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Transylvanian ethnic humour. A linguistic perspective

SUMMARY

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Table of contents

	Pg. Ab.	Pg. th.
List of tables and figures	-	9
Abstract (Romanian)	-	10
Abstract (English)	-	12
Acknowledgments	-	14
Introduction	8	19
Chapter 1. Ethnic humour - a linguistic perspective	14	25
1. What is humour?.....	-	25
2. Ethnic - a definition of the concept	-	28
3. Theories applied to (ethnic) humour	-	29
3.1 Non-linguistic theories of humour.....	-	31
3.1.1 Superiority Theory	-	32
3.1.2 Incongruity Theory	-	32
3.1.3 Relief Theory	-	34
3.2 Linguistic theories of humour.....	-	35
3.2.1 Script-based Semantic Theory of Humour (SSTH)	-	35
3.2.2 General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH)	-	40
3.2.3 Ontological Semantic Theory of Humour (OSTH)	-	42
3.3 Pragmatic theories	-	43
3.3.1 Relevance Theory and Humour	-	44
3.3.2 Incongruity Theory from a cognitive pragmatic perspective	-	48
3.3.3 Intersecting Circles Model (ICM)	-	51
4. Conclusions	-	52
Chapter 2. Ethnic humour research in (Eastern) Europe	15	54
1. An overview	-	54
2. Estonia and Belarus	-	57
3. Poland	-	58
4. Bulgaria	-	59
5. North Macedonia.....	-	60
6. Romania	-	62
7. Conclusions	-	67
Chapter 3. Methodological considerations	17	69
1. Fundamental concepts in the study of ethnic humour	-	69
1.1 The ethnic phenomenon (ethnicity, ethnic group and ethnic identity)	-	69
1.2 Central group/dominant group/us vs peripheral group/dominated group/others vs target group	-	74

1.3 The ethnic script/stereotype	-	75
2. Ethnic jokes	-	78
3. Research questions	-	83
4. Corpus	-	84
5. Analytical aspects	-	85
Chapter 4. Ethnic scripts in the Transylvanian humorous discourse. <i>Gypsy jokes</i>	21	91
1. Roma - Demographic, historical and sociocultural aspects	-	91
2. Gypsy jokes	-	99
2.1 (Lack of) education.....	-	100
2.2 Dishonesty: theft, begging, lying, general dishonesty	-	104
2.2.1 Theft.....	-	105
2.2.2 Begging	-	108
2.2.3 Lying	-	109
2.2.4 General dishonesty	-	110
2.3 Stupidity	-	111
2.4 Dirt	-	114
2.5 Large family: the unwanted child	-	115
2.6 Physical appearance: black as a stereotype	-	117
2.7 Gypsies' rights	-	118
2.8 Metal obsession	-	120
2.9 Poverty	-	121
2.10 Non-poor: the rich	-	123
2.11 Violence	-	124
2.12 Discrimination/racism	-	125
2.13 Similarities	-	127
2.14 Language	-	129
3. Conclusions	-	131
Chapter 5. Ethnic scripts in the Transylvanian humorous discourse. Jokes with Hungarians/Magyars/ Szeklers and Romanians	24	135
1. The Hungarians/Magyars/Szeklers - demographic, historical and sociocultural aspects	-	135
2. Jokes with Hungarians/Magyars/Szeklers and Romanians	-	140
2.1 The History of Transylvania	-	141
2.1.1 From a Romanian perspective.....	-	142
2.1.1 From a Hungarian perspective	-	146
2.2 The Autonomy of Szeklerland	-	153
2.2.1 From a Romanian perspective	-	154
2.2.2 From a Hungarian perspective	-	155
2.3 Aggression and discrimination	-	157



2.3.1 From a Romanian perspective	-	157
2.3.1.1 Without a political dimension	-	157
2.3.1.2 With a political dimension	-	162
2.3.2 From a Hungarian perspective	-	163
2.3.2.1 Without a political dimension	-	163
2.3.2.2 With a political dimension	-	165
2.4 Ethnic and state affiliation	-	166
2.4.1 From a Romanian perspective	-	167
2.4.2 From a Hungarian perspective	-	171
2.5 Language use	-	172
2.5.1 From a Romanian perspective.....	-	173
2.5.2 From a Hungarian perspective	-	177
2.6 Hungarian-Romanian friendship	-	181
2.6.1 From a Romanian perspective.....	-	181
2.6.2 From a Hungarian perspective	-	183
2.7 Gastronomy	-	184
2.7.1 From a Romanian perspective.....	-	184
2.7.2 From a Hungarian perspective	-	184
2.8 Other topics	-	185
2.8.1 Politics: from a Romanian perspective.....	-	185
2.8.2 Insults: from a Romanian perspective	-	186
3. Conclusions	-	186
Chapter 6. Interethnic jokes: reflecting interethnic relations in jokes	26	189
1. The case of <i>Gypsy</i> jokes.....	26	189
1.1 How is the Roma minority called in jokes?.....	27	190
1.2 Interethnic relations in <i>Gypsy</i> jokes	28	195
1.2.1 By explicit interpretation, portrayal by ethnonym	-	196
1.2.2 By explicit interpretation supported by the ICM: utterance interpretation	-	197
1.2.2.1 By lexical information	-	197
1.2.2.2 By grammatical information	-	198
1.2.3 By implicit interpretation	-	199
2. The case of jokes with <i>Hungarian/Magyar/Szekler</i> and <i>Romanian</i>	30	201
2.1 How is the Hungarian minority called in jokes?.....	30	201
2.2 Interethnic relations in jokes with Hungarians/Magyars/Szeklers and Romanians	30	201
2.2.1 By explicit interpretation, portrayal by ethnonym	-	202
2.2.2 By explicit interpretation supported by the ICM: utterance interpretation	-	202
2.2.2.1 By lexical information	-	203
2.2.2.2 By grammatical information	-	204
2.2.3 By implicit interpretation	-	204

2.2.3.1 By implicit interpretation, portrayal by ethnonym	-	204
2.2.3.2 By using proper names	-	205
2.2.3.3 Implicit: decoding by accessing information that is part of the cultural frame	-	206
3. Shared themes/stereotypes in <i>Gypsy, Hungarian/Magyar/Szekler</i> and <i>Romanian</i> jokes	33	208
4. Conclusions	-	214
Final considerations	35	216
1. Themes and stereotypes in ethnic jokes	36	217
2. The cultural frame in Transylvanian ethnic jokes	38	219
3. A pragmatic view on stereotypes	40	221
4. Perspectives on terminology	41	223
5. Limitations and future prospects for analysis	42	224
Bibliography	43	225
Appendix 1. Corpus (1) <i>Gypsy</i> jokes	-	240
Appendix 2. Corpus (2) Jokes with <i>Hungarians/Magyars/ Szeklers</i> and <i>Romanians</i>	-	258
Appendix 3. ICM in <i>Gypsy</i> jokes	-	285
Appendix 4. ICM in Jokes with <i>Hungarians/Magyars/ Szeklers</i> and <i>Romanians</i>	-	288
List of publications	-	291
List of conferences	-	292
Originality declaration		



*Now is the perfect time to analyse post-socialist jokelore in Eastern and Central Europe
and to compare the results to the jokes of the well-established democracies
of Western Europe (Laineste 2009, 31).¹*

¹ Although it is an idea launched more than a decade ago, because Romanian ethnic humour has been the focus of not too many researches, I believe that this quote reveals the niche that this thesis has found in mapping Romanian ethnic humour and illustrating its specificity.

INTRODUCTION

Ethnic humour. Ethnic humour is a worldwide phenomenon. Research into it has also become popular since the 1970s and 1980s, in the 20th century, and the phenomenon has been investigated from different perspectives.

The study of ethnic humour in Romania is a domain that is vaguely addressed by linguistic research, at least from a quantitative perspective. Popescu (2011) analysed Romanian ethnic jokes popularised on the Internet from the perspective of the targets (Hungarians and Roma) and the most common ethnic scripts associated with them (see Chapter 2, Section 6). Rus (2022) approached ethnic humour from a psycho-sociolinguistic, dialectal and ethnographic perspective, as reflected in elements that constitute the "cultural heritage of the people who live in villages"² (Rus 2022, 13) such as shouts, lamentation songs, wedding poems, etc. (see Chapter 2, section 6). Except for these works, the Romanian literature lacks approaches that directly address ethnic humour.

Transylvania. Transylvania is a region of Romania, recognized for its heterogeneous cultural heritage due to the autochthonous substratum that contains influences brought by the ethnic minorities living in the area.

In a broad sense, Transylvania is located in the central and northwestern part of Romania. It was the core of Dacia in the 1st and 2nd centuries. It was reached by Hungarian conquerors and then became part of the Kingdom of Hungary (1000). The birth of the Principality of Transylvania took place as part of the Kingdom of Eastern Hungary. In the 16th-17th centuries, it was a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire, but had dual suzerainty - Ottoman and Habsburg after 1690, when the Habsburgs took possession of Transylvania through the Hungarian crown. The consolidation of Habsburg control began in 1711 with the dispatch of imperial governors. In 1867, Transylvania became part of the Kingdom of Hungary within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. After the First World War, in 1918, Transylvania was united with Moldova and Wallachia to form Greater Romania. In 1940, northern Transylvania was ceded to Hungary, but Romania reclaimed it at the end of World War II. So, Transylvania's status has been uncertain, and the 20th century has brought many changes that have been hard for Hungarians on the one hand and Romanians on the other.

From the 12th century onwards, the Szeklers and Saxons are mentioned in history as groups of people who were sent by Andrew II of Hungary to defend the borders. Between 1437 and 1848, political power was divided between the (mostly) Hungarian nobility, the German bourgeoisie and the Saxons with military responsibilities. The Transylvanians (Romanians (majority) + Szeklers/Hungarians + Saxons) lived together in good relations for many years. Even for Romanians living in Transylvania, the migration that started in the mid-20th century from other parts of Romania was unexpected.

The interethnic conflicts present at both local and national levels, intensively promoted by the media, are (often) generated by those people who have not understood the essence of living together

² *patrimoniul cultural al oamenilor de la sat* (Rus 2022, 13).

for a long time in this multi-ethnic region. In general, conflicts break out not because of those Romanians, Hungarians or Roma who are natives of the region, but under the pressure of newcomers and those living outside the region (in Hungary or in other parts of Romania).

The name Transylvania, today, has two meanings:

1. Transylvania in a narrow sense, designating the intra-Carpathian region of Romania;
2. Transylvania in the broad sense, which adds the intracarpathian area, the regions of Maramureş, Crişana, Sătmar and even Banat.



Image 1 - Transylvania in the narrow sense³



Image 2 - Transylvania in the broad sense⁴

Why a study of (ethnic) humour in Transylvania? As mentioned above, ethnic jokes have been treated in the Romanian space in the research of Popescu (2011) and Rus (2022), but the specificity of Transylvania brings new perspectives worth considering. Transylvania is the ethnically richest region of Romania. Demographic data from the last census (see Chapter 4) show that Hungarians and Roma are the most numerous ethnic groups in this region. Apart from this, the largest number of Hungarians and Roma live in this region, in relation to the total number of persons belonging to the two national minorities in Romania. With this argument in mind, I have chosen to analyse the jokes that portray the *Hungarian/Magyar/Szekler* and⁵ the *Gypsy*⁶.

Transylvania can be described as “a blurred boundary, an area of ethnic ambiguity far from the dominant centre, whose people provide a ready-made butt for ethnic jokes” (Davies 1990, 313) (see, for example, the jokes with “ardeleni”⁷). However, my analysis focuses on jokes that are in circulation within this region. Davies considers that the targets of ethnic jokes usually live on the “geographical periphery of the nation” (1990, 310), which is not confirmed in this particular case. It is not the geographical distance that is the core of ethnic jokes, but differences in “language, culture,

³ Source: <https://visit.transilvania-lands.ro/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/harta-transilvania-e1458232149953.jpg>, accessed at 2.03.2024.

⁴ Source: <https://enciclopediaromaniei.ro/wiki/Transilvania>, accessed at 2.03.2024.

⁵ Ro. ungar/maghiar/secui.

⁶ Ro. țigan.

⁷ Regional group designating people who live Transylvania.

behaviour, and values, but they are only told and can only be told because of basic similarities between all of them" (Davies 1990, 313).

Thus, the Transylvanian perspective is also given by the way I chose to collect the corpus. It was created in 2021 through a process of documentation as a source of knowledge of ethnic humour. I chose field⁸-based documentation mediated by forty collaborators⁹ who, in informal meetings, performed the ethnic jokes they knew. Subsequently, I was interested to find out whether these jokes are available online, in order to test whether the 200 ethnic jokes collected are also circulating in the virtual world.

The introductory quotation, selected as the motto of the paper, projects the niche of the research I undertook (which materialises in this PhD thesis), mirroring the vision of Eastern European researchers on the need to collect and analyse jokes circulating in former communist countries. The specificity of humour in these countries renders a broad approach to ethnically themed humour. Although European Union law prohibits discrimination of any kind, including ethnicity/minority group membership¹⁰, ethnic jokes are still reflections of stereotypical information associated with these groups and of the interethnic relations that are being built at a social level.

The characters in jokes are given ethnic names, often the process of naming is realised by using ethnonyms. Thus, the *Gypsy*, the *Hungarian* and the *Romanian* (as periphery), but also the *Magyar*, the *Szekler* and the *Romanian* (as centre) are the most appreciated characters of Transylvanian and Romanian ethnic humour. One can notice that *Hungarian* is the name given by *Romanians* in their jokes that target the Hungarian ethnic group (as a peripheral group), while this group self-identifies as *Magyar* or *Szekler* when the joke is told from its perspective (as a central group). *Romanian* is the only ethnonym used in both *Gypsy* and *Hungarian* jokes. The Roma ethnic group is reflected through the *Gypsy* character. Clarification on the use of ethnonyms is needed at the beginning of this paper. The *Gypsy* is the character of the joke, not the real/actual person/identity. Thus, all stereotypes associated with it are attributed to the character, not the social identity. Although sociological research (see chapter 4) shows that the ethnic minority group uses both the ethnonym Roma (considered endonym) and Gypsy (considered exonym¹¹), the present work is only related to the fictional character that exists in the fictional universe of the joke. The fictional nature of the character is given by the hyperbolization of the stereotypes that are associated with an ethnic/minority group in social reality. Therefore, the use of the term *Gypsy* does not attract a

⁸ This term should be understood as a cultural reality (see Ştiucă 2007), not just a spatial one, "defined by certain values, but also by certain social relations that the researcher must assume" (Ştiucă 2007, 18) (Ro. *definită de anumite valori, dar și de anumite relații sociale pe care cercetătorul trebuie să și le asume*).

⁹ Collaborators are source persons who performed ethnic jokes in the two meetings, passing the humorous information through their own knowledge filter. The choice of this term was favored by the terminology of ethnological field research (Ştiucă 2007).

¹⁰ Source: *EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, Article 21 - Non-discrimination*.

1. Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.

2. Within the scope of application of the Treaties and without prejudice to any of their specific provisions, any discrimination on grounds of nationality shall be prohibited.

<https://fra.europa.eu/en/eu-charter/article/21-non-discrimination>, accessed at 3.07.2024.

¹¹ The distinction is explained in Chapter 4.

pejorative (i.e., negative) meaning, but, on the contrary, enhances the humoristic effect of the joke. Therefore, the analysis does not draw any negative considerations on Roma ethnicity. In the paper, the use of ethnonyms with the meaning of the *character in the joke* is marked by *italics*.

In Europe, some ethnonyms commonly used to refer to the Roma are Eng. *Gypsy* and Esp. *gitaní*, due to the fact that the Roma were believed to have originated in Egypt. These people are also referred to as Gr. *athinganos*, *tsiganos*, Germ. *Zigeuner*, It. *zingari*, Hu. *cigányok*, Ro. *ţigani*' (Sandu 2018). In Romanian, the exonym used is the Greek/Byzantine word *ţigan*. Since 2010, when a polemic debate arose in the Romanian press on the official use of one of the ethnonyms - *rom* vs. *ţigan* - due to Silviu Prigoană's legislative proposal and the Romanian Academy's recommendation to accept the use of *Gypsy* instead of *rom*, numerous arguments were launched, especially by linguists who proved that the endonym *rom* is the correct one (see, for example, Zafiu 2009, but also Gheorghe Sarău and Delia Grigore in a letter to the Rector of the University of Bucharest, dated December 12, 2010).

The problem of (self-)identification through the use of one of the ethnonyms seems to be directly related to the use of Romani language. Due to marginalisation, discrimination, enslavement, persecution, deportations, exterminations and racist behaviour of which the Roma were victims, many Roma lost their mother tongue, which forced the use of the *Gypsy* exonym within the group as well. Moreover, from a semantic point of view, the Greek meaning of the exonym was *filthy* (Sandu 2018), assigning a social status to this ethnic group. Over time, this meaning was lost, with *Gypsy* becoming an accepted ethnonym. In Romania, the first to speak about the endonym *rom* was Mihail Kogălniceanu (1837), who identified it in Roma oral communication.

Researchers in the field note that ethnic jokes have culturally dependent elements. As I will illustrate, ethnic jokes do not only require sociocultural contextual information, but are a reflection of the sociocultural life in which we live and the interethnic relations in society. Therefore, the need to integrate social and cultural information, in particular, but also historical, ethnological, anthropological and/or political information has become essential for identifying, describing and analysing ethnic jokes in the Transylvanian space.

Thus, the analysis considers a general linguistic perspective. The broadest dimension is the pragmatic one, to which are added aspects related to morphology, phonetics, phonology, syntax and semantics, together with sociolinguistic, dialectal and discourse analysis aspects.

The first two chapters of the paper review the literature on humour in general (Chapter 1) and ethnic humour in particular (Chapter 2). Chapter 1 introduces discussions and perspectives on humour and its ethnic character. The problem of defining humour is dealt with in the first part of the chapter, followed by my own definition from a pragmatic perspective, which attempts to clarify the following dimensions: (1) sociocultural phenomenon, (2) humorous act, (3) humorous discourse, (4) humorous behaviour. By narrowing the domain, the chapter presents general perspectives on ethnic humour, ethnicity/ethnicity to be further explored in chapters 2 and 3. The chapter then follows a diachronic description of the theories of humour, starting from the ancient ideas that formed the basis of the study of humour (from Plato and Aristotle, Cicero, Theophrastus, Quintilian, Horace) and reaching the theories known and applied in analysis today. At this point, I introduce an overview of the theories of humour, based on the distinction between linguistic vs. non-linguistic theories. The

most important ideas outlined around superiority theory, incongruity theories and relief theory¹² are named (see section 3.1). In addition to these are the linguistic theories, the Script-based Semantic Theory of Humour (Raskin 1985), the General Theory of Verbal Humour (Attardo and Raskin 1991), the Ontological Semantic Theory of Humour (Raskin et al. 2010). The main pragmatic theories and models of analysis are highlighted in section 3.3. Relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995) has led to two models of analysis: the incongruence-resolution model (e.g., Suls 1972, 1977, 1983; Ritchie 1999, 2004, 2006, 2009; Dynel 2012a, 2012b; Yus 2016, 2023) and a model that considers the three dimensions found in jokes – *make-sense frame*, *cultural frame* and *utterance interpretation* – the Intersecting Circles Model (Yus 2013a, 2013b, 2016, 2023).

Chapter 2 discusses the main directions of analysis of ethnic humour. Starting with Christie Davies, the forerunner of ethnic humour research in the world, I present an overview of the phenomenon and how to analyse it (section 1). The focus then shifts to Eastern Europe. Thus, research from Estonia and Belarus (Laineste and Fiadotava 2017, Laineste 2005, in section 2), Poland (Brzozowska 2013, Brzozowska and Chłopicki 2019, Chłopicki and Brzozowska 2017, in section 3), Bulgaria (Genova 2014, in section 4), North Macedonia (Takovski 2015, 2018, in section 5) is described and the conclusions reached are discussed. Section 6 of the chapter presents research on (ethnic) humour in Romania.

Chapter 3 presents general aspects of the corpus, objectives and methodological vision, but not before reviewing and contextualising the field-specific terminology.

The corpus of 200 jokes, organised according to the main theme, is presented in full in Appendix 1 (100 *Gypsy* jokes¹³) and Appendix 2 (100 *Hungarian* jokes)¹⁴. Thus, the code that makes up the source of the jokes quoted in the paper reads as follows: I = Appendix 1/II = Appendix 2; first digit = the theme within which it falls; digit after the point = the number of the joke within the theme. In the case of *Hungarian/Magyar/Szekler* jokes, the second digit is 1 (Romanian perspective) or 2 (Hungarian perspective), and the third digit is the number of the joke within a thematic sphere. Each joke in the appendices also presents a website source, where I identified the joke in the closest variant to the one performed in the informal sessions.

The main objectives of the paper are:

- To identify the main themes and associated stereotypes in ethnic jokes portraying *Gypsies, Hungarians/Magyars/Szeklers* and *Romanians*.
- To illustrate the interethnic character of Transylvanian ethnic jokes.
- To identify the linguistic and extralinguistic mechanisms underlying Transylvanian ethnic jokes.

These are formulated in Chapter 3, section 4, as research questions, with questions subordinate to each main objective.

The direction stated in the title is linguistic, predominantly pragmatic (cognitive and sociocultural). The main method of analysis is the Intersecting Circles Model (SCM) (Yus 2013a, 2013b, 2016, 2023), the chosen model paying particular attention to all aspects targeted by humorous texts that have an ethnic dimension. Beyond this, the paper integrates operational

¹² Sometimes called the Tension Release Theory.

¹³ Meaning jokes with *Gypsies* or jokes with *Hungarians/Magyars/Szeklers* and *Romanians*.

¹⁴ The order is determined by the moment when these jokes were collected: (1) May 2021 – *Gypsy* jokes (Chapter 4 and Appendix 1 is about these jokes) and (2) June 2021 – *Hungarian* jokes (Chapter 5 and Appendix 2 is about these jokes).

concepts of the main theories of (ethnic) humour. Qualitatively, the main ideas are related to (1) identifying themes/stereotypes and to what extent they are supported by sociological studies, (2) identifying thematic combinations, (3) reflecting interethnic relations in jokes on a formal/linguistic level, (4) mirroring the use of ethnonyms, (5) identifying strategies used to identify the centre and the periphery in humorous text, (6) identifying the importance of the cultural element in ethnic jokes. From a quantitative point of view, the thematic frequency and frequency of the use of ethnonyms and other ways of naming the central and peripheral groups in the ethnic jokes that make up the corpus, as well as the frequency of typologies in the ICM are identified. The research is based on a comparative-contrastive view that leads to the identification of common themes/stereotypes shared by the three groups living in Transylvania.

Chapter 4 presents the main themes and their associated ethnic stereotypes/scripts. Starting from the presentation of demographic, historical and sociocultural aspects, the whole chapter sheds light on the correlation between these and humour, i.e. how these aspects are reflected in (inter)ethnic jokes. Starting from the organisation of the corpus, each theme is dealt with in the order of the appearance of the first joke constituting a new theme. I identify the main themes as well as complementary ones. The thematic relationship found in certain humorous texts is also presented. I propose in this chapter the distinction between hyper-stereotype vs hypo-stereotype.

Chapter 5 is mirroring the structure of chapter 4. The novelty of this chapter lies in the double perspective from which the jokes are illustrated. Thus, the chapter presents both the jokes told by Romanians and the jokes told by Hungarians, respecting the thematic criteria. We will notice how these jokes constitute a sociocultural dialogue. With the change of perspective, the centre-periphery relationship is also overturned. Moreover, the self-deprecating/self-ridiculing humour is also reflected in this chapter, as sometimes it happens that the central group also becomes the target of the joke, together with the peripheral group.

Chapter 6 introduces the ethnic vs. interethnic joke distinction out of the need to illustrate that most of the jokes that make up the corpus do not only communicate something about the peripheral group, but also highlight the central group and reflect the relationship existing between the two groups. This chapter introduces the notions of *model character* vs. *anti-model character*, the former a reflection of the central group, the latter a reflection of the peripheral group in the universe of jokes. In this chapter, I also illustrate the models of interpretation of the presence of Romanians in *Gypsy* and *Hungarian/Magyar/Szekler* jokes. Finally, the common/shared stereotypes found in Transylvanian ethnic jokes are illustrated.

The last chapter presents the main conclusions and proposes future research directions.

The appendices of the paper include: the corpus of *Gypsy* jokes (Appendix 1), the corpus of *Hungarian/Magyar/Szekler* and *Romanian* jokes (Appendix 2), the ICM analysis applied to *Gypsy* jokes (Appendix 3) and the ICM analysis applied to *Hungarian/Magyar/Szekler* and *Romanian* jokes (Appendix 4).

CHAPTER 1

ETHNIC HUMOUR - A LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

The first chapter reviews the linguistic and non-linguistic theories that have emerged in the analysis of humour over time. This diachronic presentation leads to some pertinent conclusions. Thus, the first research in the field of humour has been carried out since Antiquity, the most valuable being Aristotle's *Poetics*, which will remain a reference work for all those who intend to investigate the humoristic phenomenon.

Based on the directions promoted by the ancients, nonlinguistic theories of humour developed: incongruity theories, superiority theory and relief theory. Incongruity theories interpret humour in terms of a mismatch between a concept and the objects that can be related to it. Works based on this view of humour belong to Kant, Schopenhauer and Bergson. The theory of superiority has its roots as far back as Greek antiquity (Plato and Aristotle in Barnes 1984, Hamilton and Cairns 1961) and emphasises the superiority of the individual who laughs at the misfortune of another. Relief theories (Spencer, Freud and Kant) see humour as a way of reducing psychological tension.

Although Raskin does not relate the Script-based Semantic Theory of Humour (SSTH) to any of the directions listed above, Incongruity Theory seems to be the foundation of SSTH, which posits the opposition of scripts as the most important factor in the analysis of jokes. As research identifies small shortcomings in the application of this theory to other narrative types except jokes, SSTH is further developed into the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH) which adds five knowledge resources that also allow for the comparison of humorous texts. The most experimental linguistic theory of humour is the Ontological Semantic Theory of Humour (OSTH), which excludes the individual from the elaboration of the joke, based on semantics like SSTH. Thus, the most famous experiment based on this theory is *The joking computer*¹⁵, a humour generation platform that aimed to demonstrate the extent to which humans can build computer models of the creative process. Moreover, this software helps children to explore language by exploiting it phonetically and semantically.

Raskin (2014, 370) concludes that a theory of humour must be, in the true sense of the word, multidisciplinary, just as the humorous phenomenon is itself. Thus, in the analysis aspects of phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics will be considered, along with sociolinguistic, dialectal and discourse-analytic aspects (how control and discrimination manifest themselves in language). The broadest dimension considered is the pragmatic one, being applied the Intersecting Circles Model within a framework oriented by Relevance Theory and Incongruity Theory. However, one cannot begin a study of humour without appealing to the SSTH and GTVH whose basic concepts also guide the analysis undertaken in this thesis.

¹⁵ see <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/ncs/departments/computing-science/joking-computer-309.php>, accessed at 20.04.2024.

CHAPTER 2

ETHNIC HUMOUR RESEARCH IN (EASTERN) EUROPE

I started this paper with a quotation from Laineste (2009), an Estonian researcher, as I thought it best summarises the identified niche: *Transylvanian ethnic humour: a linguistic perspective*.

Considering the research undertaken mainly in Eastern Europe, one can conclude that ethnic jokes are not universal. The specific cultural context in which they are told is crucial to understanding them. For this reason, the present paper represents an important step in mapping Transylvanian ethnic jokes with *Hungarians* and *Gypsies* to identify their specificity.

I started the discussion by drawing on Davies' research (e.g., 1982, 1990, 1998, 2002, 2011), which proposes a comparative-contrastive analysis of the differences in the social and cultural structures of two or more countries where ethnic humour is manifested particularly in the form of jokes. Then, I turned to recent works that tested the limits of his proposed theory and tried to find new ways of analysis that were adapted to the society in which the research was carried out. Thus, although Davies's theory of ethnic humour (see, for example, the Centre-Periphery Model) is one that claims to be universal, its testing has only taken place in Western industrialised societies. In other societies, new approaches to analysis are needed.

I have found that ethnic jokes particularly target the social component of ethnic identity. Through Takovski's research, I have illustrated that we should consider humour a "mode of expressing, questioning, and negotiating one's ethnic identity" (Takovski 2015, 128), especially from the point of view of the target of the joke, as the joke should render the ethnic and interethnic specificity (Tudor 2022). Therefore, ethnic jokes must develop truly ethnic scripts that are related to a local context and not universally applicable ones. Thus, Laineste and Fiadotava (2017) try to identify whether there are any negative effects of globalisation on the ethnic character of jokes, and their findings show that ethnic jokes are popular despite the mentioned phenomenon. Genova (2014) shows that Bulgarian ethnic humour targets only two ethnic groups (*Gypsies* and *Armenians*), jokes targeting others are only a form of borrowing. Referring also to the choice of targets, Brzozowska (2013) observes that jokes change over time, the transformation being generated by the economic and political situation, and that with globalisation, jokes tend to become more and more ethnically neutral. Also, in relation to the process of targeting, Brzozowska and Chłopicki (2019) discuss the need to extend the Centre-Periphery Model, as ethnic jokes that occur in a given space can be about a similar and close group, but also about a foreign and distant group (e.g. Chinese in Poland).

Thus, one can notice that researchers' views on how to choose the target differ. What is certain is that one needs to identify whether a joke performed in a given space represents an autochthonous form (i.e., *autochthonous ethnic humour*) or is a borrowing adapted to the linguistic context (i.e., *circulation/imported ethnic humour*). It is also possible to encounter humorous realizations that are adapted not only to the linguistic context but also to the cultural, social, political

and economic context, making it more difficult to identify to what extent the joke represents borrowing. Raskin (1985) demonstrates that the target group can only be replaced by another group if the same (ethnic)script/stereotype can be attributed to it.

The purpose of an ethnic joke is to present stereotypes about a peripheral group in a humorous vein. Regarding the attribution of stereotypes, I have found that although the tendency is to attribute negative stereotypes to the peripheral group/target, there are exceptions. In general, stereotypes are embedded in the collective mind, and once attributed to a particular group, the group will carry the "label" forever (stereotypes are general characteristics that cannot be changed).

Views on stereotypes also differ. Davies (1990) found that the most widespread opposition is that between *stupidity* and *canniness*, but subsequent research has gone on to show either that these scripts are general ones that accept subdivisions (e.g. Popescu 2011), or that they are stereotypes among many others (e.g. Genova 2014), or even that they are non-ethnic qualities (Takovski 2015). Takovski (2015) distinguishes between *authentic ethnic scripts* and *functional ethnic scripts*. Also, Davies (1990) says that there is a target for each of these stereotypes in a local context/in a particular community. The question that arises is whether a group can be represented as both stupid and canny in a particular community.

The central group - peripheral group relationship is also seen and analysed from different perspectives. Research has continued to apply the Centre-Periphery Model in heterogeneous contexts, interpreting the relationship either in terms of the performance of the joke (i.e., the performing group = the central group) or in terms of the status of the group (i.e., if a group is assigned a "worthy" stereotype, that group is considered central). Research has also shown that there are social contexts that require the adoption of an extended variant of the Centre-Periphery Model.

Therefore, I have chosen the *Romanian, Hungarian/Magyar/Szeckler* and *Gypsy* jokes to illustrate Davies' (1990, 1998) hypothesis: differences in language, culture, behaviour and values are at the core of the jokes, but they can be joked about only because of the similarities between all these groups. Thus, members of the central group perceive the peripheral group as a distorted reflection of themselves, "not as alien, unfamiliar, and inscrutable but as ambiguous, eccentric, and thus amusing peoples" (Davies 1990, 314).

In the paper, I looked at the extent to which the ethnic scripts presented by Davies can be applied to the Romanian space and also I identified whether the improvements brought by the research of Laineste, Takovski, Brzozowska, Chłopicki, Genova, Popescu and others can be applied in the analysis of Transylvanian ethnic humour.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The chapter starts by presenting the existing views on the ethnic phenomenon and its manifestations (section 1.1), *central group, peripheral group, target group*, concepts that are found in the Centre-Periphery Model (CPM) proposed by Davies (1990) (section 1.2), *ethnic script/ stereotype* (section 1.3). These have been mentioned in previous chapters, but it is necessary to apply them to the Transylvanian regional context. In section 2, I define ethnic jokes from different theoretical perspectives. In section 3, I present the research questions, and in section 4, I provide details on the corpus and how it was collected. Section 5 summarises the analytical approaches of the research.

The research questions are, in fact, chains that attempt to illustrate the Transylvanian ethnically specific humour phenomenon as a whole.

1. What are the main themes in ethnic jokes portraying *Hungarians/Magyars/Szeklers, Gypsies, and Romanians*?
 - 1.1 Which stereotypes are ascribed to each ethnic group targeted - *Hungarians/Magyars/Szeklers, Gypsies, and Romanians*?
 - 1.2 Are there common stereotypes these ethnic groups share?
 - 1.3 Are the stereotypes identified in the jokes supported by sociological studies?

2. What characterises the interethnic jokes in Transylvanian?
 - 2.1 Which are the ethnonyms (endonyms and exonyms) used for the people living in Transylvania in humorous texts and how frequent are they?
 - 2.2 How can we map the ethnic interactions in Transylvanian ethnic jokes?
 - 2.3 How does Transylvanian ethnic humour relate to the Centre-Periphery Model?
 - 2.4 What strategies are used to identify the centre and the periphery?

3. What are the linguistic and extralinguistic mechanisms underlying Transylvanian ethnic jokes?
 - 3.1 How can the Intersecting Circles Model be applied and how many jokes exploit each possible combination of the circles?
 - 3.2 To what extent does the cultural element influence the interpretation of ethnic humorous text?

The corpus was created in May 2021 and June 2021 respectively and contains 100 *Gypsy* jokes and 100 *Hungarian* and *Romanian* jokes. The corpus was collected during two informal sessions where 20 people (in each session) were asked to tell jokes about the mentioned ethnic minorities. The groups consisted of people aged between 22 and 73.

CRITERION	MAY 2021 SESSION <i>GYPSY</i> JOKES	JUNE 2021 SESSION HUNGARIAN JOKES
GENDER	10 women and 10 men	7 women and 13 men
AGE	25-61	22-73
ETHNICITY	14 Romanians 3 Hungarians 2 Saxons 1 Roma	14 Romanians 6 Hungarians
ORIGIN COUNTY	Braşov, Harghita, Covasna, Cluj, Sibiu	Braşov, Covasna, Mureş

Tabelul 3.1 - *Collaborators*

The process of collecting jokes in each session ended after 100 jokes had been performed¹⁶. All the jokes were told in Romanian, although 11 members were bilingual (9: Romanian-Hungarian + 2: Romanian-German)¹⁷. Also, the original texts were made available to me if they were in Hungarian¹⁸, although they were performed in Romanian to facilitate understanding by all members of the group. Where possible, I searched for the sources of the jokes and made a list of them (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2). Most of the jokes are found in several sources, in various forms, which reinforces the fact that the jokes are a species of urban folklore, with an oral character, the written versions being transcriptions of jokes circulating in society. However, some humorous texts were not found on the internet, therefore, I assumed that (1) the performer was the creator or (2) the joke has only a spoken version that was recreated by the performer. The corpus was organised by main theme.

The chosen method of collecting jokes illustrates that they circulate orally in the Transylvanian community, although I recognised, even during the collection sessions, that some jokes can also be found on the internet. Therefore, I later also identified the source of these jokes, specifying it in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. Two of the jokes with *Hungarians/Magyars/Szeklers* and *Romanians* can be found in volumes of humorous short stories.

The present research combines the views of sociocultural pragmatics and cognitive pragmatics. The analysis will be made within a theoretical framework that also integrates the various theories of humour in order to create a theoretical whole that satisfies the analytical needs. For a

¹⁶ I announced to the collaborators at the beginning of the session that the collection process would be finalized after 100 jokes had been performed. However, the atmosphere created also facilitated the performance of other jokes after the actual collection process was interrupted.

¹⁷ The Roma person does not speak Romani language, coming from a community (Crizbav, Braşov county) where Romanian is considered as a mother tongue and the members of the community generally declare themselves Romanians.

¹⁸ I did not change any part of the jokes, which are reproduced both in Chapter 5 and in Appendix 2. They are presented as transcribed by the collaborators.

qualitative analysis, I will use relevance theory through the importance given to context (situation, in GTVH terms) and through the process of interpreting utterances (i.e., deriving explicatures/implicatures and analysing implicit and explicit meaning). Thus, the analytic model that permits the analysis of all the dimensions existing in ethnic jokes is the Intersecting Circles Model (Yus 2013a, 2013b, 2016), originating from RT.

The analysis works with other linguistic and non-linguistic theories of humour, by identifying the scripts/frames envisioned by the text of the joke (including frame/script oppositions explained by incongruity), the frame/script switch triggers (SSTH), by identifying the target and the intended narrative strategy (GTVH), as well as linguistic aspects. Therefore, the qualitative analysis consists of an interdisciplinary linguistic analysis in which I will also follow aspects related to phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics, taking into account some dialectal aspects. It remains relevant to identify the strategies related to the way control and discrimination are manifested in the language (through discourse analysis), since, according to the superiority theory, the central group considers itself superior to the peripheral one, and at the discourse level these aspects can be analysed by applying the ICM.

Relief theory explains how humour remains a way of releasing psychological tensions at the unconscious level. By applying this theory, we understand why ethnic jokes remain a phenomenon that is alive today. Although in many European countries, the telling of ethnic jokes is an increasingly rare phenomenon due to political correctness, which is based on the desire not to offend, marginalise or even exclude others, in Romania, the performance of ethnic jokes is a living, current behavior. Ethnic humour is present on specialised websites (e.g. raziculacrimi.ro, bancuri365.ro), on social networks (e.g. Facebook, TikTok), in the media, but especially in oral communication.

First, by applying the Intersecting Circles Model, I will identify whether all the ethnic jokes under consideration are constructed based on the cultural frame. The existence of a stereotype that is inferred during the interpretation of the joke text implies association with a cultural frame. Therefore, I will identify the stereotypes associated with each ethnic group and look for those stereotypes that are common in order to test Davies' (1990, 1998) hypothesis: ethnic jokes are about a distorted version of the central group itself. I will confront the identified stereotypes with the results of sociological studies to see if the stereotypes belong to the target ethnic group (i.e. if they are authentic ethnic scripts) and also to demonstrate that the jokes are a representation of sociocultural behaviour. Besides identifying stereotypes, I will also consider possible combinations of stereotypes within a single joke.

Second, based on the ICM, I will exemplify the possible combinations of the circles targeted by this model, illustrate the resulting typologies and make a quantitative evaluation of them.

Being a linguistic analysis, I will also focus on the semantic, phonetic, and grammatical particularities of the linguistic behavior of minorities in Romanian that are transferred to the world of jokes.

Thirdly, I will discover the ethnonyms and other possible terms of address used in ethnic jokes with *Gypsies* and *Hungarians* and determine their frequency. I will appeal to the ethnic vs. inter-ethnic joke distinction to reflect the presence of the majority group in the humorous text. Another aim

is to investigate whether other ethnic groups also become targets in *Hungarian* and *Gypsy* jokes. I will discuss the underlying strategies of interethnic jokes and thus construct a map of the interactions of the central group with the peripheral group in order to create a picture of the interactional movement. Thus, I will test to what extent the Centre-Periphery Model is applicable to Transylvanian ethnic jokes. In addition, I will investigate the linguistic mechanisms that prove the presence of a central group in humorous discourse.

Therefore, the synchronic research aims at both a qualitative and a quantitative analysis through an integrative model of analysis, which will result in a comparative-contrastive study targeting *Gypsy* and *Hungarian/Magyar/Szekler* and *Romanian* jokes collected in Transylvania.

CHAPTER 4

ETHNIC SCRIPTS IN THE TRANSYLVANIAN HUMOROUS DISCOURSE. *GYPSY* JOKES

The corpus was organised thematically: (a) dishonesty (23%, including theft, begging, lying, general dishonesty), (b) terms of address (12%), (c) dirt (12%), (d) stupidity (7%), (e) physical appearance (7%), (f) (lack of) education (6%), (g) racism/discrimination (6%), (h) Gypsies' rights (5%), (i) metal obsession (5%), (j) poverty (4%), (k) violence (4%), (l) similarities between Romanians and Gypsies (3%), (m) language (3%), (n) large family (2%), (o) non-poverty (1%).

Each theme is a representation of the targeted stereotype. These stereotypes can be divided into two categories: (1) hyper-stereotype and (2) hypo-stereotype. I choose to make this distinction in order to illustrate that, by simply invoking the *Gypsy* character, the activation of all other stereotypes becomes possible. Thus, the *Gypsy* is the only hyper-stereotype that encompasses the hypo-stereotypes identified in section 2: thief, beggar, liar, dishonest, stupid, black, uneducated/illiterate, victim, profiteer, poor, rich, ignorant of Romanian/Roma language, unwanted child/the one who abandons his/her child. The way in which the presence of the *Gypsy* is evoked in the humorous discourses is analysed in Chapter 6.

The survival of ethnic jokes has been analysed by Popescu (2011), who focused on jokes existing on various Romanian websites. She identifies scripts/stereotypes and analyses them on the basis of the stupidity-canniness distinction (Davies 1990). Her qualitative analysis focuses only on jokes illustrating linguistic distortions. Săftoiu (2017), analysing expressions, proverbs and jokes, identifies the following stereotypes: (a) *Gypsies* are thieves, (b) *Gypsies* are violent, (c) *Gypsies* are beggars, (d) *Gypsies* have low social status, (e) *Gypsies* cannot overcome their social status. These stereotypes have been related to the opposition of Davies (1990), but Popescu (2011) and Săftoiu (2017) have shown that it is sometimes difficult to categorise a joke into one of the two categories, because a *Gypsy* can be represented as stupid or canny even in the same humorous discourse. Therefore, I avoided subordinating the identified stereotypes to macro-scripts, such as stupidity vs. canniness, even though most ethnic humour scholars resort to this distinction. I have identified stereotypes at the micro-level (cf. Săftoiu 2017) and called them hypo-stereotypes, subordinating them to the only hyper-stereotype, *the Gypsy*. Moreover, the identified ethnic scripts/stereotypes complete the picture of Romanian ethnic humour, adding new data to the conclusions of the aforementioned researchers.

In terms of the main theme on which the jokes are built, I have identified a tendency to juxtapose several ethnic themes/scripts/stereotypes in a single joke. 43% of the selected jokes exploit more than one ethnic theme/script. There are categories where the main theme is never combined with other complementary themes: dirt, large family, poverty, violence. Other categories always combine the main theme with other subsidiary themes: *Gypsies'* rights and language jokes, which are not encountered without the support of other hypo-stereotypes.

I also identified additional ethnic scripts that are not main themes in any of the jokes in the corpus: (a) fear of the police; (b) laziness; (c) cleverness.

The combination of ethnic themes/scripts/stereotypes was analysed horizontally (possible combinations: main theme +/- other theme) and vertically (total number of occurrences of a given theme). In this way, it was established that certain themes/stereotypes complement each other:

- ▣ education - stupidity - discrimination/racism - language;
- ▣ education - stupidity (x2);
- ▣ education - stupidity - *Gypsies'* rights;
- ▣ education - stupidity - violence;
- ▣ dishonesty (theft) - metal obsession - poverty;
- ▣ dishonesty (theft) - non-poverty;
- ▣ dishonesty (theft) - terms of address;
- ▣ dishonesty (theft) - poverty;
- ▣ dishonesty (theft) - dishonesty (begging);
- ▣ dishonesty (theft) - dishonesty (lying) (x2);
- ▣ dishonesty (theft) - violence;
- ▣ dishonesty (theft) - metal obsession;
- ▣ dishonesty (theft) - large family;
- ▣ dishonesty (begging) - large family - violence;
- ▣ stupidity - dishonesty (theft);
- ▣ stupidity - education - poverty;
- ▣ stupidity - similarities - general dishonesty;
- ▣ large family - metal obsession;
- ▣ physical appearance - large family - metal obsession;
- ▣ physical appearance - terms of address;
- ▣ *Gypsies'* rights - stupidity;
- ▣ *Gypsies'* rights - dishonesty (begging);
- ▣ *Gypsies'* rights - racism/discrimination (x2);
- ▣ *Gypsies'* rights - dishonesty (theft) - racism/discrimination;
- ▣ metal obsession - dirt;
- ▣ metal obsession - non-poverty;
- ▣ metal obsession - dishonesty (theft);
- ▣ metal obsession - dishonesty (lying);
- ▣ racism/discrimination - dirt;
- ▣ racism/discrimination - non-poverty;
- ▣ similarities - physical appearance;
- ▣ similarities - dishonesty (theft);
- ▣ language - poverty;
- ▣ language - stupidity;
- ▣ language - dishonesty (theft).

In order to complete the picture of possible combinations, I present here also the information on the category of terms of address, which will be dealt with in chapter 6:

- ▣ terms of address - racism/discrimination - violence (x2);
- ▣ terms of address - dishonesty (theft);

- ▣ terms of address - similarities;
- ▣ terms of address - dirt.

The occurrences of a particular theme is represented in the following table (4.9). The most prolific topic is theft and the least prolific is general dishonesty.

Theme	Main theme	Secondary/ Complementary theme	Total
Education	6	2	8
Theft	18	6	24
Begging	2	2	4
Lying	1	3	4
General dishonesty	2	1	3
Stupidity	7	7	14
Dirt	12	3	15
Large family	2	2	4
Physical appearance	7	1	8
<i>Gypsies'</i> rights	5	1	6
Metal obsession	5	3	8
Poverty	4	5	9
Non-poverty	1	3	4
Violence	4	6	10
Terms of address	12	2	14
Racism/discrimination	6	6	12
Similarities	3	1	4
Language	3	1	4

Table 4.9 - Occurrence of themes in the corpus

The thematic diversity and the ability of the performers to present such diverse sociocultural aspects within the 100 jokes in the corpus are remarkable. The variety of stereotypes and the creative way they are combined, through the thematic areas in which they are contained, proves that the stereotypes attributed to the peripheral *Gypsy* group are stable and easily accessible to both the joke tellers and their receivers. This fact is also reinforced by the relatively short form of humorous texts, which often, by simply confirming a stereotype/stereotypes, generates the humorous effect.

CHAPTER 5

ETHNIC SCRIPTS IN THE TRANSYLVANIAN HUMOROUS DISCOURSE. JOKES WITH *HUNGARIANS/MAGYARS/SZEKLER*S AND *ROMANIANS*

In this chapter, I have shown which strategies are used in (inter)ethnic jokes to find out who is the humorist's target. Sometimes the central group targets itself, as a strategy of self-mockery.

In *Hungarian/Magyar/Szekler* and *Romanian* jokes, some stereotypes may be strengthened or contradicted depending on the perspective of the joke-teller.

The most prolific stereotypes are associated with the following themes: (1) aggression and discrimination; (2) language use; (3) Transylvanian history. The themes can be main themes and/or secondary/complementary ones. Below is a quantitative presentation of them:

Theme	Main theme	Secondary/ Complementary theme	Total
The history of Transylvania	18	2	20
The autonomy statute of Szeklerland	2	0	2
Aggression and discrimination	35	15	50
Ethnic and state affiliation	12	1	13
Language use	21	18	39
Romanian-Hungarian friendship	5	3	8
Gastronomy	3	1	4
Politics	1	12	13
Insults	1	4	5
Stupidity vs. canniness	2	6	8

Table 5.2 - *Themes identified in jokes with Hungarians/Magyars/Szeklers and Romanians*

Thematic complementarity is found in the corpus as follows:

- the history of Transylvania - language use (x2);
- the history of Transylvania - insult - stupidity vs. canniness (the Hungarian is called stupid);
- the history of Transylvania - aggression and discrimination - language use - Hungarian-Romanian friendship;
- the history of Transylvania - aggression and discrimination - stupidity vs. canniness (the Romanian is stupid because he doesn't know the history of Romania);
- the history of Transylvania - language use - stupidity vs. canniness (the Hungarian is stupid because he can't read Romanian);

- ▣ the history of Transylvania - politics;
- ▣ the autonomy statute of Szeklerland - The history of Transylvania – language use;
- ▣ the autonomy statute of Szeklerland - Hungarian-Romanian friendship;
- ▣ aggression and discrimination - language use (x5);
- ▣ aggression and discrimination - ethnic and state affiliation;
- ▣ aggression and discrimination - stupidity vs. canniness (the Hungarian is stupid because he is gullible);
- ▣ aggression and discrimination - stupidity vs. canniness (the Hungarian is canny because he takes advantage of a stereotypical situation);
- ▣ aggression and discrimination - politics (x8);
- ▣ aggression and discrimination - language use - politics (x2);
- ▣ ethnic and state affiliation - aggression and discrimination (x6);
- ▣ ethnic and state affiliation - aggression and discrimination - language;
- ▣ ethnic and state affiliation - language (x2);
- ▣ language - aggression and discrimination;
- ▣ language - aggression and discrimination - insult;
- ▣ language - gastronomy;
- ▣ language - aggression and discrimination - politics - stupidity vs. canniness (Tókéş, representative of the Hungarian community, is stupid);
- ▣ Language use - Hungarian-Romanian friendship;
- ▣ Hungarian-Romanian friendship - language use (x3);
- ▣ Hungarian-Romanian friendship - stupidity vs. canniness;
- ▣ stupidity vs. canniness – the history of Transylvania.

The existence of common stereotypes (see also chapter 6, section 3) of the three ethnic groups targeted in this research confirms what Davies (1990) has argued: the targets are a reflection of the central group and represent a very similar group from a sociocultural perspective.

In addition, I have observed that the social, cultural, historical and political information presented throughout the chapter supports the stereotypical information that has become a theme in the *Hungarian/Magyar/Szekler* and *Romanian* jokes.

The dialogic game of jokes told from the Romanians' perspective, on the one hand, and from the Hungarians' perspective, on the other hand, makes the centre-periphery relationship to be overturned depending on the position of the performer. This humorous dialogue helps to shape the view of the ethnic group that the joke-teller represents on a given theme. At the same time, the humorous text succeeds in decoding the presence of the performer/central group and the target/peripheral group through pragma-linguistic mechanisms that will be developed in the next chapter.

Due to the permanent confrontation between *Romanians* and *Hungarians/Magyars/Szeklers* in the world of jokes, I propose a new concept to be illustrated in Chapter 6: interethnic jokes.

CHAPTER 6

INTERETHNIC JOKES: REFLECTING INTERETHNIC RELATIONS IN JOKES¹⁹

When the relationship between two ethnic categories is interpreted in humorous discourses, I use the concept of interethnic jokes. They mirror the existing intercultural relations between ethnic groups living together in Transylvania (the region where the corpus was collected).

Considering the discussion of how ethnic relations are illustrated in jokes, one of the most interesting features of ethnic humour, I propose a new perspective on ethnic jokes. By interethnic jokes, I mean those jokes in which both the central group (through model characters) and the peripheral group (through anti-model characters) are portrayed.

The presence of the model character²⁰ (as a representative of the central group - i.e., Romanian, understood as an inhabitant of Transylvania) is marked in the discourse through linguistic tools. This research shows that the presence of the central group can be explicitly declared through ethnonyms or through lexical or grammatical means. Lexically, the use of lexemes referring to (1) occupations/professions, (2) a person in general, or (3) proper names are the most frequent representations. From a grammatical point of view, the use of pronouns and verbs (1st and 2nd person, singular or plural) are widely used tools.

Section 1 of this chapter presents the phenomenon described above in relation to *Gypsy* jokes. This section is broader, addressing also one of the main themes found in *Gypsy* jokes, as mentioned at the end of chapter 4 - terms of address. Section 2 considers *Hungarian/Magyar/Szekler* and *Romanian* jokes and presents the main strategies for identifying the central and peripheral groups. In the case of these jokes, there is no main theme dealing with terms of address, the only theme that is closely related to the naming of Hungarians is the category of insults, which has already been dealt with in Chapter 5, section 2.8.2. Section 3 of this chapter presents the main common/shared stereotypes of the characters identified in the jokes covered by this research.

1. THE CASE OF GYPSY JOKES

Going through the examples in Chapter 4, I can affirm that ethnic humour portrays *Gypsies*, almost never *Roma*, because of the propagation of the negative features highlighted by the presence

¹⁹ Parts of this chapter are taken from: Tudor, Noemi. 2022. "Interethnic jokes in Transylvania. The case of Gypsy jokes." Bulletin of Transilvania University of Brasov, Series IV. Philology. Cultural Studies, no. 2: 9-28. The information was presented at the International Conference on Linguistics: Structure, Use and Meaning - Language and Dialogue from an Intercultural Perspective (September 15-17, 2022), in the paper *Interethnic jokes in Transylvania*.

²⁰ I propose the distinction *model character*, representative of the central group that regulates physical and character traits, actions, behaviors, etc. considered normal for the sociocultural space from which he/she comes, and *antimodel character*, representative of the peripheral group, who differs from the model character by at least one distinctive feature, which often becomes the source of (inter)ethnic humour.

of the *Gypsy*. Thus, jokes, in the light of the negative stereotypes associated with an identity referred to as *Gypsy*, become prolific. The mere mention of the anti-model character triggers numerous inferential processes that focus attention on those distinctive features that are not/rarely attributed to the model character. For this reason, *Gypsy* becomes a hyper-stereotype, encompassing other hypo-stereotypes.

1.1 WHAT IS THE ROMA MINORITY CALLED IN JOKES?

In the 100 *Gypsy* jokes collected, the peripheral group (i.e., the *Gypsies*) is named in various ways. The section illustrates the ethnonyms and other ways of naming this ethnic group found in the corpus, reflecting the portrayal of the *Gypsy*.

Type	Name	Occurrence
Exonym (Base form)	<i>ţigan</i> (adult, male)	163 out of which:
Derived forms:	<i>ţigancă</i> (adult, female)	11
	<i>ţigănuş</i> (child)	3
Phrases:	<i>pui de ţigan</i> (child)	2
	<i>copil de ţigan</i> (child)/ <i>copiii ţiganilor</i> (children)	1+1
	<i>ţiganul tată</i> (adult male, father)	1
	<i>ţiganul bătrân</i> (old, male)	2

Table 6.1 - *How do we call Gypsies in jokes? (1)*

Type	Name	Occurrence
Other lexeme used for <i>child</i>	<i>Puradel</i>	9
Other lexeme used for <i>adult, female</i>	<i>Piranda</i>	13
Other lexemes used for <i>adult, male</i>	<i>Tatai</i>	11
	<i>Bulibaşa</i> ²¹	6
Lexeme used for <i>young, male</i>	<i>Golan</i>	1

Table 6.2 - *How do we call Gypsies in jokes? (2)*

Type	Name	Occurrence
Prototypical names	Elvis	6
	Lăcătuş (also referring to a prototypical job)	5
	Majestatea Sa Iulian	1
	Parpanghel	1
	Zambila	1

Table 6.3 - *How do we call Gypsies in jokes? (3)*

²¹ Leader of a Gypsy band.

Type	Name	Occurrence
Designating a group	Şatră de Țigani (referring to very poor Gypsies living in tents)	3
	Cartier de Țigani (Gypsy neighborhood)	1
	Comunitatea romilor (Romani community)	1
	Familie de Țigani (Gypsy family)	1
	Cetățenii de pe lângă Târgu Mureş (citizens living near Târgu Mureş)	1

Table 6.4 - How do we call Gypsies in jokes? (4)

Type	Name	Occurrence
Calling names	<i>Cioară</i> (crow)	8
	<i>Moace</i> (referring to people who are goofy, slow and lazy)	1
Endonym-based	<i>rom/rrom</i> (adult, male) <i>pui de rom</i> (child)	5 out of which: 1
Non-exonym-based/ avoidance	<i>nene</i> (a respectful word used by children/younger people when addressing older people)	1

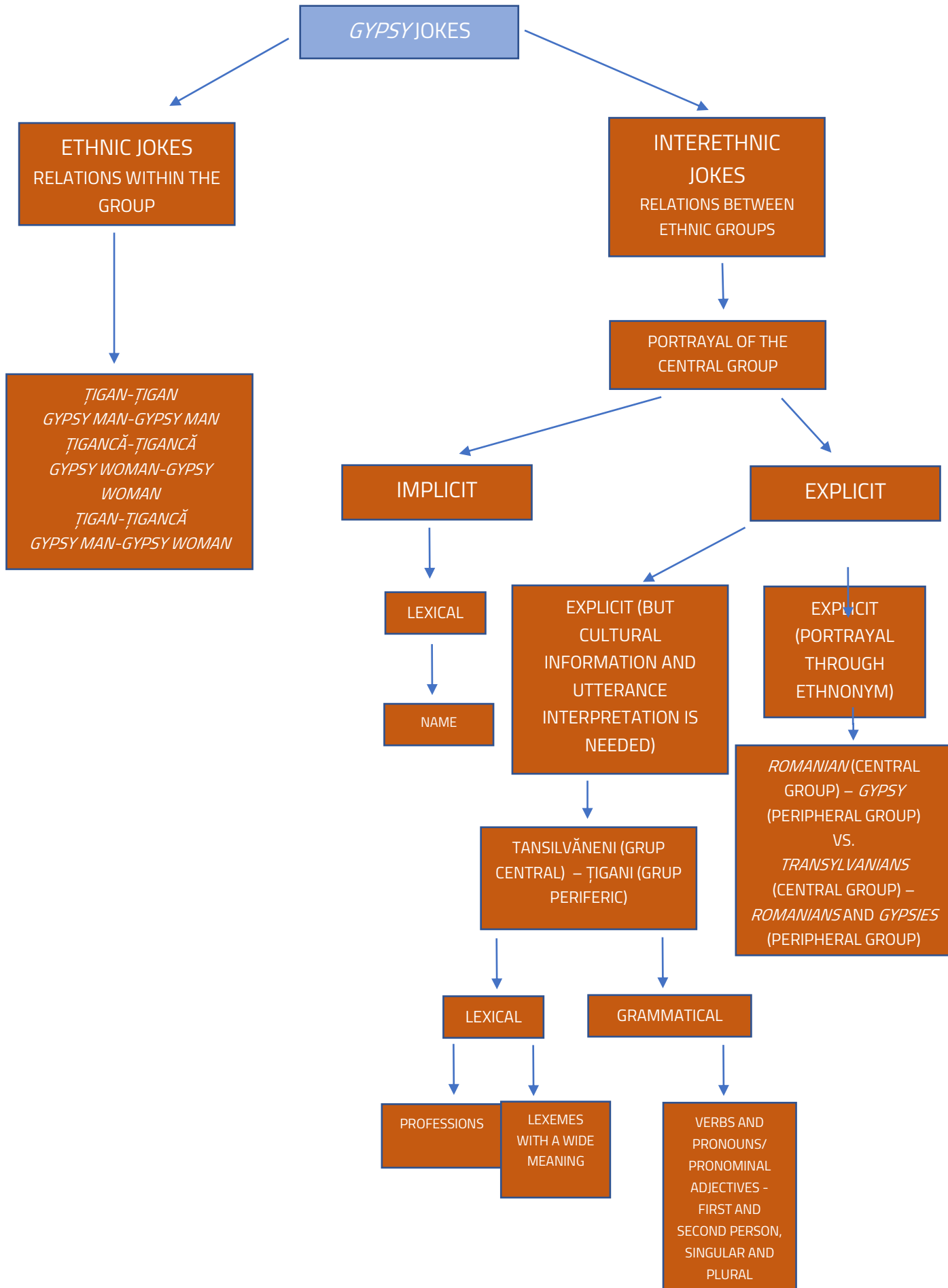
Table 6.5 - How do we call Gypsies in jokes? (5)

1.2 INTERETHNIC RELATIONS IN GYPSYJOKES

In most of the jokes, the central group, reflected either by traditional Romanian names or by the presence of an individual (woman or man)/group of individuals (without explicitly naming the ethnic origin), represents people living in Transylvania (Hungarians, Romanians and Saxons, often generically called *Romanians*²²), who target *Gypsies* in their jokes. The peripheral ethnic minority (i.e., the *Gypsies*) is the target of these jokes. It becomes important to illustrate how the joke can convey interethnic information. I will present, through Figure 6.1, the inferential processes involved in the interpretation to establish and infer the presence of the central group.

²² with the meaning of Romanian citizens; interpretation favored by the way the corpus was collected.

Figure 6.1 - Portrayal of *Romanians* in *Gypsyjokes*



2. THE CASE OF JOKES WITH *HUNGARIANS/MAGYARS/SZEKLETS* AND *ROMANIANS*

2.1 HOW IS THE HUNGARIAN MINORITY NAMED IN JOKES?

From the Romanian perspective, the character is named by the ethnonym *ungur/unguroaică* (i.e., Hungarian male/Hungarian female) (ethnonym used 125 times in the corpus), and from the Hungarian perspective, the ethnonyms used are *maghiar* (i.e., Magyar) (11 occurrences) and *secui* (i.e., Magh. *székely*; Eng. *Szekler*) (23 occurrences). To these are added words referring to language: *ungureşte* (11 occurrences) or *limba maghiară* (4 occurrences) (i.e., Hungarian language) and the territory inhabited by the Szeklers, *Ținutul Secuiesc* (Eng. Szeklerland) (2). In jokes, we can consider *ungur/unguroaică* as an exonym, while *maghiar* and *secui* are endonyms. In addition, the Huns also appear (3 occurrences), presented as ancestors of the Hungarians.

Other ways of portraying the Hungarian ethnic group are:

- proper names: Attila/Ottila (3/1 occupancy), Imre (3 occupancies), János (28 occupancies), István (3 occupancies), Pista/Pisti²³ (5/11 occupancies), Jóska (3 occupancies), Laci (4 occupancies), Gyuri (11 occupancies), Feri (8 occupancies), Gábor (7 occupancies), Tókéş László (1 occupancy), Zsuzsi (2 occupancies);
- physical features: *mustăciosul* (cu accent maghiar) (Eng. a person having a moustache with Hungarian accent);
- jobs associated with the political environment: *parlamentar din UDMR* (Eng. DUHR²⁴ MP);
- terms denoting an ethnic insult: *bozgor*;
- association with gastronomic elements: *salamul Pick* (Eng. Pick salami).

2.2 INTERETHNIC RELATIONS IN JOKES WITH *HUNGARIANS/MAGYARS/SZEKLETS* AND *ROMANIANS*

Similar to the *Gypsy* jokes, in the jokes portraying the Hungarian minority, we can distinguish ethnic jokes (5% of the corpus), which present relations within the ethnic group, and interethnic jokes (94% of the corpus), which present interethnic relations existing between the central and the peripheral group. Apart from these, as described in Chapter 5, multi-ethnic jokes generally portray nationalities that are not socioculturally connected, but stereotypes are attributed to them, with one being the victim/target of the joke (see Appendix 2, 5.2.3, which shows a group of people speaking different languages, i.e. the French and the *Szekler*). This typology is overtaken in the Hungarian jokes because, next to (1) a Frenchman and an American, the *Hungarian* and the *Romanian* also appear, (2) next to the German, the *Romanian* and the *Hungarian* also appear, (3) next to the black person, the *Romanian* and the *Szekler* also appear, (4) next to the Frenchman and the Englishman, the *Hungarian* and the angel (i.e., *Funar*, *Romanian politician*) also appear.

These jokes mirror the relationship that is established at the social and cultural level between the two ethnic groups (i.e., *Hungarians/Magyars/Szeklers* and *Romanians*). The jokes that introduce a *Romanian*, a *Hungarian* and a *Gypsy*, or the *Moldovan sheep keeper*, the *Vrâncean sheep keeper*, and

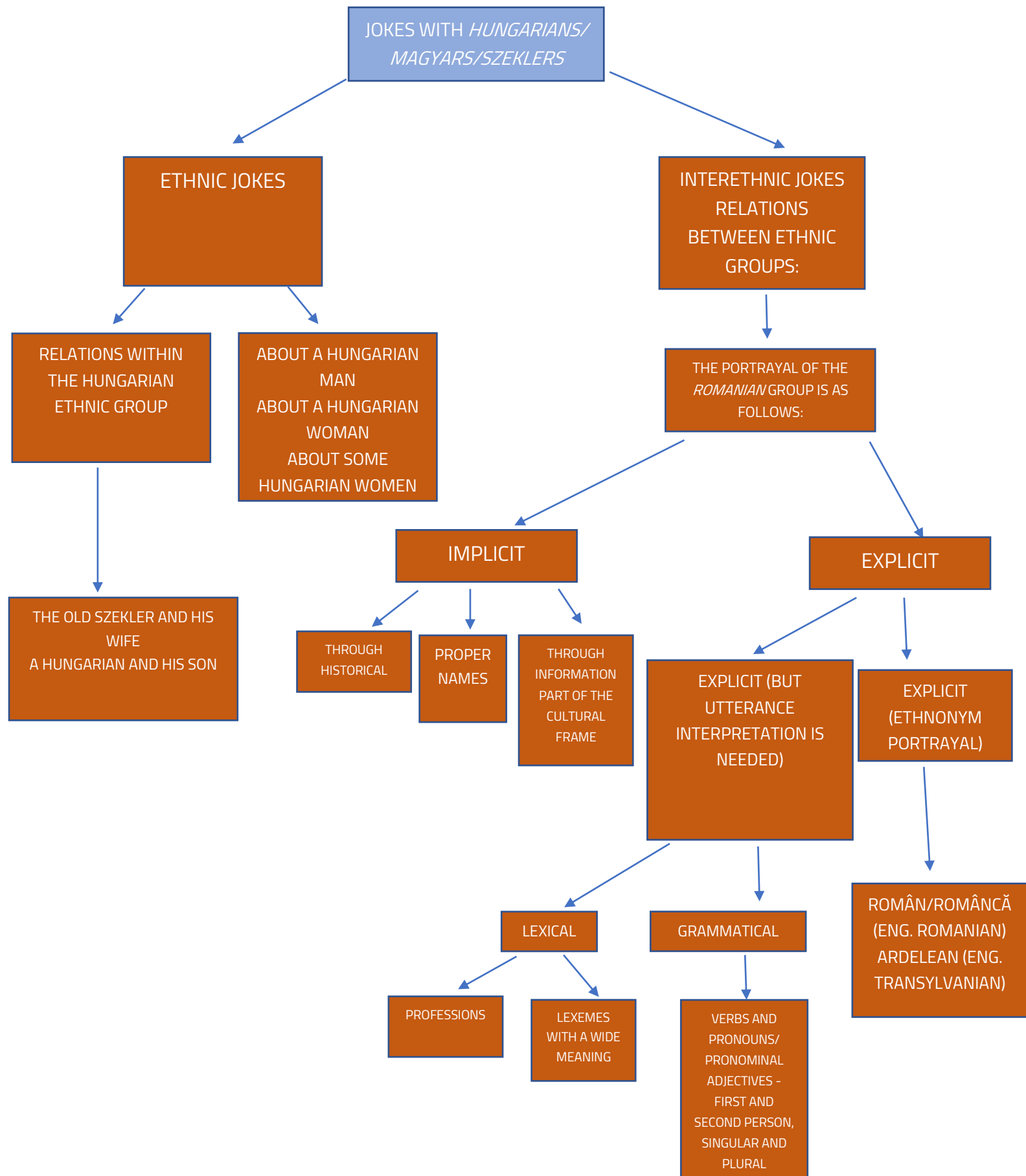
²³ Diminutive of *István*.

²⁴ Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania.

the *Hungarian sheep keeper* are also considered interethnic jokes as any joke that reflects the existing interethnic relations in Transylvania/Romania. Thus, multiethnic jokes become interethnic jokes from this perspective (1% of the jokes remain multiethnic, while 6% are apparently multiethnic jokes that become interethnic by presenting the relationship between *Hungarians/Magyars/Szeklers* and *Romanians*).

I have identified how the *Hungarian/Magyar/Szekler* is portrayed and established that most jokes (94% of the corpus) reflect the relationship he/she has with the Romanian. In what follows, through Figure 6.2, I present the strategies used to infer the presence of the Romanian in these jokes.

Figure 6.1 - Portrayal of Romanians in jokes with Hungarians



3. SHARED THEMES/STEREOTYPES IN JOKES WITH *GYPSIES, HUNGARIANS/MAGYARS/SZEKLEERS* AND *ROMANIANS*²⁵

As Davies (1990) has shown in relation to the *stupid* ethnic script, the central group targets a peripheral group which they perceive as a distorted and thus amusing reflection of themselves. The existing closeness between the two groups is emphasized numerous times in the literature (see chapter 2). We can represent this view as follows:

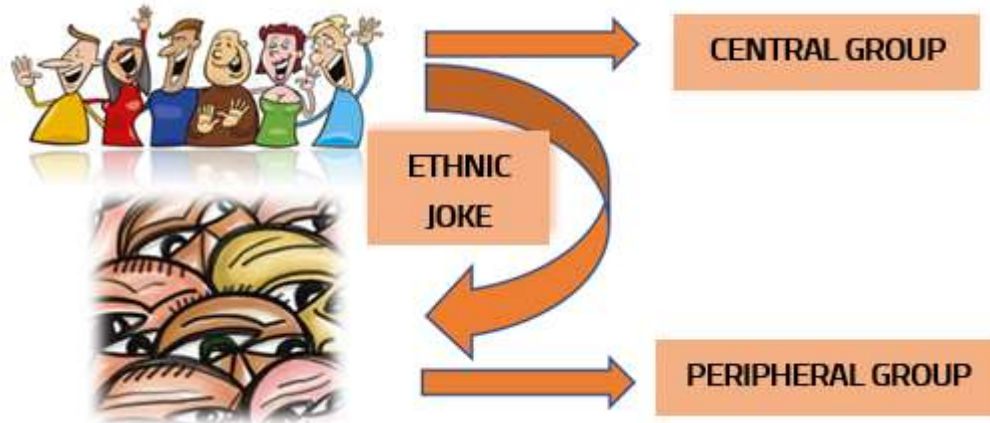


Figure 6.3 - *Central group-peripheral group relationship in ethnic jokes*²⁶

A topic less addressed by the study of ethnic humour remain common stereotypes, because, as I have already illustrated in Chapters 4 and 5, often an ethnic script can be shared by minority groups and perhaps even by the majority.

In chapter 4, I analysed the *Gypsy* jokes, where the targets of the ethnic jokes performed by Romanians, who transpose themselves into the universe of jokes as model characters, are the *Gypsies* (anti-model characters). In the process of data collection, I was interested in the jokes told by the Roma community about *Romanians* or *Hungarians*, if they exist. Interacting especially with Roma communities in Crizbav, Codlea (Mălin neighbourhood) and Săcele (Gârcini neighbourhood), I found out that they do not target the two mentioned groups in their jokes.²⁷ Chapter 5 was dedicated to the jokes with *Hungarians/Magyars/Szeklers* and *Romanians*. These jokes have been rendered from a double perspective: (1) Romanian central group - Hungarian peripheral group; (2) *Magyar/Szekler* central group - *Romanian* peripheral group. I illustrated a game of reversal or confirmation of the

²⁵ The information was presented at the 3rd Humour Research Project (October 2-3, 2023), in the paper *Shared stereotypes in Transylvanian ethnic jokes*, and at the Students' Annual Conference of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures (April 26-27, 2024), in the paper *Stereotipuri comune în glumele etnice transilvănene*.

²⁶ Image sources:

Freepik.com/premium-vector/group-happy-people_1712803.htm, accessed at 4.03.2022.

<https://lazycho.com/2016/07/09/my-hope-for-group-work-and-introverts/>, accessed at 4.03.2022.

²⁷ In reality, they may not reveal information that could put them in a negative light outside the community. From our discussions, I found that members of the Roma community see humour as a tool that fosters interethnic aggression, but aspects of humour reception were not addressed in this paper. This perspective was also confirmed by the only Roma person who participated in the corpus collection session.

view on similar themes, favoured by the change of perspective. However, in the case of the jokes dealt with in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively, the ethnonym *Romanian* designates in turn (1) either the Transylvanian group (which includes the German and Hungarian minorities) or (2) a national identification (see chapter 3, section 1).

Thus, a map of humoristic interactions can be drawn as follows²⁸:

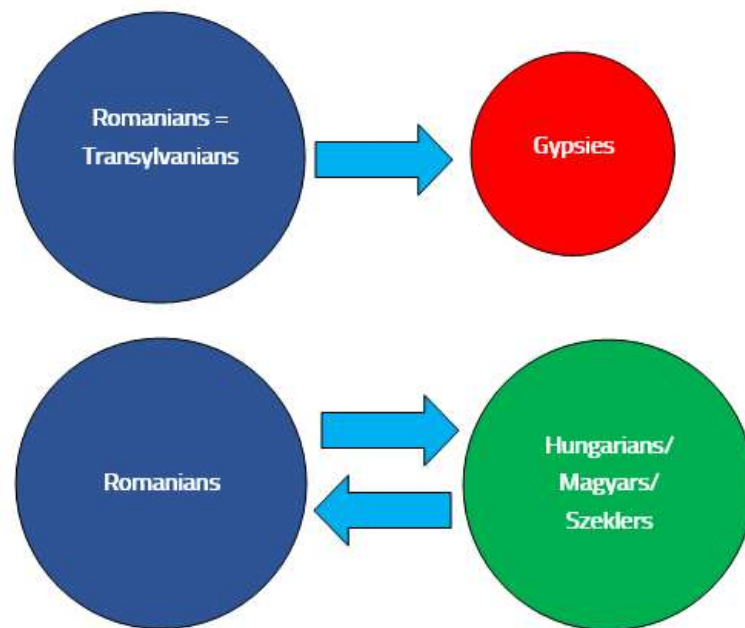


Figure 6.4 - Map of interethnic relations in Transylvanian ethnic jokes

Following a comparative analysis, the shared stereotypes/themes identified in the collected humorous texts (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2) are presented in this section, each category being reflected by an example taken from the previous chapters where they have already been analysed by applying the Intersecting Circles Model.

I have identified shared/common ethnic scripts/stereotypes/themes in the 200 jokes that make up the corpus. These include: (1) *Gypsies = Romanians*: theft; general dishonesty; (2) *Gypsies = Hungarians*: obsession with the use of the minority language; distortion of the Romanian language; illiteracy; begging; (3) *Romanians = Hungarians/Magyars/Szeklers*: obsession with the past; friendliness; (4) *Romanians = Gypsies = Hungarians/Magyars/Szeklers*: canniness; stupidity; violence; discrimination.

²⁸ The size of the circles is relevant. *Romanians* and *Hungarians* are presented on the same position due to the dialogic game that is built at the level of ethnic humour performance. *Gypsies*, on the other hand, are targeted by *Romanians* and never become the central group.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The main goal of this research was to identify the specific aspects that characterise the Transylvanian ethnic humour, choosing as a species the ethnic joke, one of the most widespread forms of verbal humour, variants of which are often recorded in collections of jokes, but also on the Internet. Thus, looking at the corpus presented in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2, I illustrate that 86% of the *Gypsy* jokes in the first part of the corpus (100 jokes in total) are found either in an identical form or in an adapted form on the Internet²⁹. The percentage for the *Hungarian/Magyar/Szekler* jokes (100 jokes in total) is higher, 93%, and we add two more jokes that were identified in a volume of humorous stories. This shows the close link between oral and written forms of jokes.³⁰ For the jokes that were not identified in written sources, I consider that the joke either had only an oral form in 2021, at the time of corpus collection, or was a joke created by the collaborator³¹ who performed the joke in the informal joke collection sessions.

A comparative-contrastive approach has been considered to identify the shared and specific stereotypes/themes of each ethnic group in ethnic jokes.

Applying a pragma-linguistic paradigm, I proposed a model of analysis that integrates the main directions and concepts in the study of humour, which is necessary to create a framework that allows the contextualisation, explanation, and analysis of jokes. Thus, the conceptual delimitation of some terms (ethnic, central group vs. peripheral group, target(group), stereotype, ethnic script, etc.) was necessary in order to apply them to the local context of Transylvania and to the jokes collected in this space. From the field of pragmatics, I applied directions of sociocultural pragmatics and cognitive pragmatics (in particular, relevance theory). Within the cognitive model, I identified the theory that equally treats all aspects concerned by ethnic jokes. The Intersecting Circles Model (Yus 2002, 2013a, 2013b, 2016, 2023) treats (1) language/discourse-centered strategies (utterance interpretation), (2) strategies targeting frame construction (make-sense frame), and (3) strategies focusing on sociocultural background information (cultural frame). I have used concepts such as frame/script switch trigger, frame/script opposition (where applicable) from SSTH (Raskin 1985), target and narrative strategies from GTVH (Attardo and Raskin 1991), among the most important ones. The linguistic perspective of the paper is given by the aspects identified in the analysis of jokes pertaining to phonetics, morphology, syntax, semantics and dialectology, aspects specific to minorities. To these are added perspectives drawn from discourse analysis (by reflecting how control and discrimination

²⁹ To determine the sources on the Internet, I have chosen the website on which the form of the joke is the closest to the version performed by the collaborator. By inserting the text into search engines, relying on the algorithms that these search engines use, I have identified the sources mentioned at the end of the humorous texts in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

³⁰ I believe that the 200 thematically organized jokes are a valuable collection that can provide an opportunity for researchers to analyse them from other perspectives.

³¹ The collaborator is a filter of humorous information, because of this he can adapt and create jokes.

manifest themselves in language). Relief theory explains why humour remains a way of removing psychological tensions in the subconscious. Although European policies limit stereotyping, ethnic jokes remain a living phenomenon in Transylvania today. The most important model has been taken from the study of ethnic humour - the Centre-Periphery Model (Davies 1990).

1. THEMES AND STEREOTYPES IN ETHNIC JOKES

Chapters 4 and 5 present the main themes and stereotypes identified in ethnic jokes with *Gypsies*, on the one hand, and with *Hungarians/Magyars/Szeklers* and *Romanians*, on the other hand. I observed that there is a direct relationship between the thematic area in which a joke is embedded and the stereotype targeted. Thus, for example, in the jokes on the theme of theft, the Gypsy is represented as a thief, and in the jokes on aggression/discrimination, the *Hungarian/Magyar/Szekler* or *Romanian* is morally characterised as *violent*. Therefore, I noticed that the theme always tends to incorporate the same stereotypes (e.g. the history of Transylvania = the obsession with proving that Transylvania belongs to *Romanians* or *Hungarians/Magyars/Szeklers*). There is an interdependence between the joke theme and the targeted stereotype. In the case of *Gypsy* jokes, the humorous text can usually be reduced to the stereotype that also denotes the thematic area (e.g. filth - dirty; stupidity - stupid; poverty - poor; non-poverty - rich; begging - beggar, etc.). On the other hand, in jokes with *Hungarians/Magyars/Szeklers* and *Romanians*, the name given to the thematic area often does not explicitly illustrate the associated stereotypes (e.g. language use - the Hungarian does not speak Romanian; the Hungarian wants to speak Hungarian exclusively, etc. or ethnic and state affiliation - in the *Romanians'* view, all *Hungarians* should live in Hungary; in the *Hungarians'* view, they want to live in Transylvania/Szeklerland where they should be considered natives), except for jokes in the categories of aggression and discrimination, and stupidity vs. canniness.

These themes/stereotypes can stand alone or combine with others to enhance the humoristic effect of the text.

The main themes identified, in descending order of their frequency as themes (main and complementary), are:

<i>GYPSEY</i> JOKES	JOKES WITH <i>HUNGARIANS/MAGYARS/SZEKLEERS</i> AND <i>ROMANIANS</i>
Theft (24 jokes)	Aggression and discrimination (50 de jokes)
Dirt (15 jokes)	Language use (39 de jokes)
Stupidity (14 jokes)	The history of Transylvania (20 de jokes)
Terms of address (14 jokes)	Ethnic and state affiliation (13 jokes)
Discrimination (12 jokes)	Politics (13 jokes)
Violence (10 jokes)	Romanian-Hungarian friendship (8 jokes)
Poverty (9 jokes)	Stupidity vs. canniness (8 jokes)
(Lack of) education (8 jokes)	Insults (5 jokes)
Physical appearance (8 jokes)	Gastronomy (4 jokes)
Metal obsession (8 jokes)	The autonomy statute of Szeklerland (2 jokes)

Gypsies' rights (6 jokes)	
Begging (4 jokes)	
Lying (4 jokes)	
Large family (4 jokes)	
Non-poverty (4 jokes)	
Similarity (4 jokes)	
Language (4 jokes)	
General dishonesty (3 jokes)	

Table C. 1 - *Themes in Transylvanian (inter)ethnic jokes*

In addition to these themes, there are also topics that were not the main themes in the ethnic jokes, among the most important being *fear of the police*, *lack of traditions*, *laziness* and *canniness* in the case of the *Gypsy* jokes, *illiteracy* and *begging* in the case of the *Hungarian/Magyar/Szekler* and *Romanian* jokes.

Interestingly, ethnic jokes confirm the existence of common/shared stereotypes attributed to the three ethnicities represented in the jokes either by model or anti-model characters (see Figure C.1). These common/shared stereotypes are reflections of the phenomenon of *ethnic kinship*, also confirming Davies' (1990) theory: we do not tell ethnic jokes about an unknown group, but about one very similar to the one we come from.

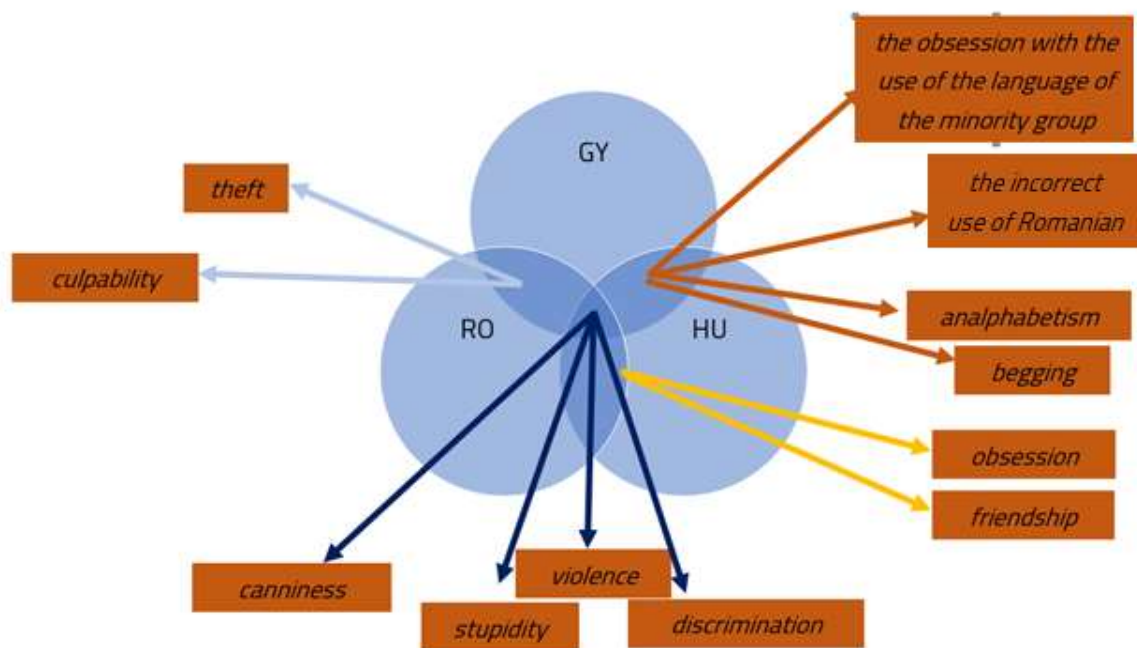


Figure C.1 - *Common stereotypes in Transylvanian (inter)ethnic jokes*

It is important to note that stereotypes are much stronger in the case of Gypsy jokes; often, simply strengthening or contradicting them is enough to derive the humorous effect. We also note that these texts are much shorter than the *Hungarian/Magyar/Szekler* and *Romanian* jokes: (1) 100 *Gypsy* jokes = 4,243 words; (2) 100 *Hungarian/Magyar/Szekler* and *Romanian* jokes = 7,075 words³².

³² The numbers include only the text of the joke and its code, not also the source, headlines and subheadings.

These stereotypes are accessed in the joke interpretation process through the cultural frame (see MCS).

2. THE CULTURAL FRAME IN TRANSYLVANIAN ETHNIC JOKES

Based on the information summarized in Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 and the analysis of the examples in Chapters 4 and 5, we come to the following conclusions:

(1) In *Gypsy* jokes:

- Schema (1) make-sense frame + cultural frame + utterance interpretation occurs 21 times;
- Schema (2) make-sense frame + cultural frame is found 39 times;
- Schema (5) cultural frame + utterance interpretation is found 10 times;
- Schema (6) cultural frame is found 30 times;
- Schemas (3) make-sense frame and utterance interpretation; (4) make-sense frame and (7) utterance interpretation are missing.

(2) In jokes with *Hungarians/Magyars/Szeklers* and *Romanians*:

- Schema (1) make-sense frame + cultural frame + utterance interpretation occurs 12 times;
- Schema (2) make-sense frame + cultural frame is found 36 times;
- Schema (5) cultural frame + utterance interpretation is found 23 times;
- Schema (6) cultural frame is found 29 times;
- Schemas (3) make-sense frame and utterance interpretation; (4) make-sense frame and (7) utterance interpretation are missing.

Therefore, I can state that ethnic jokes always involve the activation of the cultural frame. The main reason for this is that the humorous effect is generated in these jokes by the shared sociocultural information stored both in the mind of the joke-teller and in the mind of the receiver³³. This information is necessary in order to make sense of a humorous text targeting ethnicity. Thus, interpretative strategies involve not only the activation of a make-sense frame³⁴ - referred to in the literature also as script, scenario, schema, or frame - or of possible interpretations given to a word/utterance (through strategies existing at the level of the explicature or even through strategies that consider explicit rather than implicit interpretation or vice versa), but also the processing of sociocultural information accessed through the cultural frame. This cultural information includes stereotypical qualities/defects targeting a particular ethnic group - *Gypsies, Hungarians/Magyars/Szeklers, Romanians* - which are shared by the (Transylvanian) community to which the sender and the receiver belong. These stereotypes are prejudices that are attributed to a whole ethnic group, because stereotypes are collective attributes. In 29.5% of the total number of occurrences in the corpus, the confirmation of prototypical information about the culture or

³³ In the case of ethnic jokes, I made the distinction between ideal-sender vs. ideal-receiver to emphasize the need of sharing sociocultural information.

³⁴ Usually, two frames are activated at different moments of the interpretation of the text, the second frame being revealed by the punchline of the joke. These frames may stay in opposition (see SSTH).

community of the target group generates the humorous effect, because the receiver becomes the victim of the *shock of manifestness*. Thus, metarepresented cultural beliefs become the source of humour. Whenever a sociocultural information is confirmed or contradicted, the cultural frame must be accessed. Often, the cultural frame contains stereotypical information that constitutes implicated premises that allow the derivation of relevant implicated conclusions.

In conclusion, cultural stereotypes are collective representations shared by members of the Transylvanian community.

As I have shown in Chapters 4 and 6, respectively, the Gypsy hyper-stereotype triggers in the receiver's mind information associated with an anti-model character, which becomes a stereotype itself. The portrayal by exonym from the very beginning of the joke favours the access to the hypostereotypes associated with this ethnic group, which are also identified by sociological studies and confirmed in the humorous texts. The humorous effect generated by the jokes portraying the *Roma* anti-model character, through the endonym, is not based on the accessing of hypostereotypes, the only cultural information being that Romanians isolate both *Roma* and *Gypsies*.

Therefore, the cultural information most often concerns the relationship between the central group and the peripheral group, not the peripheral group and its associated hypostereotypes.

Also in the case of *Hungarian/Magyar/Szekler* jokes, cultural information motivates the choice of the ethnonym, but it does not become a hyper-stereotype. The anti-model character is called *Hungarian* if the joke is performed by a *Romanian*, who becomes the model character, or is called *Magyar* or *Secui* in jokes performed by a *Hungarian*. As mentioned in Chapter 5, the choice of the ethnonym *Hungarian* implies prejudices associated with this ethnic group, similar to the exonym *Gypsy*, but the use of the ethnonym in the sociocultural space without having a pejorative semantic feature, as in the case of *Gypsy*, makes this ethnonym not yet specialised:

- *Gypsy* - pejorative vs *Roma* - politically correct;
- *Hungarian* - *Magyar* - *Szekler* - all politically correct, but with a preference to be used either by Romanians, who refer to members of the Hungarian ethnic group), or by Hungarians, who refer to themselves as *Magyars* (national ethnonym) or *Szekler* (regional ethnonym). There is, however, a tendency to specialise the terms *Hungarian* and *Magyar* (see chapter 5, section 1).

Given a social and political direction that promotes political correctness, this stereotypical information leaves reality and floods the world of ethnic jokes. Empirical observations show that, in Europe, the tendency is to abolish the performance of ethnic jokes³⁵, but in Romania, these jokes are still present today. By correlating the information found in jokes with sociocultural information, in particular, I can state that these stereotypes are hyperbolizations of sociocultural stereotypes, and

³⁵ My participation with papers/presentations about ethnic jokes in international conferences surprised the audience. Linguists were even more surprised when I mentioned that these jokes are still told/performed today. Although the paper does not cover the reception of humor, in chapter 1 (section 3.1.1) and in chapter 3 (section 5), I have introduced information about the aggressive or cohesive potential of ethnic humor. I believe that the degree of acceptance of these jokes depends on the perception of each individual, however, there is a social tendency to prevent speech that does not comply with the perspectives of political correctness. However, stand-up comedy shows, talk-shows and social media abound in humorous texts with ethnic connotations, including jokes. The finding of some of the jokes from the corpus in various oral and written sources demonstrates both the topicality of the ethnic phenomenon in the field of humour and the relevance of these texts in contemporary society.

most of them are supported by sociological, anthropological, ethnological, historical and political studies.

3. A PRAGMATIC VIEW OF STEREOTYPES

Why do people "fall for" stereotypical information about an ethnic group, and why do they use this information in ethnic jokes?³⁶

Žegarac (2000/2008, 66) observes that stereotypes, called *implicit beliefs*, are difficult to change because they are accessible and cannot be consciously realised, even if they are different from people's conscious beliefs.

Clearly, the more participants are confident that they share more cultural beliefs³⁷, the more they can access the contextual information available to them, recognising the principle of economy intended by the performer/joke-teller.

Žegarac (2000/2008, 66) also points out that "implicit beliefs are intuitive and not easily amenable to consciousness, they are hard to change and may be radically different from consciously held beliefs, without those who hold them being aware of this." Let's take, as an example, the socially unacceptable intuitive belief [Gypsies are thieves], people who hold this belief might replace it consciously with an acceptable assumption [there is no correlation between thieves and a person who ethnically associates himself/herself to the Gypsies' ethnic group], while continuing to behave according to their old, intuitive stereotype (adapted from Žegarac, 2000/2008, 66).

From an RT perspective, our mind tends to be geared to maximisation of relevance. Relevance is obtainable with low mental effort or increased effort that is compensated for by additional effects. Stereotypical information requires low mental effort. Therefore, we access stereotypical knowledge in interpretation to maximise relevance.

Being easy to access, stereotypical information is often shared (i.e. it becomes part of the mutual cognitive environment), and ethnic jokes also play with this kind of background knowledge. Cultural information about a given ethnic group is included in the cultural frame on which the joke is built (see ICM above). Therefore, ethnic humour involves the presence of a culture-specific frame which governs the interpretation of the humorous discourse.

Therefore, RT is suitable in the process of understanding how utterance interpretation and context selection can create a humorous effect. RT shows that a communicative act makes the receiver hold expectations that it is going to be relevant enough in exchange for the effort it takes to infer the content communicated and can foresee why that particular communicative act deserves the interlocutor's attention. The sender is able to predict the inferential strategies and steps that the receiver will take in interpreting a (humorous) text. In the interpretation of ethnic humour, encyclopedic knowledge is the most frequent source of information retrieved from context. This happens also due to the existence of cultural frames on which the humorous text is built and on which they rely. The role of ethnic jokes is mostly to reinforce or challenge cultural stereotypes such as those involving ethnic groups. Stereotypes remain stable because they are accessed by the low

³⁶ A discussion on the spread and stability of stereotypes was initiated in Chapter 3, Section 5.

³⁷ I.e., have a mutual cognitive environment in RT terms.

mental effort principle. They are spread as Sperber's (1996) model proves, constructing a cultural frame which is accessed during ethnic joke interpretation. The humorous effect is generated in many occasions due to the "joy of manifestness" (Yus, 2016).

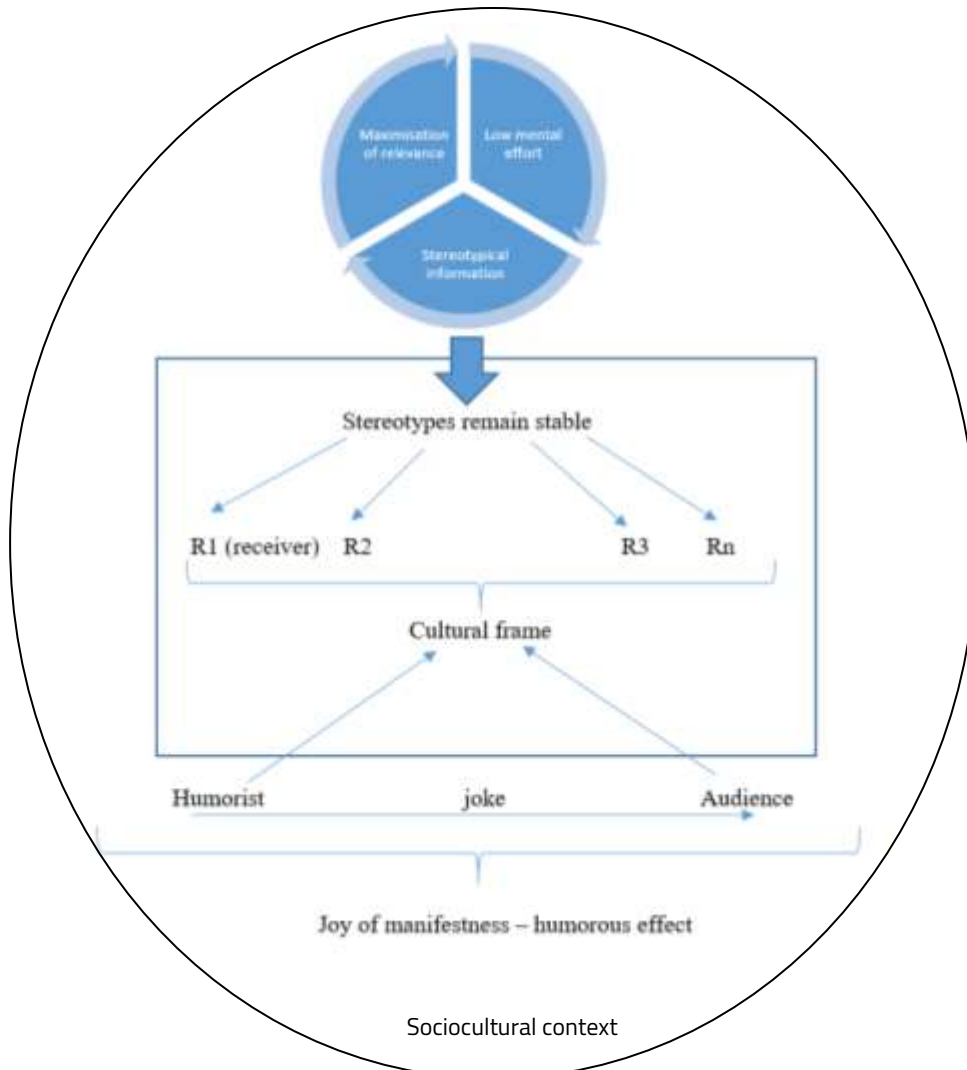


Figure C.2 - *RT and stereotypes*

4. PERSPECTIVES ON TERMINOLOGY

The main problem I faced is related to translating the specialized language, adapting it and finding the most appropriate meaning in the Transylvanian humoristic context. In addition, it was necessary to propose and integrate into the specialized language new terms with definitions that reflect the local context.

Thus, the most important distinction proposed in this paper is the dichotomy of *ethnic vs. interethnic jokes*. Chapter 6 presented the distinction and illustrated the main ways in which *Romanians* are reflected in jokes portraying *Gypsies* and *Hungarians/Magyars/Szeklers*. Also, in this chapter, I graphically illustrated the map of ethnic interactions in Transylvanian interethnic jokes. In addition, I have shown that, in the case of *Gypsy* jokes, the central group consists of *Romanians* who target *Gypsies* in their jokes, with *Gypsies* representing the peripheral group. In the case of the *Hungarian/Magyar/Szekler* and *Romanian* jokes, the centre-periphery relationship is overturned once the perspective changes. Thus, in jokes told from the *Romanians'* perspective, *Romanians* represent

the central group, and *Hungarians* represent the periphery, whereas in jokes told from the *Hungarian* perspective, *Magyars/Szeklers* represent the central group and *Romanians* the periphery. Therefore, ethnonyms specialize in ethnic jokes, the Centre-Periphery model (Davies 1990) being adapted to the Transylvanian context.

Among the most important terminological distinctions are also *model character* vs. *antimodel character*. The *model character* is the reflection of the central group in the joke. It is the character who undertakes the action that is typical of any member of the group he or she represents. The *antimodel character* is the reflection of the peripheral group in the universe of the joke. This character is distinguished from the model character by a set of traits that become the source of ethnic humour.

In the process of mapping the Transylvanian ethnic jokes, I came to the distinction between *autochthonous ethnic humour* – *circulation/imported ethnic humour*. I can say that Transylvanian ethnic humour is autochthonous because of patterns deeply rooted in the sociocultural reality that are brought to light in the universe of jokes.

The Transylvanian perspective is reflected in: (1) the geo-cultural space of data collection; (2) the origin of the collaborators; (3) the number of Hungarian and Roma inhabitants in Transylvania, respectively; and (4) the toponyms found in the ethnic jokes that designate: (1) a region (Transilvania; Ardeal; Interiorul Lanţului Carpatic (Eng. Inside the Carpathian Mountains); partea de nord-est a României (Eng. north-eastern part of Romania); Ținutul Secuiesc (Eng. Szeklerland); Scaune (i.e., a form of division of the territory that forms Szeklerland); graniţa dintre România și Ungaria (Eng. the border between Romania and Hungary)), (2) mountains (Munţii Carpaţi (Eng. Carpathian Mountains); sub umbra muntelui (Eng. under the shadow of the mountain)), (3) rivers (Mureş; Olt), (4) counties (Cluj; Harghita), (5) localities (un oraşel ardelenesc (Eng. a small town in Transylvania); un sat unguresc din Ardeal (Eng. a Hungarian village in Transylvania); Satu Mare; Cluj(-Napoca); Târgu Mureş; Sibiu) etc.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES FOR ANALYSIS

Beyond the innovative element of this paper, the research is limited to the study of the sociocultural aspects reflected in the (inter)ethnic jokes with *Gypsies*, *Hungarians/Magyars/Szeklers* and *Romanians*, respectively. Future directions of analysis may go towards the collection of humorous texts targeting other ethnic groups. These include Saxons, Jews and, perhaps more recently, Ukrainians. The analysis of humour has also focused on only one species of humour, ethnic jokes. Noting that in the last decade memes and stand-up shows have been particularly well represented, it becomes interesting to observe to what extent they target the ethnic groups covered by this research. In addition, it is important to note to what extent the framework integrating pragma-linguistic and humour studies perspectives can be applied to other realisations of ethnic humour, not only jokes.

I believe that such an analysis becomes more valuable if its results can be compared with the results of other fields, for example, - as I have shown - the study of ethnic humour requires an interdisciplinary approach that leaves the boundaries of the philological studies and moves towards sociology, psychology, political studies, ethnocultural studies.

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³⁸ The links to the jokes I identified on the internet are in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.