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Appreciation of purposive ambiguity:
The relevance of puns in city promotional slogans

Abstract: The chapter reports on an empirical study involving 61 native speakers of Polish conducted to establish to what extent the presence or absence of a pun in a city promotional slogan affects the audience's perception of the slogan's appeal. The findings that emerged were used to test the predictions that follow from Sperber and Wilson's (1986/1995) relevance-theoretic model of utterance comprehension, namely that utterances may be judged as more or less appealing depending on the extent to which they meet or fall short of the interpreters' expectations of relevance. The results confirmed the observations that puns constitute an important factor affecting the appeal of a city slogan. They also demonstrated the explanatory powers of the relevance-theoretic tools in predicting pun-related phenomena.

Key words: ambiguity, puns, Relevance Theory, city promotional slogans

1. Introduction

Slogans promoting territorial units such as countries, regions or cities have become an important part of the linguistic landscapes we live in. They appear on banners and billboards, they accompany press advertisements and TV commercials; they get integrated into city and country logos. Like no other kind of discourse city they get evaluated on a regular basis, not only by marketing agencies but also by members of the general public who feel compelled to share their thoughts on selected taglines and sobriquets. Whether encapsulating some aspect of the place they promote (*Windy City, Cottonopolis*), whether expressing an invitation to visit (*Go Goa*), many of these taglines exploit puns, in other words they are carefully worded to evoke more than one meaning of a single expression. For instance, in (1) the phrase *turned on* can be interpreted as 'buzzing with activity' but the sexual innuendo is hard to ignore. In the Copenhagen logotype in Figure 1 the letters spelling the word *open* first form a fragment of the city's name, then reappear as the full fledged adjective.

(1) Atlantic City – Always **Turned On**.

65

Figure 1: Copenhagen logotype
Source: www.visitdenmark.com)

Puns like these make a fascinating object of study. Exploiting deliberately used ambiguities, they are of interest to scholars trying to gain insight into how humans produce and comprehend language. Stirring up strong emotions in the audience, they also attract the attention of researchers studying how people react to language. Their existence, widespread use, the passionate response they evoke, invite a whole host of questions. To what extent does the presence or absence of a pun affect the appeal a slogan may have for its comprehender? Does a slogan's appeal depend on the type of pun used? Are comprehenders even aware that a specific slogan owes its effect to the use of a pun? Can existing models of utterance comprehension account for this effect? If so, can their predictions regarding puns be empirically tested?

The present paper reports on an empirical study conducted to address these issues. Twenty four Polish city slogans, among them sixteen punning ones, have been presented to 61 native speakers of Polish, with a view to examining their appreciation for the puns used. The findings that emerged were used to test the predictions that follow from Sperber and Wilson's (1986/1995) relevance-theoretic model of utterance comprehension, namely that utterances may be judged as more or less appealing depending on the extent to which they meet or fall short of the interpreters' expectations of relevance.

The structure of the paper is as follows: section 2 provides a brief description about city promotional slogans and the rhetorical devices they employ. It also presents the first research question. Section 3 introduces selected dichotomies applicable to puns, describes the types of puns which were used in the study and presents the second research question. Section 4 outlines the theoretical model whose predictions the study was to test. Section 5 describes the research method we applied, introduces the research material and presents the analysis of the results. Section 6 contains a discussion of the findings obtained in the study carried out in the light of the predictions following from the relevance-theoretic model. Finally, section 7 presents the conclusions emerging from the study.

2. Slogans promoting territorial units

In this paper the term 'promotional slogans' will be used somewhat loosely to refer not only to taglines and bynames created to promote specific territorial units (e.g. *Be Berlin*) but also to unofficial catchphrases and monikers many places have (e.g. *Hotlanta*).

The official slogans are essentially a form of advertising. Their purpose is to attract the attention of the audience and to establish or maintain a positive image of the location in their minds. Most of them are created by professional copywriters employed by chambers of commerce, tourism boards or city councils hoping to forge identities for their regions, to attract tourists and investors or to increase place attachment in the residents. Sometimes they emerge as winning entries of contests announced by some official agency such as the motto of Reno in Nevada: *The Biggest Little City in the World*, which first appeared on the landmark Reno Arch in 1929. Such slogans are treated as commodities: they are commissioned, used to establish a city brand and replaced to fit the new image of the region. By contrast, unofficial slogans develop 'organically' with language users spontaneously summing up the qualities of specific places in a few well chosen words. For instance, Rome has been referred to as *The Eternal City* for centuries while the term *Sin City* has been applied by the general public to several places notorious for catering to various human vices (e.g. Las Vegas in Nevada or Macau in China). These slogans, too, have the power to create a lasting image, which however is not always positive. For instance, the derisive *Tackyoma* (emphasizing the idea of 'tackiness') or the sarcastic *Spokan't* (hinting at the inhabitants' inaptitude?) are unlikely to ever become part of a marketing strategy for the Washington State cities of Tacoma and Spokane.

The range of rhetorical and other devices professional and amateur creators of slogans employ is vast. Some mottoes and monikers make use of alliterations: the town of Lodi in California presents itself as *Livable, Lovable Lodi*. Many employ parallelisms: Dallas in Texas invites the addressee to *Live Large. Think Big*. Some contain rhymes: Happy in Texas is *The Town Without a Frown*. Some allude to other well known slogans: the aliases for Manhattan in Kansas (*The Little Apple*), Minneapolis in Minnesota (*The Mini Apple*) and Honolulu in Hawaii (*The Big Pineapple*) all capitalize on the popularity of *The Big Apple*, the well-known nickname of New York City. Many taglines contain idioms or set phrases. Thus Newark in New Jersey is a city *On A Roll* and the Canadian city of Thunder Bay is *Superior By Nature*. The Reno slogan (*The Biggest Little City in the World*) owes its effect to an oxymoron, a figure of speech which is relatively rarely used unlike the much more popular metaphor. Thus New York is also *A City that Never Sleeps* while Hershey, home to the largest chocolate manufacturer in the United States, is *The Sweetest Town In The World*

Many of these stylistic figures coexist with one another in a single slogan. In fact the puns which lurk in many of them arise thanks to the accumulation of diverse tropes. In the Hershey slogan the key word *sweetest* oscillates between its fully valid metaphorical sense of 'very charming' and the inadmissible literal sense of 'tasting like sugar' while the pun in the slogan for Matamata in New Zealand (*You **matter** in **Matamata***) emerges through the combination of rhyming, alliteration and homophony.

Pun-based humor, which is encountered in many slogans, merits a separate discussion, which is outside the scope of the present paper. At this point let us merely say that despite the widespread perception of puns as an essentially humorous kind of wordplay, punning slogans are not always funny and not all humorous slogans contain a pun. For instance, the claim that Sitka in Alaska is *A Natural Place to Visit* is not likely to provoke laughter and the humorous nickname of Cambridge in England, *The City of Perspiring Dreams*, is based on spoonerism, not a pun: its creator (the author and screenwriter Frederic Raphael) transposed some of the consonants in the nickname of its rival Oxford, *The City of Dreaming Spires*.

As could be expected, in many cases the appeal of a slogan resides in its graphic form. Consider *AmaMi*, which appears on the card serving as a discount pass to Milan's museums. Not only does it incorporate the abbreviation of the city's name (*Mi*), but it says (in Italian) "It [presumably, Milan] loves me". Diverse symbols, pictures and numbers are used to create rebus slogans. In *I love £ondon* the pound symbol replaces the first letter in the name of the British capital. In the ubiquitous *I♥[city name]* clones of the original *I♥NY*, a picture of a heart is used in lieu of the verb *love*. A rebus-based pun is concealed in the cryptic *NO8DO*, which can be encountered throughout the Spanish city of Seville, adorning street names, lampposts and even drain covers. Number 8 in the middle of this pictorial word puzzle is supposed to represent a skein, or a coil of yarn, which in Spanish is called *madeja*. *No madeja do* is meaningless but when pronounced aloud it sounds almost exactly like *No me ha dejado* (i.e. "She [Seville] has not abandoned me"), the city's official motto.

Apart from symbols, slogans employ other graphic methods which produce a punning effect. In the word-within-a-word logotype of Copenhagen the adjective OPEN in the city name becomes apparent because the letters that spell it have been placed on a circle in a contrasting color and set askew.

Whatever their form, slogans not only tend to get noticed but often provoke a whole gamut of emotions from appreciation to scorn. Journalists deem them newsworthy enough to merit coverage (cf. Dugan 2007, Hiebert 2014), scholars of urban studies emphasize not only their role in establishing city brands but also their esthetic values (Pareja-Eastaway et al. 2013, Ries 2010, Wiśniewska 2011, Chrząścik 2013), the blogosphere on the Internet is teeming with bloggers announcing their private rankings of the slogans they have found particularly

impressive, atrocious or bland (cf. Pollock 2008, Herzog 2010). This leads us to our first research question, given below:

Question 1: To what extent does the presence or absence of a pun affect the audience's perception of a slogan's appeal?

2. Pun-related dichotomies

In this paper we define a pun as a rhetorical figure whose effect arises from a contrived ambiguity between identically or similar-sounding words. In literature puns are typically described in terms of various dichotomies, two of which are pertinent to our discussion. Arguably, the best known is the distinction into double-retention puns and single-retention puns. Coined by Dynel (2010), these two terms respectively refer to puns which have two viable meanings and those which have one.

An example of a double-retention pun can be found in the Polish slogan in (2), which invites its reader to both fall in love *with* Warsaw and *in* Warsaw.

(2) Zakochaj się **w Warszawie**.
("Fall in love with/in Warsaw")

These two equally valid meanings result from the underlying structural ambiguity: as indicated in the tree diagrams in figure 2, the key fragment *w Warszawie* can be treated as either the prepositional object of the main verb (corresponding to the "with Warsaw" reading) or the adverbial of place (corresponding to the "in Warsaw" reading).
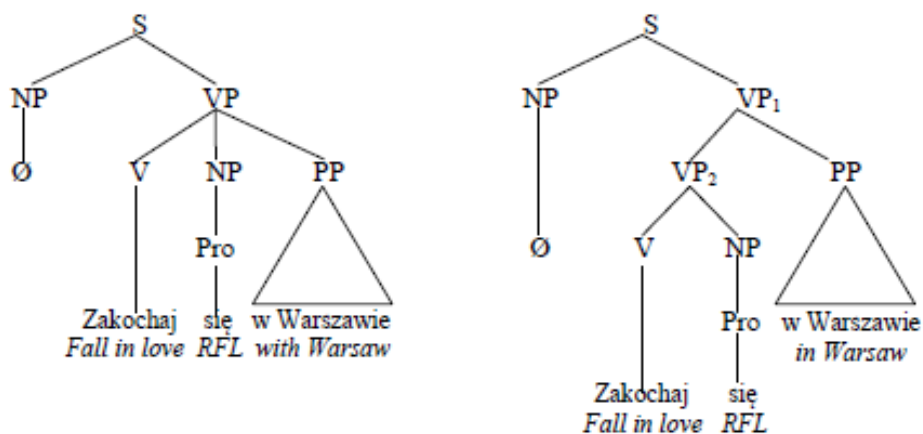

Figure 2 The two underlying structures of the *Fall in love with/in Warsaw* slogan

The slogan in (3), especially its first part, is an example of a single retention pun, as one of the readings it supports is not admissible. Its interpreter is not likely to entertain the idea that Świętokrzyskie Province literally enchants, that is, performs sorcery, nor is he/she likely to believe that he/she is invited to arrive there through the air. The ambiguous words *czaruje* ('[it] enchants') and *poleć* ('fly') make sense only when taken metaphorically. The punning effect arises thanks to the extraneous literal meanings of these two key words. The pun will be apparent only to the language users who are familiar with old legends of witches flying on broomsticks to the tops of the region's mountains.

(3) Świętokrzyskie **czaruje** – **poleć** na weekend.
("Świętokrzyskie [Province] enchants – fly over/recommend[1] for the weekend")

The second distinction which is pertinent to our study is the one classifying puns into vertical and horizontal ones. In the structure of vertical (or paradigmatic) puns the ambiguity carrying fragment (variously called the punning element, the pivot or the connector) appe6ars once simultaneously yielding more than one interpretation. Vertical puns can be observed in slogans (1), (2) and (3). A punning utterance is horizontal (or syntagmatic) if in its structure the punning element appears more than once. The Copenhagen slogan in Figure 1 above is a horizontal pun as is the slogan in (4), promoting the North Dakotan city of Cando, and the Polish slogan in (5). Strictly speaking, punning utterances of this type are not ambiguous. Though on each occasion the connector makes available a different meaning, these meanings get integrated into the emerging message, which ultimately explicitly conveys only one meaning.

(4) You **can do** in **Cando**.
(5) **Lub**lin da się **lub**ić. ("Lublin is likeable.")

Diverse taxonomies of puns have been proposed (e.g., Dynel 2010, Yus 2003), most of them cutting across the two dichotomies described above. The presentation of these taxonomies is outside the scope of the present paper. Here we are going to mention only those pun types which appeared in our study: in addition to the double- and single-retention puns the set of vertical puns in our data included garden-path puns and imperfect puns. Following Dienhart (1995) we chose to label the latter paraphonic puns.

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[1] The authors would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for pointing out that the word *poleć* can also be interpreted as the imperative form of the verb *polecić* ('to recommend'). The second part of the slogan can thus be regarded as a double retention pun, as it carries yet another fully viable meaning, namely 'Recommend for the weekend'.

The garden-path mechanism underlies the pun in (6). This utterance, which exploits the multiple meanings of the connector verb *tonie* ("[it] is sinking"), lures the interpreter into establishing one meaning of the connector and then forces him to reinterpret it and search for another meaning. This slogan was part of a 2008 teaser campaign for the Polish city of Łódź. In the teaser phase of the campaign only the initial part the slogan was revealed, provoking the enraged citizens to write letters of protest to the local authorities. Later, in the reveal part of the campaign, the slogan was disclosed in its entirety and the gloomy message changed into a brief description of a success story.

(6) W Łodzi moja firma **tonie** ... w morzu zleceń.
("In Łódź my firm is sinking… in the sea of orders")

Paraphonic puns are based on the phonological similarity of two words. In puns of this sort the punning element always appears as a fragment of a larger set expression. This allows it to serve as a "prime", which induces the addressee to identify another identically or similar sounding "target" expression. Though the explicitly conveyed meaning of the utterance is unambiguous, the interpreter ends up swinging back and forth between the meanings incorporating the concepts associated with the expressed prime and the unexpressed target. This type of pun can be seen in the slogan of the English city of Kingston upon Hull, in (7), which puns on the phrase ***Hell on Earth***, and in another slogan promoting Łódź, given in (8), which is supposed to convey the message that the city offers opportunities for finding a good job and having a good life. In this slogan the quirky unconventional expression *po łódzku* (literally, 'the Łódź way' or 'the way characteristic of Łódź') brings to mind the set phrase *po ludzku* (literally, 'like a human being'), whose idiomatic meanings include 'as one could wish'.

(7) **Hull** on Earth.
(8) Żyję i pracuję po **łódzku** [target: *ludzku*]
("I live and work the Łódź/human way")

The diversity of forms and combinations of meaning exhibited by vertical puns allows us to formulate another research question, namely:

Question 2: Is the appeal of a punning slogan a function of the pun type?

3. The relevance-theoretic position on the appreciation of puns

As stated in the introduction to this paper, we would like to examine the appreciation of puns through the theoretical lens provided by the Relevance Theory. The idea that this particular framework can offer valid insights into the emotional and aesthetic reactions puns evoke may seem unjustified. After all, Relevance Theory is essentially a model of utterance comprehension, better suited to explaining how puns are processed[2]. Nonetheless, attempts have also been made to apply it to the investigation of the appreciation of puns. For example, Tanaka (1992, 1994) employed Sperber and Wilson's model to explore the potential puns have for enhancing the effectiveness of advertising slogans and van Mulken et al. (2005) conducted an empirical relevance-based study to test the hypothesis that double-retention puns are appreciated more than single-retention ones.

We believe that a particularly useful tool for explaining what lies behind the language users' appraisals of some puns as appealing and some as not can be found in the relevance-theoretic notion of optimal relevance. The key tenet of the theory, formulated as the Communicative Principle of Relevance, holds that "[e]very ostensive stimulus conveys a presumption of its own optimal relevance" (Wilson and Sperber 2004: 612). What this means is that all intentionally produced utterances, including city slogans (whether punning or not) create in the addressee the expectation that in return for expending his attention and processing resources he will be rewarded by cognitive gains that will make his efforts worth his while. This expectation prompts the addressee to start the interpretation process, which, like all cognitive activities, will proceed in a way predicted by Cognitive Principle of Relevance, that is, it will be geared to achieving the greatest possible gains for the smallest possible efforts.

The main prediction following from the Relevance Theory would thus be that an addressee would perceive a pun as pleasing if it meets his expectations of relevance, and as unsatisfactory if it falls short of these expectations. How pleasing or how unsatisfactory a pun is felt to be would depend on the extent to which it exceeds of foils these expectations for a specific addressee.

Considering the factors which contribute to making a specific kind of utterance difficult or easy to process and considering the number and type of cognitive effects to be gained by processing a pun we might expect to observe the following tendencies:

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[2] Several relevance-based accounts of various aspects of deriving meanings of punning utterances have been provided by one of the authors of the present paper (Solska 2012a; 2012b; and 2012c).

1. Vertical puns, which force the interpreter to derive two interpretations, will be more costly to process than unambiguous non-punning utterances or horizontal puns. The multiple meanings vertical puns support may increase the cognitive gains they offer. For different vertical puns and for different comprehenders, the overall balance of cost and gain will be different.
2. Horizontal puns, which explicitly communicate a single message, will be less costly to process than vertical puns and equally costly to process as non-punning slogans. Compared with non-punning slogans they may offer more gains due to the fact that in all of them one of the two connectors is the name of the place being promoted. The second connector may thus be treated as drawing attention to a key feature of the place.
3. Single-retention puns will be more costly to process than double-retention puns, since they force the interpreter to entertain an extraneous meaning. They may offer more or fewer cognitive gains depending on the nature of that extraneous meaning, specifically on whether it provides or highlights pertinent information about the place being advertised.
4. Garden-path puns will be more costly to process than those kinds of puns which do not require a reevaluation of the initial hypothesis about the meaning of the key expression. They may, however, offer more cognitive gains than those single-retention puns whose additional meaning is not apparent to the addressee and those paraphonic puns which fail to provide a discernible prime or an identifiable target.
5. Those paraphonic puns which fail to provide a discernible prime or an identifiable target will be more costly to process than those that succeed in providing them. The cognitive gains they offer will be greater if both the prime and the target convey pertinent meanings.

These are the predictions we will put to the test during the analysis of the data obtained in our study.

4. Method

4.1 Participants

A total of 61 participants took part in the study (51 females and 10 males). They were all students of English at the University of Silesia, Poland, ranging in age from 19 to 30 years (mean age: 22: range). The reason for choosing this particular group of participants was connected with their availability. All participants were native speakers of Polish, born and raised in Poland.

4.2 Instruments and procedure

The general method we adopted to address the two research questions was to present native speakers of Polish with a randomized list of 24 Polish city promotional slogans consisting of eight horizontal puns, eight vertical puns, and 8 non-punning utterances. Care was taken to select slogans which would be interpretable without an accompanying picture or special typeface. A questionnaire was developed to elicit data from the participants. The questionnaire was anonymous.

In order to create the questionnaire, in the pre-testing phase a larger sample of 44 slogans was presented to groups of undergraduate students at The English Teacher Training College in Sosnowiec as well as the University of Silesia. The aim of the pretests was to eliminate slogans which exploit wordplay and/or ambiguity despite clearly being non-punning. The slogans which were screened out included slogans containing rhymes, such as *Mazury–Cud Natury* ("Masuria–The Wonder of Nature") as well as metaphors, such as *Lublin–Nieziemski Klimat* ("Lublin–Heavenly Climate").

Since part of what we wanted to investigate was the perceived pleasingness of vertical puns as a function of pun subtype, we decided that the set of slogans containing vertical puns should be internally diverse so as to reflect the heterogeneous nature of such puns. Thus in the set there were two double-retention puns, two single-retention puns, two garden-path puns and two paraphonic puns.

The complete list of slogans used in the study can be found in the Appendix. For ease of reference they have been arranged by the type. Each slogan has been provided with a trilinear gloss, the vertical puns with two: one for each of the two meanings.

To address the research questions, that is, to measure the participants' perception of how pleasing each slogans was, an attitude scale was used. The participants were asked to respond to the question "Do you find this slogan pleasing?" by indicating the value ranking from "Definitely not" to "Definitely yes" on a seven point Likert-scale.

Each slogan was presented as follows (the English translation, given below, was not included in the questionnaire). Question (a), which is presented here, was accompanied by three other questions which are not shown here since they were connected with issues not investigated in the present study.

W ŁODZI MOJA FIRMA TONIE… W MORZU ZLECEŃ.
[In Łódź my firm is sinking… in the sea of orders]

(a) Czy ten slogan Ci się podoba?   **1   2   3   4   5   6   7**
     ("Do you find this slogan pleasing?")

4.3 Analysis and results

In order to address research question 1 (the perceived pleasingness of a slogan as a function of utterance type) the obtained scores for pleasingness for the three types of slogans were compared using the two-way repeated-measures 3x8 ANOVA. The two independent grouping variables were: a slogan type and a slogan. Three levels of the slogan type variable were distinguished: H–slogans containing horizontal puns, N–non-punning slogans and V–slogans containing horizontal puns). As shown in figure 3, the main effect of the slogan type on the obtained scores was highly significant [$F(2,120) = 38.76$, p<.001]. Post hoc Bonferroni tests revealed that slogans of type H received significantly higher scores (M = 4.62; SE = 0.17) than the slogans of type N (M = 3.65; SE = 0.19) and V (M = 3.62; SE = 0.22) (both p<.001). The difference between type N and V was not significant (p>.05). Mean scores and standard errors for pleasingness in each of the three types of slogans are presented in Tables 1, 2 and 3 below.
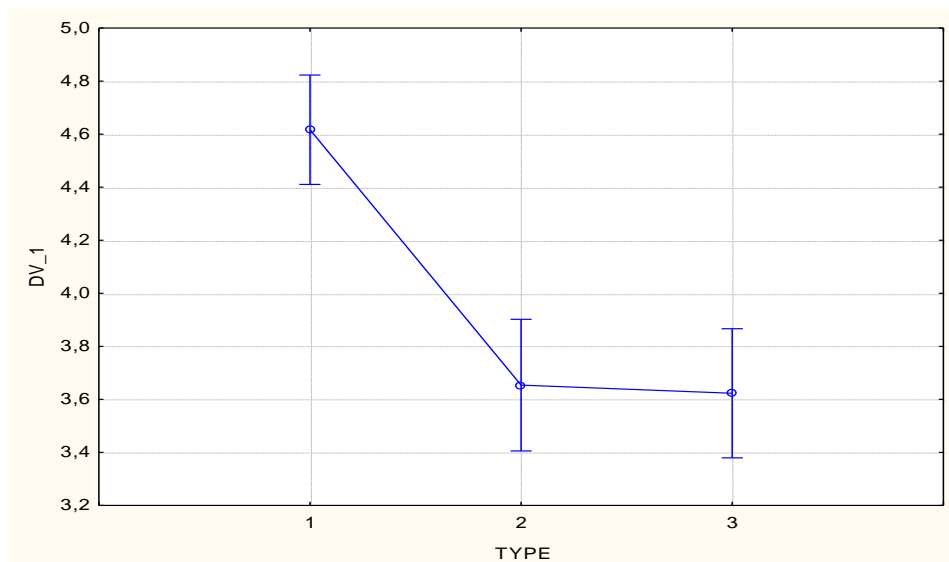

Figure 3: The main effect of the slogan type (1: H; 2: N; 3: V) and the mean scores (DV_1) for perceived pleasingness.

75

Table 1: Mean scores and standard errors for perceived pleasingness in type H slogans

No.	Slogan	Mean	Standard Error
1.	*Ciesz się Cieszynem* ("Enjoy Cieszyn")	4.98	0.19
2.	*Lublin da się lubić* ("Lublin is likeable")	4.44	0.16
3.	*Poznań wart poznania* ("Poznań is worth knowing")	5.15	0.15
4.	*Wolę Zduńską Wolę* ("Zduńska Wola is my choice")	4.66	0.16
5.	*Skocz do Skoczowa* ("Pop over to Skoczów")	5.10	0.14
6.	*Wielkopolska. Autentycznie wielka Polska* ("Wielkopolska. Where Poland is truly great")	4.03	0.19
7.	*Warto płynąć Wartą* ("Warta. The river worth taking a trip on")	4.25	0.16
8.	*Lądek Zdrój. Przylądek zdrowia* ("Lądek Zdrój. The promontory of health")	4.33	0.18

As can be seen in Table 1, the mean scores for horizontal puns oscillated between 4.03 and 5.10, thus falling entirely on the 'pleasing' side of the scale.

Table 2: Mean scores and standard errors for pleasingness in non-punning slogans

No.	Slogan	Mean	Standard Error
1.	*Magiczny Kraków* ("Magical Cracow")	3.66	0.20
2.	*Śląskie. Pozytywna energia* ("Silesia. Positive energy")	4.23	0.16
3.	*Rzeszów. Miasto jak z bajki* ("Rzeszów. A fairytale city")	3.30	0.18
4.	*Gdańsk. Tu się żyje* ("Gdańsk. Where life is good.")	3.54	0.21
5.	Opole. Stolica polskiej piosenki ("Opole. The capital of Polish song")	3.52	0.18
6.	*Bochnia. Miasto soli* ("Bochnia. The city of salt"	3.33	0.19
7.	*Wrocław. Miasto spotkań* ("Wrocław. The meeting place")	3.75	0.20
8.	Międzyzdroje. Perła Bałtyku ("Międzyzdroje. The pearl of the Baltic Sea")	3.90	0.20

As can be seen in Table 2, the mean scores for non-punning slogans oscillated between 3.30 and 4.23, straddling the dividing line between the 'pleasing' and 'not-pleasing' side of the scale.

Table 3: Mean scores and standard errors for perceived pleasingness in type V slogans

No.	Sub-type	Slogan	Mean	Standard Error
1.	D	*Zakochaj się w Warszawie* (1: "Fall in love in Warsaw") (2: "Fall in love with Warsaw")	3.26	0.21
2.	D	*Rybnik. Miasto z ikrą* (1: "Rybnik. A city full of pep") (2: "Fishpond. The fishroe city")	5.21	0.19
3.	S	*Świętokrzyskie czaruje – poleć na weekend* (1: "Świętokrzyskie enchants–dash over for the weekend") (2: "Świętokrzyskie bewitches–fly over for the weekend")	3.18	0.22
4.	S	*Ciechocinek. Uzdrawia potężnie* (1: "Ciechocinek has vast healing powers") (2: "Ciechocinek heals all the way to graduation towers")	3.13	0.21
5.	G	*W Łodzi moja firma tonie ... w morzu zleceń* ("In Łódź my firm is sinking… the sea of offers")	3.64	0.25
6.	G	*Łódź mnie zawiodła... na ścieżkę kariery* (1: "Łódź has disappointed me…") (2: "Łódź has set me off… on a career path")	3.90	0.23
7.	P	*Żyję i pracuję po łódzku* (1: "I live and work the way they do in Łódź") [prime: *łódzku*] (2: "My life is good and so is my job") [target: *ludzku*]	3.66	0.24
8.	P	*Jarocin free. Wolne miasto* (1: "Jarocin free. A free city") [prime: *free wolne*] (2: "Jarocin. A frivolous city") [target: *frywolne*]	3.00	0.21

As can be seen in Table 3, the mean scores for vertical puns oscillated between 3.00 (for the paraphonic Jarocin slogan) and 5.21 (for the double-retention Rybnik slogan). The latter score is an exception, however. The mean scores for all other slogans fell on the 'not-pleasing' side of the scale.

In order to address research question 2, the two-way repeated-measures 4x2 ANOVA was used, the four levels of the slogan subtype variable being: (i) d–slogans containing double-retention puns, (ii) s–slogans containing single-retention puns, (iii) g – slogans containing garden-path puns and (iv) p–slogans containing paraphonic puns. As can be seen in figure 4, there was a significant main effect of the slogan subtype on obtained scores [$F(3, 180) =$

13.099, p<.001]. The greatest appreciation (highest perceived pleasingness) was expressed for subtype d (M = 4.24; SE = 0.14), followed by g (M = 3.77; SE = 0.20), p (M = 3.33; SE = 0.17) and s (M = 3.16; SE = 0.17). Table 4 shows Post hoc Bonferroni comparisons between all subtypes.
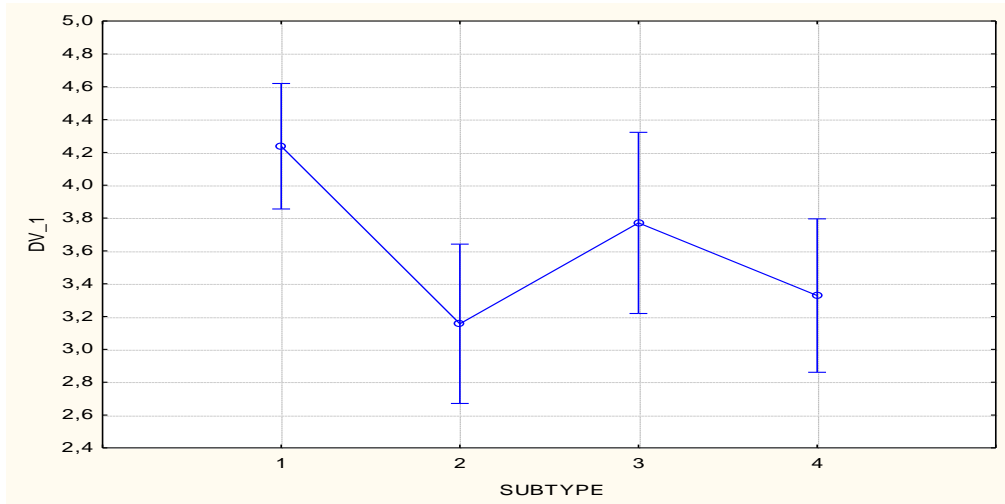

Figure 4. The main effect of the slogan subtype (1: d; 2: s; 3: g; 3: p) and the mean scores for perceived pleasingness

Table 4: Post hoc Bonferroni comparisons between scores for perceived pleasingness for all subtypes of the vertical puns.

Subtype	d	s	g	p
d	–	0.000**	0.087	0.000**
s	0.000**	–	0.008*	1.000
g	0.087	0.008*	–	0.123
p	0.000**	1.000	0.123	–

5. Discussion

In our study we hoped to establish (i) whether the perceived pleasingness of a slogan is affected by the use of a pun and (ii) whether the perceived pleasingness of slogans containing vertical puns is affected by the pun type.

As far as objective one is concerned, the results we have obtained confirm that the appeal the slogans had for the participants did indeed depend on the

78

utterance type. The patterns of pleasingness we have observed bear out the predictions following from the Relevance Theory, listed in section 3. Thus:

1. Horizontal puns were rated as more pleasing than vertical puns. Arguably, this was due to being unambiguous and hence less costly to process.
2. Horizontal puns were rated as more pleasing than non-punning slogans. Arguably, this was due to the greater number of cognitive effects they offered.
3. Vertical puns were rated as marginally less pleasing than non-punning slogans. Arguably, this was due to being costly to process and not generating enough cognitive effects to justify the extra cost.

As far as objective two is concerned, the perceived pleasingness of a vertical pun did turn out to be dependent on the pun subtype. Again, the patterns of pleasingness we have observed bear out the predictions endorsed by the Relevance Theory. Thus:

1. Of all vertical pun subtypes, double-retention puns received the highest rates for pleasingness. Arguably, this was due to the greater number of cognitive effects they offered compared with single-retention and paraphonic puns, and due to being less costly to process than garden-path puns.
2. Garden-path puns were rated as more pleasing than single-retention puns or paraphonic ones. Arguably, this was because the greater number of cognitive effects they offered compared with single-retention and paraphonic puns outweighed their relatively higher processing cost.
3. The paraphonic pun in the Jarocin slogan received the lowest rating. Arguably, this was because its prime and target expressions were particularly difficult to detect and its explicit content stated the same information twice and so its information content was low.

We were surprised to find that with one exception all vertical puns in our study were rated as not pleasing. This finding goes against the commonly held beliefs that due to their increased information content puns enhance the communicative value of the utterance in which they appear. This was not so in the case of the puns we tested. Our study showed that resorting to puns may be fraught with risk.

The results we have obtained for double- and single-retention puns confirm the findings established in van Mulken et al.'s (2005) study that the former are appreciated more than the latter. It has to be pointed out, however, that the ratings for the two double-retention slogans in our study differed drastically from each other. The mean score for the Warsaw slogan was low (3.26), while the mean score for the Rybnik slogan was particularly high (5.21). Arguably, the low mean rating for the Warsaw slogan could be attributed to the fact that the pun it contained was based on a structural ambiguity, hence lacked an obvious connector and some participants simply failed to notice its punning character. The high attractiveness of the pun in the Rybnik slogan may have

79

resulted from particularly high information content of the connector expression. The phrase *z ikrą* ('full of pep/full of fishroe') not only conveys a positive message about the city but also makes an implicit reference to its name *Rybnik* ('fishpond').

6. Conclusions

Our study confirmed the observation that puns constitute an important factor affecting the appeal of a city slogan. It also demonstrated the explanatory powers of the relevance-theoretic tools in predicting pun-related phenomena. However, it has to be also pointed out that the findings we have obtained should be treated with caution. The appeal city slogans may have for language users is not something that can be precisely measured. The participants' judgments could have been affected by such factors as their attitudes towards the places being promoted, their prior knowledge of the slogans, their fondness for or their aversion to word games. We cannot be sure that the same effects would occur with different participants or if different slogans were used. More research is required before we can gain sufficient insight into the complex nature of what is involved in experiencing punning discourse.

Appendix

1. Slogans containing horizontal puns

(1) *Ciesz   się   Cieszynem*
    enjoy.2SG.IMP RFL   Cieszyn.INSTR
    "Enjoy Cieszyn"

(2) *Lublin   da   się   lubić*
    Lublin give.3SG.PRES   RFL   like.INF
    "Lublin is likeable"

(3) *Poznań   wart   poznania*
    Poznań   worth getting-to-know.GEN
    "Poznań is worth knowing"

(4) *Wolę   Zduńską Wolę*
    prefer.1SG.PRES   Zduńska Wola.ACC
    "Zduńska Wola is my choice"

(5) *Skocz   do Skoczowa*
Jump.2SG.IMP to Skoczów.GEN
"Pop over to Skoczów"

(6) *Wielkopolska.   Autentycznie wielka Polska*
"Wielkopolska [region] Authentically great   Poland
"Wielkopolska. Where Poland is truly great"

(7) *Warto   płynąć   Wartą*
"[it is] worth swim/sail.INF Warta.INSTR."
"Warta. The river worth taking a trip on"

(8) *Lądek Zdrój. Przylądek   zdrowia*
Lądek Zdrój promontory.NOM health.GEN
"Lądek Zdrój. The promontory of health"

2. Non-punning slogans

(1) *Magiczny Kraków*
Magical   Cracow
"Magical Cracow"

(2) *Śląskie.   Pozytywna energia*
Silesian [voyvodship]. Positive   energy"
"Silesia. Positive energy"

(3) *Rzeszów. Miasto   jak   z   bajki*
Rzeszów city.NOM like.PREP from   fairytale.GEN"
"Rzeszów. A fairytale city"

(4) *Gdańsk.   Tu   się   żyje*
"Gdańsk   Here   RFL   live.3SG.PRES"
"Gdańsk. Where life is good"

(5) *Opole. Stolica   polskiej   piosenki*
"Opole. capital.NOM   Polish.GEN song.GEN"
"Opole. The capital of Polish song"

(6) *Bochnia. Miasto   soli*
Bochnia city.NOM   salt.GEN"
"Bochnia. The city of salt"

(7) *Wrocław. Miasto   spotkań*
"Wrocław city.NOM   meetings.PL.GEN"
"Wrocław. The meeting place"

(8) *Międzyzdroje. Perła   Bałtyku*
"Międzyzdroje pearl.NOM   Baltic [Sea].GEN
"Międzyzdroje. The pearl of the Baltic Sea"

81

3. Slogans containing vertical puns:

Double-retention puns:

(1) (a) *Zakochaj   się   w   Warszawie.*
       fall-in-love.2SG.IMP   RFL   in.PREP Warsaw.LOC
       "Fall in love with Warsaw"
   (b) *Zakochaj   się   w   Warszawie.*
       fall-in-love.2SG.IMP   RFL   in.PREP Warsaw.LOC
       "Fall in love in Warsaw"

(2) (a) *Rybnik. Miasto   z   ikrą.*
       Rybnik city   with pep.INSTR
       "Rybnik. A city full of pep
   (b) *Rybnik.   Miasto z   ikrą.*
       †Fishpond city   with roe.INSTR
       "Fishpond. The fish roe city.
   (The city's name *Rybnik*, which used to mean "fishpond, is derived from *ryba*, i.e. "fish")

Single-retention puns:

(3) (a) *Świętokrzyskie czaruje–   poleć   na   weekend.*
   Świętokrzyskie enchants.3SG.PRES   fly/recommend.2SG.IMP for weekend.ACC
       "Świętokrzyskie Province enchants–Dash over/Recommend for the weekend"
   (b) *Świętokrzyskie czaruje–   poleć   na   weekend.*
   Świętokrzyskie performs sorcery.3SG.PRES fly/recommend.2SG.IMP for
   weekend.ACC
       "Świętokrzyskie bewitches–Fly over/Recommend for the weekend"

(4) (a) *Ciechocinek. Uzdrawia   potężnie*
       Ciechocinek heal.3SG.PRES powerfully.ADV
       "Ciechocinek has vast healing powers"
   (b) *Ciechocinek. Uzdrawia   po   tężnie*
       Ciechocinek heal.3SG.PRES till   graduation towers.PL.ACC
       "Ciechocinek heals all the way to graduation towers"

Garden-path puns:

(5) (a) *W Łodzi   moja firma tonie ...*
       In Łódź/boat.LOC my   firm   sink.3SG.PRES"
       "In Łodź my firm is going down…"
   (b) *W Łodzi   moja firma tonie ...   w morzu   zleceń*
       In Łódź/boat.LOC   my firm   sink.3SG.PRES in sea.LOC orders.PL.GEN"
       "In Łódź my firm is getting submerged in the sea of orders"

(6) (a) *Łódź mnie   zawiodła ...*
       Łódź me.DAT disappoint.3SG.PST
       "Łódź has led me down…"

82

(b) *Łódź   mnie   zawiodła...   na   ścieżkę   kariery.*
    Łódź   me.DAT   lead.3SG.PST   on   path.ACC   career.GEN
    "Łódź has set me off on a career path."

Paraphonic puns:

(7) (a) *Żyję   i   pracuję   po łódzku.*   [prime: *łódzku*]
        live.1SG.PRES and work1SG.PRES   the way characteristic of Łódź.ADV
        "I live and work the way they live and work in Łódź"
    (b) *Żyję   i   pracuję   po ludzku.*   [target: *ludzku*]
        live.1SG.PRES and work1SG.PRES   like a human being.ADV
        "My life is good and so is my job"

(8) (a) *Jarocin free.   Wolne miasto.*   [prime: *free.Wolne*]
        Jarocin free_Eng   free   city
        "Jarocin free. A free city"
    (b) *Jarocin frywolne   miasto*   [target: *frywolne*]
        Jarocin frivolous   city
        "Jarocin. A frivolous city"
    (Jarocin was home to the biggest 'alternative' music festivals in Poland under the communist rule)

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Celowe wieloznaczności w ocenie odbiorcy:
Relewancja kalamburów w sloganach reklamowych miast

Streszczenie

W artykule zaprezentowano wyniki badania empirycznego przeprowadzonego na grupie 61 młodych Polaków celem zbadania, w jakim stopniu obecność lub brak celowej wieloznaczności w postaci kalambury w hasłach promujących miasta wpływa na atrakcyjność tychże haseł w świadomości odbiorcy. Uzyskane wyniki posłużyły do przetestowania przewidywań, wynikających z Teorii Relewancji Sperbera i Wilson (1986/1995), iż wykorzystujące wieloznaczność językową hasła reklamowe mogą być uznane za mniej lub bardziej atrakcyjne w zależności od stopnia, w jakim spełniają oczekiwania odbiorcy odnośnie ich relewancji. Badanie potwierdziło, iż takie czynniki jak wysiłek poznawczy włożony przez odbiorcę w interpretację hasła oraz ilość i jakość uzyskanych przez odbiorcę efektów poznawczych znacząco wpływają na ocenę atrakcyjności poszczególnych haseł. Uzyskane wyniki potwierdziły także skuteczność wypracowanego przez Sperbera i Wilson modelu rozumienia języka do przewidywania zjawisk związanych z interpretowaniem wieloznaczności.

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Absichtliche Mehrdeutigkeit in der Beurteilung eines Rezipienten:
Die Relevanz der Schprachspiele in Werbeslogans von Städten

Zusammenfassung

Der Beitrag präsentiert Ergebnisse der 61 jungen Polen durchgeführten empirischen Un-tersuchung. Diese sollte engrünten, inwieweit die absichtliche Mehrdeutigkeit in Form eines Schprachspiels in den einige bewerbenden Slogans die Attraktivität der Slogans im Bewusstsein des Rezipienten beeinflusst. Die Ergebnisse ermöglichten, die aus der Relevanztheorie von von Sperber und Wilson (1986/1995) ppp tische ppp we Studie polnischen con-geleitet beteiligt zu etablieren, inwieweit das Vorhandensein oder Fehlen eines pun in einer Stadt Werbeslogan beeinflusst

Wahrnehmung des Publikums der Beschwerde der Slogan. Die Ergebnisseh, die waren entstanden verwendet, um die Vorhersagen zu testen, die von Sperber und Wilson (1986/1995) Relevanz theoretische Modell der Äußerung Verständnis folgen, nämlich, dass Äußerungen wie mehr beurteilt werden kann oder weniger ansprechend auf das Ausmaß abhängig, zu dem sie sich treffen oder fallen Kurz der Dolmetscher die Erwartungen der rel-Evance. Die Ergebnisse bestätigten die Beobachtungen, die Wortspiele einen wichtigen Faktor bilden die Attraktivität einer Stadt Slogan zu beeinflussen. Sie zeigten auch die Erklärungs Befugnisse der Relevanz theoretische Werkzeuge bei der Vorhersage von pun bezogene Phänomene.