 90)

The second one flouts the last maxim by not being ‘orderly’:

The kitchen table on, them I saw. (Yoda-speak) (p. 90)

Considering the nature of the maxims of Manner along with the examples above, it is possible to assume that only with the ‘ambiguity’ maxim a mere violation can be achieved as the disregard of the other maxims would have a potentially-hard-to-conceal effect on the utterance.

4. Language of Air Traffic Control (ATC)

Language used in aviation radiotelephony is a very specific and strict type of professional discourse and involves all the communication among the participants of the air traffic (pilots, controllers, ground workers, etc.). The focus here is specifically on the communication between aircrafts and ATCs, where the conversations commonly revolve around the subjects related to the movement around the airport (both on and above the ground). As stated in the *Manual of Radiotelephony* published by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO): “The information and instructions transmitted are of vital importance in the safe and expeditious operation of aircraft. Incidents and accidents have occurred in which a contributing factor has been the use of non-standard procedures and phraseology. The importance of using correct and precise standardized phraseology cannot be overemphasized.” (ICAO, 2007, chapter 2, p. 1) Clearly, the importance of the standardized phraseology is enormous. As an international authority, the ICAO provides guidance in the phraseology and its usage by publishing detailed manuals. Generally, the process of communication seems to be highly regulated here; every situation has specific phrases associated with it, it is suggested how the transmission of a message should be technically executed in order to communicate successfully or whether an answer to the message is expected or not (there often occurs a very strict turn-taking structure). In other words, the intention is to have an exact procedure prescribed for every possible situation, but as suggested by ICAO, it is not possible to be prepared for all the possible events. It is proposed that the “Users may find it necessary to supplement phraseologies with the use of ‘plain’ language.” (ibid, Foreword, p. 3). However, even when this should occur, the language is to be used in the most efficient possible manner.

Although it is stated above that use of plain language may occur, it still seems strange that an instance of ATC communication might contain humorous phenomena (the participant amusing each other), or even be perceived as humorous by an external observer of the conversation. Analyses of such humorous conversations which try to clarify the phenomenon of humour in strictly professional environment are presented in the following part of the thesis. Due to the extent of the phraseology and complexity of the phraseology, its occurrence is discussed and explained separately with each

conversation and not here in advance. The conversations are then analysed according to the theories described earlier in the thesis.

5. Analyses of recordings of ATC conversations

5.1 Conversations source

All the conversations analysed here are adopted from a YouTube channel called *H89SA*, the content of which involves video edits with transcripts of interesting ATC conversations taken from *LiveATC.net* (H89SA). That is a website providing “both live and recorded ATC audio transmissions with instant archive retrieval” (Pascoe, LiveATC.net) from many places around the world.

5.2 Sampling

The conversations were picked with the intention to represent the different sources of humour in ATC conversations. The representation of the different sources does not reflect the real-world rates of occurrence; that is not the purpose of the present thesis. It is possible that some types of humour sources are not represented at all as only a relatively limited corpus of videos was examined.

It should also be noted that majority of the conversations involves the same person in the role of the Air Traffic Controller (ATC); see more information in the conclusion.

5.3 Classification of the conversations

The conversations are classified based on common features; the two largest groups are the internally (participants amusing one another) and externally (serious for the participants, amusing for an external observer) humorous conversations. The internally humorous conversations are further divided into those based on ‘simple’ puns (Internal A) and those utilizing some extra knowledge to create the humour (Internal B). The externally humorous conversations are further divided into those based more on the superiority theory (External A) and those based more on the incongruity theory (External B).

5.4 Transcription symbols

Although the transcriptions are mostly directly adopted from the source videos, occasionally some adjustments are made; whether attempting to improve the transcription

or use special transcription symbols to mark potentially important features of the conversation. The symbols used are the following: parenthesis enclosing a whole word to mark an uncertainty of the transcription and empty parenthesis to mark unintelligible speech, ‘h’ marking laughter outside of speech (multiple use marks more significant laughter) and ‘h’ enclosed in parenthesis inside a word marking laughter during the word’s utterance.

The symbols are used according to the information from University Transcription Services (2020) and Heritage, J. and Clayman, S. (2010).

Additionally, ellipsis in square brackets is used to denote unknown gaps in the conversation which might or might not have occurred due to the possible edit of the recording. In any case, these at least mark the transitions between the two different conversations. The symbol is used according to the APA citation style.

5.5 Analysis procedure

The analysis of each conversation consists of four steps: technical circumstances, humorous scheme, CP perspective, and theory of humour. It should be noted that during the conversation analyses the term ‘pilot’ is generally used to refer to the aircraft side of conversation, whether it is directly pilot speaking or not.

5.5.1 Technical circumstances

In this section, the technical background is provided to explain the circumstances of the conversation at hand.

5.5.2 Humorous scheme

The occurrence of humour in the conversation is describe by creating a scheme of the event and ideally trying to apply the scheme described in chapter 1.2.1 where it is appropriate. If not possible, there are at least attempts to locate the element representing the ‘punchline’. The attempt at humour is classified as successful or failed whenever possible.

5.5.3 Cooperative Principle perspective

Here, the transgressions of CP Maxims featured in the conversations are analysed along with their function in the given context.

5.5.4 Theory of humour

In the last step of the analysis, humour is explained through the initially described theories of humour and the specific features of the different theories are identified in the conversation.

5.6 Internally humorous conversations

Conversations where the participants have the intention to amuse one another.

5.6.1 Internal A

Humour in these conversations is based on puns only utilizing the language immediately at hand and not requiring other, special knowledge of the external world.

Conversation 1

UnitedAirLines1578: (United) 1578, what are the winds?

Tower (TWR): Atmospheric phenomenon. Wind 290, 14, gust 22.

UAL1578: Thank you very m(h)uch, 290, 14.

FUNNY ATC: KENNEDY STEVE & BOSTON JOHN! (H89SA, 2018)

Technical circumstances:

‘Tower’ is in the role of a control station in this conversation; in other examples this role is assigned to ‘Ground’. The first is concerned with the aerial space, while the latter with the ground space. (ICAO, 2007)

According to *Manual of Radiotelephony* (ibid.), there always needs to be an identification present when initiating a conversation, and also when closing one when pilots recapitulate the message received to confirm correct understanding. The aircrafts are identified by special call signs (possibly containing the number of the flight). Use of the callsign during the initiation of a conversations appears to be more crucial than at the end.

As described at *SKYbrary Wiki* (2020), aircrafts close to landing at or launching from the airport are provided with information about the current wind conditions near the ground surface. The information provided includes the direction and speed of the wind along with the gust speeds. “Wind speed may be given in either knots (nautical miles per hour) or metres per second depending upon the procedures of the State concerned.” (*SKYbrary Wiki*, 2020).

Humorous scheme:

The pilot formulates a question with no intention of deceiving the controller at the tower and asks for the wind conditions. The controller understands this message but sees an alternative meaning of the question, one where the pilot is asking for an explanation or definition of the phenomenon and decides to exploit it. In the response, the controller, presumably with the intention to amuse, answers this second meaning of the question, but immediately continues with the answer to the pilot's meaning. The amusing part of the controller's answer could be considered the punchline as it forces the pilot to quickly backtrack through his utterance to realize the presence of the alternative meaning exploited by the controller. The pilot answers to this by emphasizing that he 'thanks the controller very much', which would possibly, if the controller answered without the exploitation, only have the form of a simpler 'thank you'. This, along with the brief laugh, shows the pilot's appreciation of the joke. Considering the above, the controller's attempt at humour can be considered successful.

Cooperative Principle perspective:

Through the answer, the controller flouts the Maxim of Relevance, as the information he provides is not relevant to the conversation; the flouting occurs with the intention to amuse. As described above, the pilot answers in a rather superfluous manner, thus flouting the Maxim of Quantity; as mentioned, this instance of flouting possibly occurs with the intention of expressing the appreciation of the controller's joke.

Theory of humour:

The analysed conversation can quite well be explained by the incongruity theory of humour: the pilot has very specific expectations of the controller's answer, but what he receives does not match those expectations and creates the inner conflict which according to the incongruity theory produces humour.

Conversation 2

BritishAirWays40F: And ground, SPEEDBIRD40F HEAVY, which way would you like us to do a... Face the push?

Ground (GND): (Well), I'd face the front, sir, 'cause if you're looking at the passengers while you're flying, they're gonna get scared, but the airplane should face SE.

BAW40F: Ok, I've never thought of that. I will face SE, thank you.

FUNNY ATC: KENNEDY STEVE FIXING THE SEQUENCE! (H89SA, 2016)

Technical circumstances:

The pilot is asking for the information regarding a push. According to *Manual of Radiotelephony* (ICAO, 2007), push occurs when an aircraft needs to be moved backwards (from a terminal) by ground vehicles (tugs, ...) before it can start moving on its own along the taxiways. As demonstrated for example in *FSXEurope - Tutorial-Pushback And Start ATC* (FSXEurope, 2013), the direction to 'face' the push denotes the direction which the nose of the aircraft should face, or be turned to face, during the push and after it is done.

'HEAVY' is added to the callsign of aircrafts "in the heavy wake turbulence category" (ICAO, 2007, chapter 2, p. 9)

Humorous scheme:

The pilot poses a genuine question on the direction of push; the controller recognises the alternative meaning of the utterance based on its not enough limited scope and exploits it. Thus, the punchline is imposed on the pilot which immediately notices the exploited alternative meaning of the original question (but adds the requested information at the end). Pilot addresses the exploitation in the answer and although not containing expressive laughter, it can be considered an appreciation of the humour. The attempt at humour can be considered successful.

Cooperative Principle perspective:

In the conversation, the Maxims of Relevance and Quantity are flouted by the controller as superfluous and, in the situation irrelevant, information is provided with the intention

to amuse. The pilot addresses the transgression by which he flouts the same Maxims; this can be seen as the appreciation of the controller's efforts.

Theory of humour:

The conversation's humour can be explained through the incongruity theory of humour; there is incongruity between the answer the pilot expects, and the answer provided by the controller. The inevitable visualization of the event also amplifies the depth of the incongruity as it shows the absurdity of the proposed situation in comparison to the image of a normal flight, where everyone is facing the appropriate direction.

Conversation 2: response variations

Interestingly, the joke used by the controller in Conversation 10, can be found in at least two more instances. The base of the joke is essentially the same: phrasing may change slightly, and of course, the direction provided as the requested information changes. What is interesting, however, is how the recipients' responses to the joke differ. The different manners in which the two more conversations containing the joke unravelled are discussed below.

Response B

UnitedAirLines512: Ground, UNITED512, which way would you like us to face?

Ground (GND): Err you gotta face the front, sir. If you fly looking at the passengers, they get scared. But you can push, face NW.

UAL512: Yeah, but it's hilarious to see their look.

GND: It probably would be.

UAL512: hh You gotta have a sense of humour, right?

GND: There you go.

KENNEDY STEVE: IF YOU FLY LOOKING AT THE PASSENGERS, THEY GET SCARED!!! (H89SA, 2016)

Compared to the first analysed conversation, this one does not contain a mere appreciation of the joke by the pilot, instead, they further build-up on the joke with own attempt at humour. The conversation is closed with expressions of mutual appreciation.

Response C

BritishAirWays116: SPEEDBIRD116 HEAVY requesting push and start.

Ground (GND): SPEEDBIRD116 HEAVY, push back on ALPHA approved.

BAW116: Push back on ALPHA approved, SPEEDBIRD116. Which way ('d) you like us to face?

GND: Oh, face the front, sir. If you ('re) flying looking at the passengers, they get very concerned.

BAW116: Touché!

GND: Err... But push back (so) the nose is SE.

BAW116: SE, thanks, SPEEDBIRD116.

GND: Ah, come on, you gotta admit it was slightly humorous!?

BAW116: It's hilarious, we're crying with laughter here.

DAL407: It's DELTA407, I'm laughing! But, you want me to follow that guy across... 22R?

GND: 4(h)07, cross 22R, join ZULU, monitor 123.9, have a great night.

DAL407: Yes, sir, adios, DELTA407 HEAVY. Cross 22R, and follow... On 23.9.

KENNEDY STEVE: BRITISH AIRWAYS PILOT WITHOUT A SENSE OF HUMOR!!! (H89SA, 2016)

In ATC conversations, when there is need to communicate separate letters clearly, a phonetic spelling system where each letter has a specific word assigned is used, for example: Alpha (A), Bravo (B), Mike (M), etc. (ICAO, 2007)

This conversation sees the pilot (BAW116) recognise the attempt at humour but react quite coldly, even leading the controller to ask them to admit they appreciate the joke. Even then the pilot (BAW116) answered in a sarcastic manner (flouting the Maxim of Quality). This means that the attempt at humour might be considered as failed in the first part of the conversation (but still potentially humorous to an external observer through the combination of the superiority and incongruity theories; the external perception might also be amplified by the relatively strong British accent spoken by the first pilot). After the sarcastic answer, however, a second pilot (DAL407) joins the conversation and expresses appreciation of the joke. The controller then answers in a

similarly appreciating manner. The attempt at humour might thus be considered successful considering the perspective of the second pilot.

Also, of the three conversations, this is the only one where the actually requested information is not part of the same message as the joke.

The above contributes to the approach that the lines between a canned and conversational joke are not clear as the conversational joke can also be reused; in this case however, it is still bound to its context (it is not replicated) and is reused in the exact same reoccurring situation.

It can also be seen that both a conversational and canned joke can both easily shift from being internally humorous (as is their intention) to being only externally humorous based on the response to them. This would be tightly connected to the superiority theory.

5.6.2 Internal B

Humour in these conversations is based on puns utilizing, along with the language immediately at hand, other, special knowledge of the external world.

Conversation 3

DeltaAirLines1773: Ground, DELTA1773?

Ground (GND): Errr... You need to go to MIKE-ALPHA, and there's an A330 in the way?

DAL1773: How did you know?

GND: Errr... The 5 dollars a month I paid to the Psychic Friends Network?

DAL1773: hh

GND: That's fine. You can stay there.

DAL1773: Alright, thanks, DELTA1773.

KENNEDY STEVE: Retirement & Incredible Popularity of Philadelphia!!!

(H89SA, 2016)

Technical circumstances:

'A330' denotes a specific aircraft model: Airbus A330. 'MIKE-ALPHA' represents the double letter denotation, MA, which, according to *SKYbrary Wiki* (2019), can be utilized at large airports to mark "minor taxiways or taxiway stubs" (*SKYbrary Wiki*, 2019). Taxiways are the paths used by aircrafts to move across airport, for example, from runway to ramp (e.g. *Greenville Downtown Airport*)

Psychic Friends Network was an American "telephone psychic service" (Wikipedia, 2020).

Humorous scheme:

The first humorous moment occurs with the first message from the Ground, where the controller, presumably based on his knowledge of the present situation, decides to answer the pilot's genuine, routine opening line with a prediction of his request, instead of confirming the connection and prompting the pilot to describe it; one whole conversational turn is thus skipped. The controller does not exploit an alternative meaning in the pilot's utterance, but rather exploits the knowledge of the current situation and also

of the regular proceedings of such conversations with the intention to possibly surprise and thus amuse the pilots, or maybe even accelerate the conversation a bit.

The following humorous situation is based on the build-up of the conversation from both sides. There are two possibilities: either the pilot is genuinely surprised by the accuracy of the answer or he, knowing that it is the controller's job to be precisely aware of the traffic at the airport, realizes what the controller is doing and decides to build upon it (according to intonation the latter is considered here). Regardless, the function of the pilot's response does not seem to change much from the controller's point of view.

Instead of simply confirming the prediction, the pilot asks about its foundation; the controller sensing the pilot's cooperation realizes the freedom of his possible answer; the pilot's question might be viewed as 'setting the ball' for the controller, providing him with freedom at delivering the punch line. The controller chooses an, according to him, fitting answer, which the pilot recognises as functional one and reacts with laughter appreciating the controller's choice. According to the above, the controller's attempt at humour can be considered successful.

Additionally, this conversation supports the view that conversational humour is a collaborative effort (e.g. Coates, 2007).

Cooperative Principle perspective:

From the perspective of the CP, if the conversation is viewed as strictly standardized then the controllers first utterance might be viewed as flouting of the Maxim of Manner, as it is not what should occur as response to the call (the standard order of the conversation is broken). It might also be seen as flouting of the Quantity Maxim as more information is provided at that conversation stage than should be. Next, the pilot flouts the Maxims of Quantity, and possibly Relevance, by posing the question instead of simply confirming. It should be noted that the pilot's question seems to remove the 'ties' of the CP from the following answer and thus the controller is not flouting any maxim as he was not expected to adhere to any. This might be understood as a 'suspension' of the Maxim. After this 'liberated punch line', the controller immediately provides the required information. Both however seem to flout the Maxim of Quantity in the last two lines ("That's fine." And "Alright, thanks.") by using an unnecessary amount of words (a simple exchange of

reception confirmations could have occurred instead) possibly to mutually appreciate the preceding humorous, and 'friendly', interaction.

Theory of humour:

The analysed conversation can be explained through the incongruity theory: the pilot expects a different answer at the beginning of the conversation and then later despite providing the controller with freedom at answering, the pilot might have still been surprised by the response (or maybe it was exactly because of this freedom that the answer was inherently incongruous).

Conversation 4

Shuttle America(TCF)4223: Ground, MERCURY4223, HOTEL-BRAVO, entering (...)

Ground (GND): M'RCURY 4223, ground, 13R, follow COPA.

TCF4223: 13R, follow COPA, MERCURY4223.

GND: MERCURY4223, because of the incredible popularity of Philadelphia, I can't let you go for another 20 minutes.

TCF4223: Blame the ()

GND: Definitely not the Eagles.

TCF4223: hh

KENNEDY STEVE: Retirement & Incredible Popularity of Philadelphia!!!

(H89SA, 2016)

Technical circumstances:

The pilot receives instructions regarding the movement on the airport where “HOTEL-BRAVO” probably again refers to a certain (minor) taxiway or its part. “13R”, however, marks, as described at *Federal Aviation Administration*, a specific highway: its number and its position with regards to its parallel runway (R = right). “COPA” likely refers to an aircraft by the company *Copa Airlines*.

Humorous scheme:

The controller informs the pilot, presumably flying to Philadelphia, about the wait and jokingly relates it to the city's popularity. The pilot answers in similar manner, supporting the controller's humorous intentions, but only part of his utterance seems intelligible. Probably hearing only this part of the utterance, the controller discovers a possible complement to it and exploits it: he uses his sports knowledge and refers to the professional sports team of *Philadelphia Eagles* as the ones “definitely not” to blame for Philadelphia's popularity, possibly referring to their ‘non-perfect’ performance during the given season (as seen at *NFL.com*). The pilot, when realizing the connection created by the controller, responds with sincere laughter and therefore the controller's attempt at humour can be considered successful.

Cooperative Principle perspective:

From the CP perspective, during the controllers second utterance, the Maxim of Quantity and possibly Relevance and flouted as more than the require amount of information is provided and that information might not be considered relevant for the pilot. Despite the interference in the pilot's response, it can be marked as flouting of the Maxim of Relevance as 'blaming', which expresses the pilot's feelings, is irrelevant in the ATC discourse. The Maxim of Quantity (too little information) is flouted in order to indirectly communicate a possible slight derision towards the sports team.

Theory of humour:

This instance of conversational humour can be explained through the incongruity theory as the pilot was probably surprised (incongruity occurred) by the controller's answer. Since the controller's utterance might a appear as slightly derisive towards the team, the superiority theory should also be considered.

Conversation 5

AmericanAirLines64: And ground, AMERICAN64 HEAVY?

Ground (GND): Yes, sir?

AAL64: Do you want us to continue to follow the 737?

GND: Yes, sir. But only as far as the runway, 'cause if you follow him to Cancun, everybody behind you is gonna get really angry.

AAL64: Ok, that's a good idea. We'll keep that in mind.

GND: Tower is 123.9 AMERICAN64, you have a great night.

AAL64: Yeah, you do the same. 23.9.

KENNEDY STEVE: IF YOU FLY LOOKING AT THE PASSENGERS, THEY GET SCARED!!! (H89SA, 2016)

Technical circumstances:

The pilot is asking for a confirmation of further actions and as it is possibly about to depart from the airport (following the departure of the aircraft 737), the pilot is provided with the communication frequency of the tower.

Humorous scheme:

The pilot poses a genuine question and requires a confirmation of further actions. The controller understands the question and answers it immediately but follows by exploiting the 'unlimited' scope of the question, this functions as the punchline. The pilot, realizing what the controller did, answers and appreciates the exploitation. Both continue by politely ending the conversation, again, expressing the mutual appreciation. Considering the messages following the punchline, the attempt at humour can be considered successful despite there not being any explicit laughter.

Cooperative Principle perspective:

From the perspective of the CP, the Maxim of Relevance was flouted by the controller as the 'advice' he provides does not seem particularly relevant for the situation. Flouting of the Maxim of Quantity follows as the pilot responds in a rather complicated manner through which the recognition and appreciation of the controller's attempt at humour is

expressed (again, a simple confirmation could have occurred instead of “Ok, that’s a good idea. We’ll keep that in mind.”).

Theory of humour:

The conversation can be explained through the incongruity theory of humour; the incongruity occurs when the controller delivers the punchline and forces the pilot to realize the unlimited scope of the posed question. The utterance delivered as the punchline differs from the expectations of the pilot.

Additionally, this conversation may be seen as prove that absence of laughter does not necessarily mean a failed attempt at humour. This relation is mentioned by Attardo (1994).

5.7 Externally humorous conversations

Conversations serious for the participants, but potentially humorous for an external observer.

5.7.1 External A

Externally humorous conversations core of which is better explained through the superiority theory of humour.

Conversation 6

AirFrance006: Ground, AIRFRANS006?

Ground (GND): AIRFRANS6, Kennedy?

AFR006: Yes, AIRFRANS006, gate 8 is becoming open.

GND: OK, when it becomes available, and looks like (you) get the chance to get in, we'll start bringing you that way. Otherwise, hold where you are for now.

...

Turkish Airline (TK)1: Ground, TURKISH1.

Ground (GND): TURKISH1, Kennedy.

TK1: We are clear to gate now.

GND: OK, what gate are you going to?

TK1: 1-0.

GND: OK, (...) from where I stand... Looks like there is an airplane on gate 10. So I don't think (the) two of you are gonna sit there.

...

AFR006: Ground, AIRFRANS006 SUPER, gate 8 is available for us.

GND: No it's not. They lied to ya. So, just hold there. I'll call you when it's available. I don't need you to tell me what I can see and you can't.

AFR006: Okaaay.

Funny ATC: Air France, I don't need you to tell me what I can see! (H89SA, 2014)

Technical circumstances:

The controller communicates with the pilots about the possible availability of their respective gates.

Humorous scheme:

These conversations do not seem to be considered humorous by the participants themselves but might be seen as such by an external observer; thus, the humour is described from such a point of view. The conversation should be observed as a whole.

In the first part, the pilot (AFR006) suggests the state of the gate and is ‘calmly’ denied by the Ground.

In the second part, a different pilot (TH1) gives a similar suggestion and is, again, denied, this time, however, a slightly more expressively.

In the final part, the first pilot (AFR006) gives the same suggestion and this time receives a rather expressive denial. Recognizing the manner of the answer, the pilot simply affirms.

This instance of humour cannot be explained via exploitation of an alternative (hidden) meaning of an utterance; it is discussed below using the appropriate theories of humour. Possibly the only recognizable element is the controller’s last utterance in the role of a ‘punch-line’ (see below).

Cooperative Principle perspective:

The most notable transgression of CP is the flouting of the Maxim of Quantity by the controller in order to communicate to the pilots that it is not necessary for them to provide such suggestions and that they will be informed at the right moment. The extent of the transgression seems to increase over the course of the conversation and even appears to include possible flouting of the Maxim of Quality in the last part as the controller seems to use (unlikely) exaggeration to emphasize the message. From the controller’s point of view the pilots’ messages may seem to be flouting the Maxim of Relevance as it is his job to monitor the traffic and he should be the one informing them. The pilots are possibly trying to accelerate the process by the flouting of Relevance. And because the pilots’ messages also seem untrue, they can be considered infringing of the Maxim of Quality as the pilots believe it to be true, while the controller claims the opposite.

Theory of humour:

That such conversation might be perceived as humorous by an external observer is best explained through the combination of superiority and incongruity theories of humour; as stated in the introduction, these are compatible. There are signs of slight aggression, and superiority, in the utterances (especially the last one) towards the pilots. The extent of this radically increases in the last message and appears possibly surprisingly for an observer. This is the reason why the controller's last message might be considered 'a punch-line'. This is the core of the humour in this conversation. Additionally, as there is no intention to amuse expressed by the participants, it would not make sense to judge the success or failure of the humour.

Conversation 7

Ground (GND): AEROFLOT102, hold your position, gate 4 is not accessible.

AeroFLot102: Arr... Gate 4 is not accessible. Arr... Holding position, AEROFLOT102.

...

AFL102: AEROFLOT102, our gate 4 is available.

GND: Thank you, very good! If you can get under, over or around the LUFTHANSA A340 between you and gate 4, you tell me about it!

AFL102: OK.

Funny ATC: Air France, I don't need you to tell me what I can see! (H89SA, 2014)

Technical circumstances:

The controller is informing the pilot about the availability of the gate they want to approach.

Humorous scheme:

Very similarly to Conversation 6, this conversation does not seem to be perceived as humorous by its participants, only by an external observer.

The pilot is warned about the inaccessibility of the gate and confirms that. Next, however, the pilot claims the gate is available which is perceived by the controller, who is aware of the gate's state already, as unnecessary and also not true. The controller describes this in the response to which, again, only a simple affirmation is provided by the pilot. Similarly to Conversation 6, there are no alternative meanings in the conversation exploited. Still the controller's message might be perceived as 'the punch-line'. The core of this conversation's humour is discussed below.

Cooperative Principle perspective:

The conversation features a rather sudden and significant flouting of the Maxims of Quantity in the controller's last message ('the punch-line'). It is utilized to convey the meaning of the pilot's messages being rather unnecessary and in the case of the last one also false, which implies the presence of infringing of the Maxim of Quality from the

pilot (the pilot believes it to be true). On the other hand, the controller flouts the Maxim of Quality by being insincere in his message: he is not really 'thanking' the pilot, nor does he wish the pilot to 'tell him about it'. From the controller's point of view the pilot's messages might be viewed as flouting the Maxim of Relevance as likely the controller should be informing them and not vice versa; again, it may be seen as an attempt by the pilot to accelerate the process. The pilot is considered to be aware of the standard procedures and thus not infringing the Relevance.

Theory of humour:

Similarly to Conversation 6, the perception of this conversation as humorous by an external observer can be explained through the superiority and incongruity theories. Again, there is a sign of 'looking down', or slight annoyance (possibly aggression), from the side of the controller and it appears quite surprisingly following a rather calm previous message. Thus, the controller's message may function as 'a punch-line'. The success or failure are not to be judged here either as there is no intention to amuse present in the conversation.

Conversation 8

EgyptAir (MSR) 986: Kennedy ground, EGYPT AIR986.

Ground (GND): EGYPT AIR986 HEAVY, Kennedy ground?

MSR986: Go ahead, EGYPT AIR986.

GND: You're calling me, sir!

MSR986: Yes, affirmative. Arrr... Hold short taxiway ALPHA.

GND: Okay, say request?

Funny ATC: Egypt Air pilot trolling an Air Traffic Controller (H89SA, 2014)

Technical circumstances:

The conversation features an initialization of communication between an aircraft and ground.

Humorous scheme:

A conversation only humorous to external observers; the participants struggle to successfully communicate. Similarly to Conversation 9, there appears to be no single, clear punchline suddenly inducing amusement, rather as the conversation unravels, it becomes gradually more humorous. More information about the essence of the conversation's humour below.

Cooperative Principle perspective:

The conversation features infringing of the Maxims of Relevance and Manner from the side of the pilot whose messages start to be irrelevant from his second response and his communication seems slightly disorderly and unclear. In this case, however, it does not seem connected to possible language incompetence, but rather to some momentary confusion or misunderstanding. It appears as if the pilot was not aware of the communication procedures, which seems unlikely and yet it appears even less likely that the pilot would do it on purpose. It is not possible to determine the real cause of the infringing.

Theory of humour:

The conversation's humour can be explained through the incongruity and superiority theories similarly to Conversation 10. The incongruity again stems from the participants'

inability to communicate successfully and similarly, the feeling of superiority might be the result of witnessing such unsuccessful conversation. However, compared to Conversation 10, there might also be a slight sign of irritation sensed from the controller, supporting the superiority theory slightly more.

The closest utterance to a punchline is again the last, but compared to Conversation 10, it only seems to express that there was no successful communication between the participants achieved yet and thus it may strengthen the feeling of superiority from witnessing such miscommunication even further. As it amplifies the image of a failed conversation it also amplifies the feeling of incongruity stemming from the very occurrence of such conversation in ATC discourse.

Conversation 9

Ground (GND): AEROFLOT102 HEAVY, is your gate available?

AeroFLot102: Err... Stop before MIKE-ALPHA, AEROFLOT102.

GND: I'm... Really very much aware that you'll stop before MIKE-ALPHA, so... Is your gate available?

AFL102: We are wait gate, AEROFLOT102.

GND: Ok, so the answer to that is NO? Your gate is not available?

AFL102: It's now available AEROFLOT102.

GND: NOW available?

AFL102: Now available, AEROFLOT102, we're taking to the ramp.

GND: SPLENDID!

FUNNY ATC: LEVITATING AIRBUS & RAMP NEGOTIATIONS!!! (H89SA, 2015)

Technical circumstances:

The whole conversation revolves around the ground requesting information on the state of the aircraft's assigned gate.

Humorous scheme:

The conversation revolves around the two participants who appear to be struggling in understanding each other. There is not really a single punchline suddenly inducing amusement in the observer, but the last line would be the closest to it. The conversation appears as more and more humorous as it unravels. Further description below.

Cooperative Principle perspective:

This conversation can possibly be described as featuring infringing of a maxim in its core. The pilot infringes the Maxim of Relevance in their first message as it does not answer the posed question; the transgression of the maxim does not appear to be purposeful and it seems from the rest of the conversation it might be possibly caused by imperfections in the pilot's language abilities as English is likely not their second language. The conversation is essentially a process of negotiation, where both participants try to understand each other. In the second half of the conversation, infringing of the Maxim of

Manner possibly occurs when the words 'no' and 'now' seem to blend considering the pronunciation.

Theory of humour:

Why the conversation is perceived as humorous can be explained through the incongruity and superiority theories. The incongruity comes from the inability of the speakers to understand each other and thus essentially each message becoming incongruous with the expected possible course of the conversation. The whole reality of misunderstanding might appear incongruous in the context of the ATC discourse. There might also be a trace of superiority sensed as the controller seems to be the one in charge of the situation.

The above-mentioned 'punchline' seems to close the conversation well and can be seen as a strongly incongruous element which expresses strongly positive feelings coming from the controller, instead of expressing possibly imaginable irritation from an unsuccessful communication.

It is necessary to distinguish between two levels of superiority: we can either consider humorous the controller's superiority (he is in control of the situation), or we can be amused by our own feeling off superiority over someone who is unable to communicate successfully or does not seem completely in control (or even incompetent). The first interpretation might mark the conversation more as being explainable by the incongruity theory.

5.7.2 External B

Externally humorous conversations the core of which is better explained through the incongruity theory of humour.

Conversation 10

DeltaAirLines302: GROUND... GROUND, DELTA302, ramp is telling us our gate is full for a few minutes. Do you want us... Is there any place for us to hold?

Ground (GND): Well, my first choice would be ATLANTA, sir. But that's probably (not enough fuel) for that. Where do they eventually want you to go in?

DAL302: They want us to go in through MIKE, and MIKE only. Those are his words.

GND: MIKE and MIKE only. Oh this is definitive. Alright, DELTA302, ALPHA, LIMA, BRAVO, on BRAVO short of MIKE.

DAL302: ALPHA, LIMA, BRAVO, BRAVO short of MIKE, DELTA302, thanks.

KENNEDY STEVE: THE LAST ONE! (H89SA, 2017)

Technical circumstances:

After receiving information from the ramp about the state of their gate, the pilot is communicating with the controller about further action. Specifically, the pilot is asking if there is “any place for us to hold”, which most likely means the aircraft is approaching the airport because as described, for example, in *What Every Pilot Should Know About Holding*, holding essentially refers to a situation when an aircraft ‘has to wait’ in the airspace around an airport before landing.

Humorous scheme:

The pilot poses a genuine question requiring certain information; the controller understands the question: the pilot wants to know if there is a place for them, where they could possibly safely await further instructions for landing. However, the controller decides to exploit the question for location and ignores its ties to the local airport and mentions Atlanta as a possibility, although not available at the moment. Along with this suggestion, the controller asks for more details about the ramp message. Normally, the

success of the attempt at humour would be doubted as there was no real reaction to the remark from the side of the pilot, but in this case, it is questionable if this really was an attempt at humour; the controller did not seem to await any reaction, but rather immediately continued with the solution of the problem. The remark might thus seem as more of a slight sigh over the probably very busy situation at the airport than an attempt to amuse the recipient. And if there is no intention to amuse, the remark cannot be considered an attempt at humour and thus it would make no sense to judge its success. It seems the pilot also recognized the controller's remark in this manner. At the end of the conversation, the pilot politely thanks the controller for the help and thus also possibly expresses understanding for the busy and complicated situation.

Nevertheless, from the point of view of an external observer the conversation might still be perceived as humorous (see below) and viewed as the punchline as it might force the observer to backtrack to discover the liberated meaning of the question for the location.

Cooperative Principle perspective:

From the CP perspective, by suggesting Atlanta the controller flouts the Maxim of Relevance as it does not represent a valid suggestion at the moment. As described above, the aim of this remark might be to express how busy the situation at the airport is.

Theory of humour:

As stated above, the conversation might still be considered humorous from the point of view of an external observer. This can be explained through the incongruity theory as the controller's suggestion does not certainly represent the answer anyone might expect while listening or reading the conversation and is thus incongruous and functions as the punchline from the observer's point of view.

6. Conclusion

Ten humorous air traffic control conversations were analysed from different angles with the aim to find patterns in the occurrence of humour in those conversations, to describe this humour and to explain its very occurrence in discourse so strictly professional as the one at hand. Indeed, certain patterns and similarities were discovered and are presented here with regards to the different angles of analysis.

First, considering the content, or the core of the humour in the conversations, certain patterns were discovered and according to these the conversations were classified. One major group consisted of conversations where the participants (i.e. the pilots and the controllers) expressed the intention to amuse their communication partners and the conversations generally seemed quite positively natured; these conversations were marked as ‘internally humorous.’ Within this group, further division was established between those where the humour was based solely on the immediate language of the conversation, or the co-text, and did not introduce any elements requiring knowledge from different fields, Internal A, and those where a potential risk was taken by one of the participants by introducing such external element, relying on shared knowledge of the outside world, Internal B. The second large group consisted of conversations where there was no apparent intention to amuse expressed by any of the participants. These were marked as ‘externally humorous’ because an external observer might still find these conversations humorous. They were divided into groups based on the theory of humour best explaining them: the superiority based, External A, (the inability to communicate successfully, or even slight hints of irritation by some of the participants, considered humours by an observer) and the incongruity based, External B, (use of surprise elements without the intention to amuse).

With regards to the theories of humour, it is important to note that large group of the conversations above, specifically all the conversation considered ‘internally humorous’, along with conversations 9 and 10 from the group of ‘externally humorous’, can be approached from the perspective of the release theory of humour which describes it as a tool for releasing tensions and lightening potentially stressful situations. This being quite apparent in the ‘internally humorous’ conversations, but maybe less so in conversations 9 and 10. In conversation 9, the controller uses the incongruously strong

last line, likely to appreciate that the communication ended successfully and express that everything is all right and thus releasing potential tensions. In conversation 10, the controller uses rather incongruous response possibly trying to lighten the situation with heavier traffic at the airport. In an environment where such as aviation, the function of humour as a tool for releasing tensions should not be underestimated.

From the perspective of the Cooperative Principle, essentially any deviation from the prescribed phraseology and the necessary (strictly regulated) use of 'plain' language, might be considered transgression of the Maxim of Relevance, Quantity, or Manner depending on the point of view: any message exceeding the informational parameters is starting to be irrelevant, superfluous, and disorderly. Additionally, when a turn is skipped, transgression of Manner occurs.

It is the Maxim of Relevance often causing the humorous situations above, whether 'internal' or 'external'. On the other hand, the Maxim of Quantity seems to often function as means to express appreciation of the other participant of the conversation. Maxim of Manner seems to be more related to the 'externally' humorous conversations as its infringing may be the cause of a conversational failure (does not seem to be transgressed in other ways often). Similarly, infringing seems to be the usual manner of transgression of the Maxim of Quality and in such situation, again, it is liable to cause imperfect communication between the participants.

Regarding the humorous scheme of the joke, it is apparent that the adapted version of Attardo's scheme discussed in chapter 3.1.2 can only be applied in certain cases and the only omnipresent element seems to be the punchline. This element might appear in various forms but seems to be identifiable to a certain extent in all the conversations (except for Conversation 8) and its position seems to have been proved to be in the final turns of each humour instance.

The answer to the question of how it is possible that humour occurs in such a professional discourse seems to be the controlled deviation from the strict aviation phraseology in situations where the risk seems to range from small to none. Attempts at humour may occur for various reasons, a major one being (as seen above) to create more relaxed atmosphere in the conversation, which is in harmony with the release theory of humour. Thus, for the purposes of the present thesis, conversations where humour is only

evoked in an external observer as a result of the conversation's uncontrolled deviation from the standard phraseology leading to mis- or failed communication (does not necessarily include conversation 9 and 10) are not of prime interest. It is the conversations where through witty use of language within the borderlines of safety humour and mutual appreciation are achieved and where the subject of humour in ATC can be well examined. One of the observable aspects of such conversations is that the 'humourist', provides all the necessary information immediately after the attempt at humour (even in conversation 2, response C, the information was delivered immediately after the recipient's reaction). It is apparent now that the occurrence of humour is tied to the professionalism of the discourse participants: it requires very good overview of the situation and confidence in one's ability to be able to successfully attempt humour while avoiding possible negative effects of miscommunication and remaining well within the safety of a situation and only utilizing the positive aspects of humour.

To support the argument of the person's influence, it should now be noted that the majority of the conversations (1, 2+bc, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10 and possibly 8) involve the same person in the role of an ATC; his community nickname is 'Kennedy Steve' as he used to work at the airport of the same name. He seems to be generally praised by the community listening to the recording of ATC conversations for his communicational abilities and sense of humour; he was awarded the Dale Wright Award for his great service (Lin, 2020). The conversations 6 and 7 likely involve different ATCs and seem to support the approach to the ATC's abilities and personality as crucial factors when humour is considered.

Rozšířený abstrakt

Humor a smích jsou v mezilidské komunikaci takřka všudypřítomné a jejich výskyt není vyloučen ani v komunikaci tak striktně pracovní jako je řízení letového provozu (ATC). Tato práce zkoumá humorné situace právě v tomto prostředí, snaží se zodpovědět otázku možnosti jejich výskytu a hledá mezi situacemi spojitosti.

Práce je rozdělena na dvě hlavní části: teoretickou a praktickou. Teoretická část se dále skládá z kapitol věnovaných humoru (jeho teoriím a variantám), Griceovu (1975) kooperačnímu principu (KP), jeho maximám a jazyku ATC. Praktická část se skládá z analýz deseti vybraných humorných konverzací z prostředí ATC.

Na začátek je v obecné rovině představen humor a problematika jeho definice (Attardo, 1994), která však není předmětem této práce; konverzace analyzované v pozdější části práce jsou od začátku považovány za humorné. Jsou popsány tři hlavní teorie humoru: teorie inkongruence, superiority a relaxace (Raskin, 1985). Teorie inkongruence popisuje jako humornou situaci, kde dojde ke konfliktu mezi očekáváním a skutečností. Teorie superiority tvrdí, že humor vychází z pozice nadřazenosti na někým. Teorie relaxace přisuzuje humoru schopnost uvolnit atmosféru dané situace a funguje tak jako prostředek uvolnění. Rozdělení humorných jevů je částečně převzato od Attarda (1994): vtipy a konverzační humor. Vtipy představují ucelené krátké texty, které se většinou neváží pevně na kontext situace, kdy jsou např. vyprávěny. Konverzační humor naopak vychází přímo z kontextu dané situace. Jsou doplněny situace ‚externě humorné‘, které nejsou zábavné pro účastníky dané konverzace (může se jednat o konfliktní situaci), ale mohou se tak zdát pro nezaujatého pozorovatele např. na základě teorie superiority.

Dále je detailně představen Griceův kooperační princip s jeho maximy; ten popisuje konverzaci jako společné úsilí jejích účastníků a ony maximy představují základní očekávání, které mají účastníci jeden od druhého. Při jejich splnění dochází k jasné doslovné komunikaci. Práce důkladně popisuje způsoby nenaplnění těchto maxim, které mohou generovat ‚konverzační implikaturu‘, neboli ‚význam mezi řádky‘. Důraz je kladen na porušování (flouting), popírání/negaci (violation) a nedodržení (infringing). Porušování označuje nenaplnění maximy zřejmým způsobem (aby to bylo vnímáno) s cílem vytvoření implikatury. Popírání, nebo také negace, naopak značí nenaplnění maximy bez vědomí jiných účastníků konverzace (např. lhaní). K nedodržení

dochází při neúmyslném nenaplnění maximy (bez záměru vytvořit implikaturu) z důvodu např. nedokonalé znalosti jazyka. Čtyři maximy představeny Gricem jsou: maxima kvality, kvantity, relevance a způsobu. Maxima kvantity se vztahuje k množství vyjádřených informací; nemělo by jich být menší ani větší množství, než je v dané situaci vhodné. Maxima kvality se vztahuje k pravdivosti tvrzení: neříkat co považujeme za nepravdu, nebo pro co nemáme dostatečné důkazy. Maxima relevance se říká, že zpráva má být relevantní. Maxima způsobu, se vztahuje k podobě komunikované zprávy. Ta by měla být uspořádaná, podávat informaci jasně a měla by se vyhnout nejednoznačnosti vyjádření.

Práce se snaží o uvedení celé problematiky do souvislosti s humorem a jeho výskytem a často se tedy objevují i praktické příklady z oblasti humoru. Ve spojitosti s humorem a nenaplněním maxim je adoptováno i schéma chápání vtipu (Attardo, 1990), které je přizpůsobeno konverzačnímu humoru, kde humorné vyústění není založeno na popření KP (podvodu), ale na jeho porušení. Příjemce objeví skrytý význam zprávy, jehož si její autor vůbec nemusel být vědom. Příjemce pak poukáže na onen význam, což představuje prvek pointy. Autor zprávy následně hledá význam korespondující s pointou.

Následuje představení i samotného jazyka řízení letového provozu: velmi striktní profesní diskurz, který ve své komunikaci využívají účastníci letového provozu (např. piloti a řídicí letového provozu). Existují zde předepsané výrazy (frazologie), které jsou standardizovány mezinárodními organizacemi, jako je ICAO. Snahou je připravenost na rutinní i neplánované situace, avšak vzhledem k nemožnosti přípravy na vše, je možné co nejjasnějším způsobem použít i každodenní jazyk (ICAO, 2007).

Analyzované konverzace jsou převzaty z YouTube (H89SA) a jsou vybrány s cílem pokrýt co nejvíce různých typů humorných situací. Každá analýza se skládá ze čtyř částí: technické okolnosti, schéma humoru, Perspektiva KP a teorie humoru. Technické okolnosti popisují jednoduše dané zasazení konverzace z pohledu letectví. Schéma humoru se opírá o výše adaptované schéma chápání vtipu a popisuje děj humorných situací (hledá prvek pointy). V sekci ‚Perspektiva KP‘ dochází k popisu situace v souvislosti s nenaplněním maxim KP. Část teorie humoru přiřazuje k dané

situaci teorie humoru (v podstatě vždy více z nich), které humornost situace vysvětlují nejlépe a v konverzaci jsou identifikovány indikátory dané teorie.

Na základě společných znaků jsou konverzace rozděleny do dvou větších skupin: interně zábavné a externě zábavné. Interně zábavné: někdo z účastníků (nebo více z nich) projeví snahu pobavit ostatní, dále rozdělena na Interní A, kde je humor založen čistě na okamžité komunikaci a nevyžaduje další sdílenou znalost vnějšího světa, a na Interní B, kde je tato sdílená znalost součástí podstaty humoru. Externě zábavné konverzace jsou potenciálně humorné pouze pro nezaujatého pozorovatele a neobjevuje se zde snaha někoho z účastníků pobavit ostatní. Může se jednat o situace kde se účastníkům nedaří úspěšně komunikovat, nebo situace náročné (např. při velkém provozu na letišti). Tato skupina se dále dělí na Externí A, jejichž humorná podstata je nejlépe vysvětlena pomocí teorie superiority (smějeme se neúspěchu ostatních), a Externí B, kde tuto funkci splňuje teorie inkongruence (v konverzaci se objevuje prvek překvapení bez účelu pobavení).

Pro práci jsou důležité konverzace interně humorné, nebo alespoň nevykazující znaky nepříjemnosti pro účastníky. Tyto konverzace fungují také v souladu s teorií relaxace: humor v nich tedy funguje jako prostředek uvolnění atmosféry.

Z pohledu KP je možné říci, že jakýkoliv odklon od předepsané frazeologie a nutného (striktně regulovaného) použití každodenního jazyky lze považovat za nenaplnění maxim relevance, kvantity a způsobu (dle úhlu pohledu). Právě maxima relevance často vyvolává humorné situace a maxima kvantity funguje jako prostředek k ocenění pokusu o humor. Nedodržení maxim kvality a způsobu je více spojeno s neúspěšnou komunikací pozorovatelnou u některých externě humorných konverzací.

Dále bylo prokázáno, že prvek pointy lze identifikovat ve většině humorných konverzací nehledě na zdroj humoru a jeho pozice je v posledních kolech konverzace.

Možnost výskytu humoru ve zkoumaném prostředí lze přičíst schopnostem a povaze účastníků konverzací. Humor se objevuje pouze v situacích, kde je míra rizika minimální, a naopak může být prospěšný, protože uvolňuje napětí účastníků. Potvrzením důležitosti jednotlivce je přítomnost jednoho konkrétního řídicího letového provozu ve všech kromě 2 analyzovaných konverzací, kde právě tyto dvě konverzace působí nejvypjatějším dojmem.

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