Stereotyping through Humour in Animated Movies: A Multimodal Analysis

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Abstract

Stereotyping pervades across cultures and is carried out through several ways including media, social practices, and behaviours. Animated movies are one of the popular modes wherein humour acts as an effective discourse vehicle to represent and negotiate certain stereotypical tags associated with race, gender, and social class. There are contending claims about whether animated movies have been purged off the prevalent stereotypical biases, but the contention remains unsubstantiated. Therefore, this study aimed at examining the humour genre of animated movies with a view to figuring out whether the stereotyping associated with race has either been eliminated or reduced with the passage of time. Four popular animated movies, namely, Shrek (2001), The Princess and the Frog (2009), Zootopia (2016) and Moana (2016) were analysed using textual analysis. The data collection was based on the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH) presented by Attardo (2001) with some extensions proposed by Tsakona (2013). The notions of Script Opposition and Target Knowledge Resources (KR's) of GTVH have been treated as the selection criteria of humour incidences. Those humour incidences which portray positive or negative aspects of established beliefs have been analysed. The study identified verbal and non-verbal modes of humour employed in the selected animated movies, communicating certain positive and negative stereotypes. Results suggested that multimodal humour served to perpetuate as well as fade and neutralise negative and positive facets of existing tags associated with white, black, and Polynesian races. The analysis suggested mixed stereotypes, however, the striking pattern observed in the data analysis over the period manifested a considerable progress in promoting positive stereotypes of race particularly black and Polynesians.

Key terms*: Stereotyping, Animated Movies, Multimodal Humour, Race, Shrek, The Princess and the Frog, Zootopia, Moana.*

Introduction

Stereotyping is a widely used term in the diverse academic disciplines to reflect and communicate perceived images or rigid opinions about certain groups. According to Oxford English Dictionary a stereotype is a "widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing". Many people deeply held static assumptions about various social groupings according to gender, socioeconomic status, and race contribute to the perpetuation of this simplified picture or established opinion. There are two types of stereotypes: negative and positive. Negative stereotyping is used to discriminate against and degrade particular groups based on widely held and conventionalized beliefs about them. Stereotypes impair the social standing of targeted, thus reducing those to a particular attribute that either demeans them or restrains them to achievement only in association with that particular trait or disposition (Pickering, 2016). This label separates the people who are stereotyped from the people who spread and support those assumptions. For example, the theorist Gordon Allport stated that in the US, "Sins of spiritual nature like pride and ambition are projected into the Jews, whereas shortcomings of a physical nature like lechery, aggression, and laziness are projected onto the African- Americans" (as cited in Letaief (2015), p.5).

According to Laitef (2015), white people self-pride manifests itself in the form of positive stereotypes and the assumption that white people are inherently more virtuous and courageous. Because of their social dominance and influence, this group can dictate how stereotypes are developed (Attardo, 2023; Hama, 2023). From the very beginning, animated cartoons have featured racial and other stereotypes. During the "Traditional Age" of animation, the pioneering studio known as "Walt Disney Animation Studios" was mostly responsible for producing the movies. Stereotypes based on ethnicity have been promoted by these animated features. The absence of diversity in characters and their representation in a conventional manner contributed to the development of such biases and stereotyped tags. The traditional animated movies comprised of mainly white protagonists, hence portraying white supremacy and racial bias. Lippi-Green (2012) stated that: "discrimination was customary in the early days of animation. Characters were often designed in a stereotypical way which ridiculed marginalized groups such as the mentally ill or people of other nationalities and ethnicities" (as cited in Vynckt, 2018, p. 103). Matyas (2010) found out that "It is apparent through examining the large volume of

Disney movies that there is a pattern in which whiteness is privileged. Although this tendency reflected society back when *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) and some of the earliest movies were created, it should no longer be the standard in their franchise, and yet it prevails. Over the years many scholars and critics have been critical of Disney for the stereotypical portrayal of non-white characters (as in Telma (2017) &Vynckt (2018). Consequently, the period of 90s known as "Animation Renaissance" saw a major shift in the representation of racial diversity. Animated features of that era incorporated non- white and diverse characters as well, having affirmative traits and leading roles albeit with both positive and negative stereotypes, such as the animated movies of 1990s *Aladdin* (1992) *The Lion King* (1994), *Mulan* (1999) contained non-white characters and showed mixed stereotypes but with more positive portrayals (Towbin et al .,2004).

In this "Millennium Age", Disney, Pixar, Dream Works, and other film studios have produced some of the most prolific and appealing characters and are largely acclaimed by the viewers for the representation of diverse races. The Shrek series presented as metaphorical allegory broke the racial perceptions by introducing unconventional stereotypes. "This film has a positive view about race because it represents interracial relationships, where racial and gender stereotypes are discussed through humour" (Ndirangu, 2013). However, Matyas 2010 put it as, the same racist depictions of its characters that are present in some of the earliest movies produced by the Walt Disney Company can be found in *The Princess and the Frog*, which is considered to be a groundbreaking addition to the Disney Princess franchise with its addition of an African American princess. Another animated film Zootopia, dealt with racism in a particularly careful and effective manner. The writers of the movie used subtle stereotyping to convey the message of different species living in harmony (Truitt, 2016). Moreover, Anjirba (2018) asserted about the movie *Moana* that a movie can be considered a positive step, as the studio begins a necessary process of potentially moving away from appropriating and transforming cultural property in decontextualized ways and perpetuating harmful, often colonializing stereotypes. (p.13)

Another important tenet of this study is humour. Tsakona explored the phenomenon of humour from various perspectives in different studies (see Literature Review) to find the emerging role of humour and its significance. Having established the importance of

humour, the humour employed in animated movies appears to be a highly effective discourse vehicle, representing various stereotypes. Therefore, the role of humor in communicating certain stereotypes is still a topic of study in a variety of fields of study, including linguistics.

Problem Statement

As already mentioned in the introductory paras that all the major studios have shown a gradual change in depicting non-white characters and have also exhibited diverse racial representations. But still the notion of progress and change is viewed through binary opinions. Many writers, researchers on the one hand assert that the production of recent animated movies with racial diversity is the progressive step of animation studios toward the stereotypical free portrayal of different races (as in Ndirangu 2013; Truitt, 2016; Anjirba, 2018). Yet, on the other side, some critics and researchers argued that the recent animated films tried to promote the unconventional stereotypes or to change the established opinions, but these films are loaded with such conventional tags conveying stereotypes in a tacit manner. Telma (2017) also suggested that, over the year's studies by (Lippi-Green, 2012; Azad, 2009; van Lierop, 2014; Rosa, 2006; Sonnesyn, 2011) have demonstrated that animated films are not innocuous or harmless as they appear. Considering such conflicting and competing views, the research scholars in other fields of Social Sciences have examined the presence of stereotyping in animated films from different perspectives in order to know; whether the recent animated films carry such stereotypes, and if they are yet imbued with these stereotypes, what are the gradual changes that took place through time. In Linguistics, efforts have been made to identify racial stereotyping through linguistic dimensions such as accent of a particular race and through discourse analysis. However, the study of racial stereotyping in animated movies from the perspective of humour has been the least explored area of research in the realm of Linguistics.

Significance and Implication of the Study

This study tries to bridge the chasm by connecting stereotyping and humour in animated movies using the multimodal approach with real life implications involving societal change, individual imagination, and mobilization. Findings can inform societal change by framing the opinions and thought patterns of the broad audiences to perceive changes in

the depiction of a particular race. Moreover, film makers, critics and research scholars can get meaningful insights from the representation of both negative and positive humorous stereotyping, orienting them towards propagating neutral image and positive portrayals of different races.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate verbal and visual humour relating to stereotypes based on race. (White, Black, Polynesian), in animated features produced at the turn of 21st century.

2. To classify humour incidences in terms of whether they contribute to perpetuate or fade the stereotypical attitude in animated movies under study.

3. To demonstrate whether the stereotypes and the humour techniques employed to address certain stereotypes have undergone any change over the period in this study.

Theoretical Framework

The General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) and the Semantic-Script Theory of Humor are considered as the two most prominent and influential theories of humour. The GTVH was first presented in 1991, by Attardo and Raskin. In 1993, Raskin and Attardo along with Willibald Ruch studied GTVH empirically, for investigating certain prediction to be confirmed (as cited in Attardo, 2017). Later, Attardo (2001) published a monograph that expanded the GTVH's scope to all types of texts. The basic units proposed in the GTVH for the analysis of humourous texts were the punch line and the jab line. He introduced the term jab line to make a distinction between text final punch lines and other occurrences of humour anywhere in the text, he called them strands of two or more jokes involved in script opposition. Attardo (2001) regarded GTVH as a linguistic theory "at large", that is, it includes other areas of linguistics as well, including, most notably, textual linguistics, the theory of narrativity, and pragmatics broadly conceived (p.22). These extensions or broadenings were achieved by introducing five other Knowledge Resources (KR), in addition to the script opposition. The KRs are the script opposition (SO), the logical mechanism (LM), the target (TA), the narrative strategy (NS), the Situation (SI) the language (LA), situation (SI) knowledge resource and Meta-knowledge Resource. (Attardo, 2017).

Conceptual Framework

The Script Opposition KR is of a paramount importance and jokes are identified through this parameter. The study focused on both verbal and visual as well as referential /schematic opposition and deviation from the expected response, role, and action. Analysis is carried out based on incongruity and opposition created through jab lines. Logical mechanism is dealt as in accordance with the proposed theoretical framework involving the logic behind the joke. The Target KR is a major component in the identification, production, and interpretation of certain stereotypes. In the present case, both the negative and positive targets are under analysis. Positive targets or the jokes act as a praising target towards certain groups, people, etc. Hence the targets either positive or negative contribute to strengthen or fade the existing ideas, beliefs, and certain stereotypes.

The Situation KR has been treated as the Context KR dealing with the context of a joke without any socio- cultural implications. In the Language KR, the two stylistic devices such as parallelism and deviation have also been added.
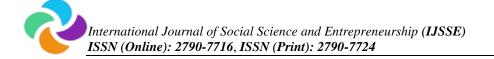
In Meta Communicative Knowledge Resource, music, eyes' movements (side to side, up and down, or in a circular pattern) nodding and pointing etc. and gestures, appearances, whimsical body movements and behaviours are also included. Whereas the para-verbal features are not included in the analysis, while considering the variation of different jokes, longer text, and time constraints.

In the present study, Stereotyping has been introduced as an additional component in the GTVH considering the study objectives. Target KR and Stereotyping have been the major and focused tenets for analyzing humorous stereotyping in dialogues of animated movies. Moreover, some additions have also been made to enrich the General theory of Verbal Humour with some stylistic elements, and most importantly the concept of stereotyping.

Literature Review

Stereotypes associated with Whites, Blacks and Polynesians

Katz and Braly (1933) explored that the stereotypical traits assigned by one hundred Princeton students for ten different races and nationalities were consistent with the prevalent stereotypes presented in newspapers and magazines. The same study was repeated by many scholars including Maykovich (1971), and Clark and Pearson (1985).

They examined ten racial and national groups of which two are useful for this study. The stereotypes associated with American whites classified by Princeton students from, respectively, 1933, 1944, 1971, or 1982 were, industrious, intelligent, materialistic, ambitious, progressive, pleasure-loving, alert, efficient, aggressive, straightforward, practical and sportsman like. While blacks displayed attributes like superstitious, lazy, happy-go-lucky, ignorant, musical, ostentatious, religious, stupid, physically dirty, naive, slovenly, and unreliable (Saftoiu & Tudor, 2023).

Fiske et., al (2009), on the other hand, found out the changes demonstrated in black's stereotypes after the selection of Barak Obama as the US President. They asserted that black Americans displayed the most dramatic change over time excluding negative competence-related adjectives such as lazy, ignorant, superstitious, aggressive, dependent, and stupid, while including positive warmth-related adjectives such as gregarious, passionate, and talkative (Frisken, 2024; Sreejitha & Suresh, n.d). The analysis of stereotypes through time revealed the stereotypes of blacks as loud, loyal to family ties, talkative, musical, very religious, aggressive, sportsmanlike, passionate, gregarious, and materialistic.

Regarding stereotypes of Polynesian race, Steele (1974) described Polynesian's as lacking ambition and initiative, irresponsible, having a tendency to obesity, having a poor work record, happy-go-lucky gobbler and so on. A few positive stereotypes explored about Maoris being cheerful, caring about their aged relatives and having courage etc.

Likewise, in the article, *here's why* (2017) *(*https://www.thatsus.co.nz) the author urged to change the traits and stereotypes associated with island people as dump, fat and violent with Maoris as brilliant innovators, hearty and strong and fierce protectors of people and earth (Cremona, 2023). Moreover, Polynesians or Hawaiian are also labeled as people live in grass huts on the beach, they all can dance the hula etc. (https://theculturetrip.com/ north america/usa/Hawaii /articles/11, 2017, writer n.t).

According to DeHart (2016), "After 150 years of religious suppression, tattoos have returned to their rightful place as cultural symbols of Polynesia". Thus, Polynesians are also stereotyped for having different types of tattoos on their bodies. An anonymous author asserted that, "Disney frequently portrays island inhabitants with clichéd coconuts. The idea of islanders with coconuts is a comedy stereotype created by American television

shows. Many say that Disney's overuse of the coconuts in this movie is in bad taste" (In Disney's "Moana" Compared to True Hawaiian Culture, 2019).

Humour Addressing Racial Stereotypes

This section contains literature related to racial stereotypes produced through humor. In this context, Jakoaho & Marjamaki (2012) examined the use of ethnic humour through critical discourse analysis. The analysis indicated that ethnic humour in stand-up comedy tended to target various groups, instead of only targeting ethnic minorities. Similarly, Green & Linders (2016) suggested that racial and ethnic comedy in stand-up comedy clips served to both highlight and fade racial and ethnic stereotypes, similarities, and differences.
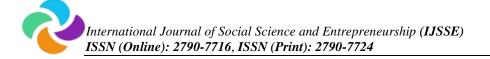
Further, Sienkiewicz & Marx (2009) wrote an essay in the field of Film and Cultural studies, discussing the use of ethnic humour in primetime animated show *South Park. South Park* has shown a propensity towards making things such as anti-Semitism and Islamophobia a lot of fun and humour. On the other hand, these portrayals also paved ways to the revival of hatred and prejudice towards Jews and Muslims.

Jenna & Christopher (2015) explored that Hawai'i students' perceptions of local stereotypes and humour were distinctively defined and categorised based on dark vs light skin tones. Furthermore, derogatory, and negative stereotypes were associated with dark skinned populations. The reviewed literature endorses the pivotal role of humour in communicating racial stereotypes.

Humour in Animated Movies

Humour in animated movies is a relatively less researched area. However, few research studies are being explored after deliberate surfing. In this regard, Akers (2013) studied the orientations of humour in animated movies for three decades using Catanescu and Tom (2001) characterization of humour with some modifications. The results of this study showed that the animated children's film industry has significantly increased the amount of adult oriented humour. Humour in animated film genre has changed since the '90s into funny faces, slapstick humour. The vocabulary evolved from simplistic and child-centric, to more complicated and technical to address the adult audience.

From the perspective of Translation Studies, Nieminen (2007) conducted a study on verbal humour in film *Shrek* by comparing the translations of verbal humour in screen translations of

Shrek. According to the analysis verbal humour in Shrek included: wordplay, allusion, sarcasm, and irony.

Likewise, Rahmawati (2013) investigated the cultural acceptability of verbal humour in animated film *Rio* while its translation in Indonesian subtitling. The findings showed the presence of 3 kinds of verbal humour namely, wordplay, allusion, and verbal irony in Rio animated film.

Kolojarceva and Artemyeva (2017) investigated humour in the animated movies from the perspective of cultural context of Russian younger school students. Results suggested that humour was manifested in transformation, violation of norms, behaviour of the hero, speech games, figurative discrepancy, falling, interaction, logical discrepancies, and violations of physiological type. Having discussed the humour modes in animated movies, these movies tend to be famous sites for humorous incidences.

Studies dealing with Multimodal study of Humour.

In this context, Tsakona (2008) put General Theory of Verbal Humour presented by Attardo (2001) a step forward by unifying the linguistic and semiotic approaches of humour and applied them on political cartoons of print media to determine the humour created through textual and image interactions. In addition, the analysis showed that humor mechanisms like exaggeration, contradiction, and metaphor can be taken as general components for manifesting humor through verbal and visual modes. In continuity, Canestrari (2010) analysed Italian film to examine humour in verbal humourous interactions, and their symmetry with meta-communicative level. The study focused on meta-communicative signals of two or more speakers involved in communication, and identified two kinds of humour, the on- and off-stage humour.

In a similar vein, Marone (2016) investigated the discursive function of humor on a microblogging vine using multimodality. An exploratory study was used to investigate how people construct humor using various verbal and semiotic modes. Some vines were just made for fun, while others represented cultural, racial, and gender stereotypes.

In the same context, Saftoiu & Tudor (2023) studied ethnic humour in cartoons from multimodal perspective involving dialogue and actions while focusing on the exchange of humorous cartoons between Western and Eastern cultures. Results indicated that the cartoons that were published in Swiss and French media, causes the Romanian media to react. As a

result, boundaries are redefined and humor functions as a social activity that causes division among groups.

After reviewing the multimodal aspect of humour, some literary devices, and the manifestation of the on- and off-stage humour with the implication of multimodal humour in communicating certain stereotypes have been established. Hence, these findings hold major relevance to the objectives of this study.

Research Methodology

The present research is qualitative in nature, as it draws upon the textual analysis of stereotyping in animated movies and the examination of verbal and non-verbal modes of humour addressing certain stereotypes. Considering the objectives of this study, the qualitative approach has been adopted. Research Methodology includes data selection methods, delimitation, sampling, and the research method adopted for this study.

Data Selection Method

Foremost, the basic information about 21st century animated movies were collected and explored. As a result, four animated movies dealing with the specific area of the proposed study were identified. The humourous data was analysed through the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH). All the six knowledge resources (KRs), namely, the script opposition (SO), the logical mechanism (LM), the target (TA), the narrative strategy (NS), the language (LA), and the situation (SI) were analysed with the extended KRs, such as, Meta-Knowledge Resource and proposed by Tsakona 2013 including the extension of stereotyping as an additional KR proposed in this study. Script Opposition KR of GTVH, laughter and metalinguistic comments have been treated as major criteria for identification of humourous incidents. Analysis was carried out based on opposition created through jab lines, where the emphasis remained on the verbal, visual and referential/ schematic opposition and deviation from the expected response, role, and action. Multimodal study has been adopted for the analysis, bearing in mind the importance of both verbal and non-verbal humour modes. The analysis was based on the racial and ethnic Stereotypes identified by Katz & Braly (1933) Maykovich (1971), and Clark and Pearson (1982). For this study, the stereotypes related to whites and Blacks (Negroes) were included. Whereas the stereotypes associated with Polynesians (Maoris) were based on the assigned attributes by Steele (1974) with some more recent modifications in the stereotypes of Polynesian race.

Delimitation of the Study

This study is delimited to four animated movies: *Shrek (2001)*, *The Princess and the Frog* (2009), *Zootopia (2016)* and *Moana* (2016). The former two movies have been selected from the first decade, whereas the latter have been chosen from the second decade of the 21st century. The reason being identifying the evolution and changes in racial stereotypes through a time frame of two decades.

Sampling

Animated movies were selected through the purposive sampling technique. This technique was employed in accordance with the nature and requirement of the study. 21st Century animated movies dealing with the sphere of the proposed study were concerned. The first consideration was the presence of humour, second focus involved the manifestation of diverse races roles, and finally, third requirement was the representation of stereotypes.

Coding of Data

To collect humorous data in the selected animated features; first, the animated movies have been carefully watched. The humorous data was extracted from the script. However, all humour incidents were not part of analysis, and only the data which was revealing the ways in which humour served as a means of portraying race in a positive, or negative way was selected for the examination. For making the above specification, the Target KR of the General theory of Verbal Humor was used, considering the negative and positive targets for perpetuating, or waning various positive and negative stereotypes. Subsequently, the selected humorous data was categorised in terms of representing race i.e. whites, blacks, Polynesians, in a stereotypical way. To make this study unbiased, the characters in the selected movies are identified as blacks, whites and Polynesians using the related literature and studies. The stereotypes were drawn based on the comments of the speakers as well as the analyst`s interpretation of the text and visual.

Furthermore, the humour instances were classified regarding perpetuating or fading/ neutralising the positive or negative stereotypes. Next, stereotypes have been studied through multimodal humour. In multimodal analysis, the classification of humour modes addressing certain stereotypes was carried out in the light of knowledge resources of GTVH.

Analysis and Discussion

Analysis of Multimodal Humour Addressing Stereotypes in Animated Movies

In the first section of analysis, the description of humourous dialogues incorporating the multimodal humour has been analysed using the GTVH framework. In this paper, one humorous instance has been presented. However, the data for all humorous dialogues are included in a tabulated form.

Humorous Dialogue

> Head Guard: Next! What have you got?
> Old Woman: Well, I have got a talking donkey.
> Head Guard: Right. Well, that's good for ten shillings, if you can prove it.
> Old Woman: He is really quiet chatterbox. Talk, you boneheaded dolt... No, no, he talks! He does.
> Old woman in his voice: I can talk. I am the talkingest damn thing you ever. saw.
> Donkey: Hey! I can fly!
> Peter Pan: He can fly!
> 3 little Pigs: He can fly!
> Head Guard: He can talk!
> Donkey: Ha, ha! That's right, fool! Now I am a flying, talking donkey. You might have seen a housefly, maybe even a superfly but I bet you ain`t never seen a donkey fly. Ha, ha!

Commentary

Script Opposition

The script opposition is normal/abnormal. There is verbal as well as referential opposition between the scripts. Verbal opposition manifests when a donkey remains silent and does not utter a word at the start, but then incongruity emanates when it starts talking. Referential humour and opposition occur at the abnormal behaviour of a donkey being talking.

Logical Mechanism

Verbal and referential contradiction in the behaviour of a donkey. Talking donkey is referentially a contradiction from the normal behaviour and exhibits humour.

Context

This scene represents the sales market. Here a donkey is with an old lady, who wants to sell it for money to lord Farquaad's guards.

Target

Here the target of the joke is a donkey depicting black character. The donkey/ African American is targeted for being a boneheaded, naive talkative slave.

Narrative Strategy

Film dialogue, exclamatory speech acts *Hey! I can fly! He can fly! He can fly! He can talk!* and visuals.

Language

Verbal and non-verbal language both show exaggeration and contradiction between the normal and abnormal behaviours (a talking donkey). Lexical parallelism is employed in *Now I am a flying, talking donkey and housefly, superfly and donkey fly*. Morphological deviation is used in adding suffix –est with talking (talkingest) to create humour. Visual metaphor is employed by depicting Black as a donkey.

Meta Knowledge Resource

Verbal comments include, Ha, ha!, Uh-oh that's right, fool. Non-verbal communicative channel includes smiling, funny facial expressions of a donkey, his wide open and rolling eyes, and wide-open eyes of people watching donkey flying and talking, slapstick humour.

Stereotyping

 In this humorous instance, African American's negative stereotypes of being a slave, and foolish person is perpetuated and reinforced through humour. Whereas the positive stereotype of blacks as talkative or chatterbox and happy go lucky are also highlighted.

Humour Incidences Perpetuated or Faded Racial Stereotypes in selected Animated Movies

In this part of analysis, the classification of humour incidences incorporated in selected animated movies perpetuating or fading/ neutralising the stereotypical tags associated with whites, blacks, and Polynesian race have been discussed.

Table 1

Humour Incidence that Perpetuated or Faded Racial Stereotypes in Shrek

S.NO	Perpetuate/ Highlight Racial Stereotypes	Neutralise/ Fade Racial Stereotypes
1.	African American as a slave, foolish person and happy go lucky.	Neutralised the stereotypes of blacks as illogical, ignorant.
2.	Blacks a subordinate or weak, talkative and whites as aggressive.	Fading and neutralising the existing beliefs about races other than white as incapable of being shown as a hero or leading character.
3.	Blacks as less intelligent, unrefined and only appropriate for laborious work.	Stereotypes based on appearance and race are waned.
4.	Nil	Fading the established stereotype of hostility among different races.

Commentary

In Shrek, four humour incidences instances perpetuate and reinforce racial stereotypes. Out of four, three instances reinforce stereotypes of subordination and enslavement as the most recurrently used stereotypes of blacks with other stereotypes such as foolish, weak, and uncivilised. Whereas one instance highlights the stereotypes of whites as cruel and aggressive. The stereotypes related to race are neutralised and faded in four incidences wherein, whites as capable of being shown as hero or leading character and ambitious and competent to rescue a princess are faded in two instances. The stereotype of hostility among different races is neutralised in one instance and the tags of blacks as illogical, ignorant are faded by showing them talkative.

Table 2

Humour Incidents that Perpetuated or Faded Racial Stereotypes in The Princess and the Frog

S.NO	Perpetuate/ Highlight Racial Stereotypes	Neutralise/ Fade Racial Stereotypes
1.	White woman as being affected. dependent on man and dreamy.	In case of a black woman, the stereotypes of woman being affected and dependent on man are neutralised.
2.	Whites as progressive, successful, and happy. Blacks as passionate.	Nil
3.	Black woman associated with food.	Nil
4.	The positive stereotype of blacks as passionate.	Black woman associated with bad. Voodoo is neutralised by presenting. good magic.

Commentary

In *The Princesses and the Frog*, there are four humour incidences addressing racial stereotypes. Four instances perpetuate racial stereotypes wherein stereotypes of blacks as passionate is shown in two instances and the stereotypical association of black woman with food is highlighted in two humour incidences. Whites as progressive, successful, and happy is reinforced in one incidence with stereotypes of white woman as dependent, affected, and dreamy. Racial stereotypes are also faded in two incidences wherein one instance neutralised racial based stereotypes by showing black women as being independent and passionate. The stereotypes of black woman associated with bad magic is also waned in one instance.

Table 3

Humour Incidence that Perpetuated or Faded Racial, Stereotypes in Zootopia

S.NO	Perpetuate/ Highlight Racial Stereotypes	Neutralise/ Fade Racial Stereotypes
1.	Nil	Blacks, as being unreliable, savages and hostile are neutralised.
2	Blacks as savages/uncivilized, incompetent and hostile.	Nil
3.	Blacks as sneaky and unreliable.	Nil
4.	Blacks are unreliable and sneaky.	Nil
5.	Nil	Blacks as being unreliable and incompetent.
6.	Nil	Stereotypes for Whites as successful, reliable, and logical are faded.
7.	Nil	Predator/ Blacks as unreliable and deceptive are also waned.
8.	Nil	Blacks as incompetent and unreliable by promoting competence and reliability.

Commentary

In *Zootopia*, three incidences reinforced the racial tags of blacks as sneaky, unreliable, happy-go-lucky, and careless. Racial stereotypes are faded in four instances wherein stereotypes of blacks as sneaky, unreliable are neutralised and faded in three examples, and stereotypes of incompetence for blacks are waned in one instance. Labels associated with whites being industrious and alert are waned in one example through presenting them lazy.

Table 4

Humour Incidence that perpetuated or faded Racial Stereotypes in Moana

S.NO	Perpetuate/ Highlight Racial Stereotypes	Neutralise / Fade Racial Stereotypes
1.	The stereotype of Polynesians making tattoos as their cultural and religious norms and Polynesians as the quintessential Maoris.	Nil
2.	Stereotype of Polynesians tattoos and hula dance and rurality Reinforcing Polynesians as the quintessential Maoris.	Nil
3.	Polynesian men as fat, musical, cheerful, and unemotional. Polynesian as the comic other and the primitive natural athletes.	Stereotype of dumb for Polynesian is. neutralised and faded.
4.	Incompetent, lacking ambition.	Nil
5.	Courageous, Incompetent, lacking. ambition, the quintessential Maori.	Nil
6.	Stereotype of coconuts related to island people. Courageous, Incompetent, lacking ambition.	Neutralising the stereotyping related to the Polynesian race. Stereotypes for man as adventurous and courageous are faded.
7.	Reinforced racial stereotype of pacific islanders as coconuts through Kakamora tribes. Polynesians as courageous and competent Polynesians as lacking ambition.	Nil

Commentary

There are seven humour incidences addressing stereotypes in *Moana*. All incidences

reinforced racial and cultural stereotypes. Three instances highlight the positive stereotyping

of the quintessential Maoris through their rurality and traditional beliefs. The labeling of

Polynesians as the comic other is perpetuated in one instance. The stereotype of the

primitive natural athlete is reinforced in one instance. Four incidences perpetuate

stereotypes of incompetence, and lacking ambition of Polynesians. Moreover, new, and

positive stereotypes of Polynesians as courageous and competent are reinforced in some

humour incidences. The stereotype of coconuts for Polynesians is perpetuated in two

instances. Racial stereotypes are neutralised in five incidences. Four instances have neutralised the stereotyping related to Polynesian race as lacking ambition and competence. The stereotype of dumb for Polynesians is also neutralised and faded by introducing them with strong articulating power in one incidence.

The Evolution of stereotyping in selected Animated Movies

The evolution of stereotyping in selected animated movies has also been demonstrated through tabulated form, employing the variations of humourous incidences involved in perpetuating or neutralising/fading the existing stereotypical tags.

Table 5
Changing trends of Multimodal Humour in Animated Movies

Modes of Humour	Shrek	The Princess and the Frog	Zootopia	Moana
	2	Normal/ Abnormal 2	1	5
	1	Actual/ non- actual 1	5	5
	0	Possible/ Impossible 1	0	0
	1	Good/bad 0	2	0
	3	Contradiction 4	7	7
Logical Mechanism	1	Exaggeration 4	2	6
	1	Analogy 0	0	0
	0	Role reversal 0	3	2
Modes of Humour	*Shrek*	*The Princess and The Frog*	*Zootopia*	*Moana*
	4	Film dialogue. 4	7	7
	4	Visuals 4	7	7

Narrative Strategy				
2		Speech Acts 3	3	5
		Exclamatory Speech acts 1		
1		Directive Speech act 0		
0		Interrogative 0	3	1
		Song		other speech acts
0		1	2	4
0			0	1
			0	1

Modes of Humour	Shrek	The Princess and The Frog	Zootopia	Moana
		Verbal Exaggeration		
	2	4	7	6
		Visual Exaggeration 5		
	2		5	7
Language	4	Metaphor 0	4	1
	2	Irony 0	1	2
	1	Ambiguity 0	1	1
	2	Parallelism 3	4	3
	1	Deviation 1	0	3
	0	Idiom 0	2	0

Modes of Humour	*Shrek*	*The Princess and The Frog*	*Zootopia*	*Moana*

	1	Metalinguistic comments 0	4	3
Meta-Knowledge Resource	4	Laughing 4	3	5
	2	Eyes' movements 4	5	4
	0	Wide open eyes' 2	4	6
	1	Funny facial expressions 4	3	3
	2	Gestures 3	4	4
	2	Slapstick Humour 3	2	3
	0	Onomatopoeia 1	0	0
	0	Dancing 0	0	1
	0	Music 0	0	1

Commentary on the Occurrences of Multimodal Humour in Shrek

The script opposition in Shrek mostly stems from the normal/abnormal relationship. Contradiction has been frequently employed following exaggeration. Exclamatory speech acts are employed alongside verbal and visual narrative methods. Visual exaggeration is mostly used with metaphors that follows closely behind. Irony and stylistic parallelism remained the top three literary devices. The most common kind of humour after metalinguistic comments is laughing. The most common non-verbal communication is eye staring, while the second most

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common is slapstick comedy, which combines facial expressions, blinking, gestures, and eye contact.

Commentary on the Occurrences of Multimodal Humour in The Princess and the Frog

The normal/abnormal has been the recurrent script opposition in *The Princess and the Frog.* Contradiction and exaggeration have been mostly used, the exclamatory speech act is used with both spoken and visual narrative. Visuals are more common. Some literary devices, like proverbs, ambiguity, and irony have not been used often. Parallelism remained an important stylistic device. In Meta-communicative KR, the most common non-verbal form of humour is laughing, followed by eye motions, particularly wide-open eyes, slapstick, whereas onomatopoeia is the least often used.

Commentary on the Occurrences of Multimodal Humour in Zootopia

In *Zootopia*, Script opposition has been demonstrated in the normal/ abnormal and actual/non-actual relationship. Logical mechanisms have been manifested mostly through contradiction with exaggeration the second and role reversal the third recurrent mechanism. Both verbal and non-verbal narrative strategies have been employed but non-verbal strategy is frequently used. Exclamatory and directive speech acts are primarily employed. Literary devices such as metaphor are frequently employed, whereas irony, idiom and ambiguity are rarely used. Parallelism is a frequently used stylistic device. All the jokes are generated through multimodality. Movement of eyes, specifically rolling eyes is the most often mode with eyes' blinking the second frequent non-verbal mode. Eye movements and laughing have been employed as the primary meta knowledge resources followed by slapstick humour, funny facial expressions, whimsical body movements and gestures particularly nodding is used as the recurrent gesture.

Commentary on the Occurrences of Multimodal Humour in Moana

In *Moana*, script opposition is most noticeable in the link between "normal" and "abnormal." The second most common opposition is between "actual" and "non-actual." Contradiction, exaggeration, and role reversal are the three most common ways of Logical Mechanism. Visual narrative strategy is mostly employed. Exclamatory speech acts are frequently used following assertive and interrogative speech act. The new narrative strategy employed is the use of songs. Visual exaggeration is more common. Irony, ambiguity, and other literary devices are also employed in the movie, but metaphors and oxymorons are rarely used. In

terms of stylistic devices, parallelism and deviation are two popular tools. Among the several non-verbal modes of metalinguistic humor, laughing is the most common, followed by wide eyes and eye movements. Metalinguistic remarks are an extra meta-knowledge resource that stands on the fourth number, alongside onomatopoeia, facial expressions, gestures, and music with dancing. Almost all the humour incidences employ both verbal and non-verbal humour, indicating the use of multimodality in creating humour.

Conclusion and Future Directions

The present study explored and identified the role of multimodal humour representing established labels and tags in 21st century animated movies namely, *Shrek, The Princess, and the Frog, Zootopia and Moana*. Results indicated both positive and negative facets of certain stereotypical tags and revealed that multimodal humour employed in the selected animated movies served to perpetuate as well as fade and neutralise the negative and positive beliefs associated with white, black, and Polynesian race. Data analysis during the time revealed a remarkable pattern of advancement in existing stereotype of non-white races, especially Black and Polynesians. The results demonstrated mixed stereotypes. So, I went along with researchers' assertions that there were subtle shifts and improvements to the traditional labeling in modern animated features. However, white prejudices were also shown to be variable and experienced mixed stereotypes.

Considering the first objective of this study, the verbal and non-verbal humour strategies representing certain stereotypes in animated movies have been identified. Findings revealed that humour incidents were in accordance with the multimodal humour proposed by the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH). However, some changes have also been observed.

Narrative Strategy KR incorporated dialogues, verbal, and non-verbal modes of humour. All of the instances demonstrated both verbal and non-verbal modes of humour. The results thus acted in accordance with Canestrari (2010) findings, which revealed the presence of both on-stage and off-stage humour with more implication of on-stage humour. In addition, song has also been introduced as a narrative strategy in the present study.
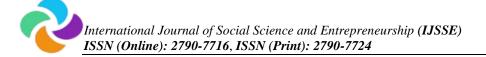
Target KR remained the focus of the present study. The stereotyping related to race has been identified through this Knowledge Resource. Both positive and negative targets are observed in the analysis. The positive targets without aggression tended to be the significant inclusion in the

target KR of GTVH. Moreover, this KR assisted the categorisation of humour incidences in terms of whether they perpetuated or faded the existing stereotypical tags.

Language KR has shown the same literary devices, with the addition of parallelism and deviation. The humour incidences exhibited phonological, morphological, and lexical opposition in punch lines of the jokes.

Stereotyping has been proposed as the additional and exclusive tenet of GTVH in order to answer the queries posed in this research. Both positive and negative stereotypes about race (black, white, Polynesian), are identified through this KR.

As far as the second objective is concerned, findings showed the pivotal role of humour in perpetuating as well as fading or neutralising the established stereotypes associated with race, with some variations. Therefore, conformed to the findings of Green & Linders (2016). Moreover, results exhibited that humour targeted various groups instead of only targeting ethnic minorities, hence complied with the results of Jakoaho & Marjamaki (2012).

The evolving tendencies in multimodal humor are examined with respect to the third aim of this research. The results showed that over the course of twenty years, four animated features had an increasing number of comedic instances that tackled specific prejudices. The script opposition between normal and abnormal was still the most popular, with actual and non-actual coming in second. Contradiction and exaggeration were the main sources of logical mechanism. Over the past two decades, we've seen a shift in narrative strategy, with the addition of song as a third narrative strategy in movies like *Moana* (2016), and *Princess and the Frog* (2009). The linguistic features that have been identified as remarkably consistent were irony and ambiguity, along with verbal and visual exaggeration, continued to be the dominant mode. The use of anthropomorphic figures in *Shrek* (2001) and *Zootopia* (2016), which portray human qualities, led to metaphors indicating a shifting pattern with additional connotation. All of the movies' stylistic devices relied heavily on parallelism, especially lexical parallelism, while deviation was rarely employed. Meta-knowledge KR is seen mostly through laughing or smiling, with metalinguistic comments serving as the secondary verbal route. Open eyes, movements, facial emotions, gestures, and slapstick humor were the most common non-verbal channel mode in all of the movies. Music and dancing were the two non-verbal forms seen in *Moana* (2016) *and The Princess and the Frog* (2009), and thus recognized as elements that contributed to the creation of multimodal humor.

Regarding the evolution of racial stereotyping, the results showed that there was a shift in the way Black characters were portrayed in animated movies over the years. The original *Shrek* (2001) furthered long-held negative perceptions of Black people. On the other hand, the negative stereotypes about Black people were diminished in *The Princess and the Frog* (2009) since the film consistently portrayed Black people as enthusiastic and linked them to food. Although *Zootopia* (2016) also promoted good traits and introduced new stereotypes about Blacks, it also neutralized the existing negative stereotypes. In the last two decades, there was a noticeable shift in the favorable representation of Blacks. However, in many instances Blacks carry the traditional stereotypical depiction needing to be neutralised.

The movies under study presented very few stereotypes for whites. The existing labels for whites also displayed a shift by reinforcing negative stereotypes for whites in one instance in *Shrek* (2001). In contrast, *The Princess, and the Frog* (2009) promoted positive stereotypes for whites, but *Zootopia* (2016) again reinforced the negative stereotypes of whites by replacing the positive attributes with negative traits, though in very few instances and also displayed positive stereotypes for whites in one instance. The period showed the fluctuating and changing stereotypes for whites.

Moana (2016) has perpetuated negative and positive stereotypes alike and displayed mixed results. However, the movie promoted positive and accepted stereotypes of Polynesian culture and can be considered a progressive step towards the positive portrayal of Polynesian race, thus the findings are aligned with Anjirba (2018). Yet, the overuse of stereotypes of coconuts and lack of ambition etc creates the same biased stereotypes for Polynesian culture.

In a nutshell, results indicate that though positive stereotypes are promoted, these animated movies still carry certain racial biases tacitly conveyed through humour. Moreover, the pivotal role of multimodal humour in communicating, establishing, and thereof, neutralising the prevailing stereotypical tags associated with whites, Blacks, and Polynesians have been established. As a result, intensifying the contribution of humourous animated movies in framing the opinions and thought patterns of the broad audiences, especially children to perceive the particular race in accordance with the stereotypes and images shown in these movies. Moreover, the multimodal humour strategies presented by GTVH along with the additional humour modes proposed in the present study tend to connect the phenomenon of humour and stereotyping in a comprehensive manner. Therefore, making the GTVH a

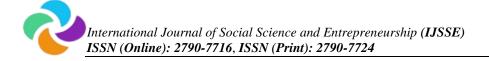multidimensional framework catering both linguistic and societal explorations.

Para-verbal features and extensive sociocultural aspects of meta-pragmatic stereotypes are not implied in the analysis and tend to be the limitations of the present study. Considering the above limitations, future research may study para-verbal features of humour targeting the positive, or negative aspects of stereotypes. The present research can be applied on a wider scale, through cross-cultural study of animated movies for humourous stereotyping. Other possible topics are exploring social and stereotypical tags grounded on sociocultural and meta-pragmatically suggested humour in animated movies or other genres. Finally, studying certain stereotypes through critical discourse approaches of humour in animated movies and also applying a framework other than GTVH. In short, working with multimodality of humour is a multiplex task and requires the effort of several scholars from diverse fields of studies including Linguistics and other Social Sciences. In order to acquire a nuanced and multidisciplinary understanding of humorous features, modes, and changing trends, multimodal analytical approaches are needed and are yet the key subjects of scrutiny in diverse academic disciplines.

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