

Západočeská univerzita v Plzni

Fakulta pedagogická

Katedra anglického jazyka

Diplomová práce

SLOVNÍ HŘÍČKY V ALENCE V ŘÍŠI DIVŮ

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Plzeň 2013

University of West Bohemia
Faculty of Education
Department of English

Thesis

PUNS IN ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND

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Plzeň 2013

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my thanks to my supervisor Mgr. Libuše Lišková, M.A. for her useful help, advice and guidance in the process of my writing. Her suggestions allowed me to complete this thesis.

ABSTRACT

Turková, Kristýna. University of West Bohemia. April, 2013. Puns in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Supervisor: Mgr. Libuše Lišková, M.A.

This thesis deals with the issue of puns in Lewis Carroll's book called *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Firstly, cultural and historical backgrounds are discussed and then general information about the book and its author are included. The thesis provides main information about puns, especially about their origin, classification and their use in English literature. To illustrate this topic, detailed analysis of individual examples from the book is made. The research part consists of analyzing three worksheet versions completed by the group of students in order to find out whether they are able to identify individual puns in the text and whether they can understand their meaning and humorous effect. Finally, the results of this research are discussed and they are complemented with suggestions for further research.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis is focused on Lewis Carroll's book known under the title *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Considering all possible books that accompanied readers throughout their childhood and that are remembered till today, I can remember exactly this book about little girl called Alice and about her curious adventures in the wonderful land. The reason why I have chosen this topic was influenced by my desire to read this book again with particular time distance since last time I read it I was ten years old and it was in Czech language. I was curious how will change my perception of this book if I would read it in English after almost fifteen years. Though many readers may consider this Victorian fantasy to be story especially for children, this book may offer many surprises even for adults and it can be very useful in English language teaching.

The theoretical part of this thesis explores the main cultural and historical background for better understanding of the period in which the book was written. The most important facts about book in general and about Lewis Carroll are also included. At the end of this part, the attention is focused on wordplay, more particularly on puns – their origin, definition, classification and their use in English literature. The practical part of this thesis begins with identifying main examples of puns in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and their further analysis, which is considered to be the basis of following research.

The research is based on two main research questions that try to find out whether Czech students of English language are able to identify individual examples of puns in the excerpts from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and whether they really understand the meaning and humorous effect of these language forms. For purposes of this research, three various worksheets were designed. The worksheets were given to a group of students of University of West Bohemia to do the tasks. The results of this research are discussed and depicted in graphs. Limitations of the research and possible implications for teachers are introduced and individual findings of the research are then used to suggest the possibilities of improvement or further research. Finally, the research questions are answered and the conclusion analyzing main ideas and results of this research is made.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Cultural and Historical Backgrounds

Almost whole 19th century in England is known as the Victorian period, the era when the Queen Victoria reigned. At the beginning of her reign people did not put their trust in the monarchy but the time showed that this period means for England a lot. As Evans (2011) claimed “during the Victorian era, Britain could claim to be the world’s superpower, despite social inequality at home and burgeoning industrial rivals overseas.” Although the Queen Victoria reigned from 1837 till 1901, the beginning of the Victorian period is sometimes dated back to the year 1815, after the Battle of Waterloo was won and Napoleon defeated. From the literary point of view Victorian age begins with the death of Sir Walter Scott, the father of the historical novel, in 1832 (Carter & McRae, 2001a, p. 125).

The Victorian period lasted very long time and from the beginning to the end it was filled with many events, with the Great Rebellion, the Irish Famine, the Chartist Movement, Reforming Act, the Boer Wars or the Crimean War among them (“Victorians,” 2011). As Carter & McRae (2001b) pointed out, “a history of the Victorian age records a period of economic expansion and rapid changes” (p. 249). During Victoria’s reign England reached its peak.

According to Carter & McRae (2001b):

The country became the workshop of the world, and from the 1870s onwards had become the world’s banker. In a period of little more than sixty years of Queen Victoria’s reign, the major invention of steam power was exploited for fast railways and ships, for printing presses, for industrial looms and for agricultural machinery (p. 249).

This fact caused the rise of the middle classes including “those who worked in the professions, such as the Church, the law, medicine, the civil service, the diplomatic service, merchant banking and the navy” but the situation of working class worsened (McDowall, 1997, p. 139). Therefore the Victorian period is mostly considered to be the time of contradictions.

The success of the Empire and problems of this period were described in many literary works. As mentioned above, from the literary point of view the Victorian age

started in 1832, after the death of significant writer, Sir Walter Scott. The interest of some Victorian writers was aimed to literary genre called novel. It was the difference between Victorian and Romantic literature, where the most important genre was poetry. At the beginning it was mostly historical novels but throughout the period many writers chose the most topical social themes (Carter & McRae, 2001a, p. 126). Among the major Victorian writers belongs especially Charles Dickens, William Thackeray, Brönte sisters, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy and many others. Moreover, in 1859 *On the Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin was published and caused excitement about the evolution.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Victorian writers did not only write for the adults but they took care of the young readers too. As Kramer (2003) claimed, “Victorian children could bury their noses in a growing number of books written just for them. Some were stories; some provided examples of how boys and girls should behave; others such as Edward Lear’s nonsense verse were sheer entertainment” (p. 29). One of the books intended for children is Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). As Ousby (1998) claimed, it is “a book which revolutionized children’s literature by putting previous literary pieties aside and opening the door to entertainment for its own sake” (p. 66). This book is considered to be a fantasy book. The writing of so called fantasy books was connected with the second half of the 19th century.

According to Carter & McRae (2001b):

Such fantasy expanded its range as the real Victorian world became less and less positive and acceptable. The new genre of science fiction was one result; the detective story, ghost stories (extending the Gothic novel’s range), utopian writing, and fantasy writing for children, all represent the escapist search for other worlds in ways which were to become increasingly popular in the twentieth century (p. 279). As Carter & McRae (2001b) claimed, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glasses* are considered to be “the most lasting mid-Victorian fantasies, requiring modern adjectives like “surreal” and “absurd” to describe their dream-like transformations and humour” (p. 279).

Though it may seem only as a book for children, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* attracts attention of many adult readers even today. According to Hale (2012), “it is nonsense that is the key to its continued success, allowing the reader to shake off the rules

and shapes of normal life, and return to the unlimited and eternally baffling visions of a half-forgotten childhood.” While thinking about other stories for children, Darton (2011) pointed out that “the *Alice* will never be put in a museum, because [it] will neither die nor grow out of fashion” (p. 263).

Firstly the book was published under the title *Alice’s Adventures Underground* and the illustration of whole book was made by Lewis Carroll himself (see Appendix A). Finally it was published in 1865 as *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* with up to this day famous and memorable pictures by John Tenniel (Darton, F. J. H., 2011, p. 264).

After its publication *Alice* became the worldwide character that was used not only in various media. As Pilinovsky (2009) claimed, “in the hundred years since her copyright expired, she has passed from being a specific character to being a near archetype: images of Alice appear in every medium” (p. 182). The stories of *Alice* were transformed to many films, with *Alice in Wonderland* (1903) being the first of them. There is also a Czech film adaptation, “*Alice*”, directed by Jan Švankmajer in 1988. The newest film *Alice in Wonderland* was directed by Tim Burton in 2010. The character of little Alice is also transformed into many theatre performances as well as into popular music (Milikan, L., 2011).

Throughout the centuries there have been many discussions about this book. The interpretations of *Alice* varied with the passing time from the biographical one, through genre studies, psychoanalytic interpretations to feminist one. The biographical interpretation pointed out the necessity of knowing the author’s life. The more readers know about the writer, the better they can understand the book. Some critics saw in it just the story of an innocent girl written for the entertainment, others took it as a particular description of that period requiring readers to be clear that it was written during particular time and it described various customs and worries of that period. Freud and other psychoanalysts saw in the book a particular kind of sexual repression (Millikan, 2011).

Some interpretations were curious, especially those in which the wonderland is understood as a result of hallucinogenic drugs (Milikan, 2011). This kind of interpretation appeared with Jefferson Airplane’s song called “White Rabbit” that used a lot of *Alice* images and indirect references to drugs. It became very popular and many artists of 60s and 70s connected it to drugs. As Parker has suggested, “the association of drugs with *Alice* is so established that *alice* is now a slang term for LSD” (as cited in Milikan, 2011).

As Sigler claimed, “*Alice* books’ enduring power and appeal may very well lie in the fact that, like dreams, they can mean whatever the readers need them to mean” (as cited in Pilinovsky, 2009, p. 182).

Lewis Carroll

The author of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, known under the pseudonym Lewis Carroll, is in fact Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, an Oxford Don and Mathematical Lecturer of Christ Church. He was born in Daresbury, Cheshire in England, on 27th January in 1832 to large family of eleven children, where he was the third one. Dodgson was educated at Rugby School and after graduation he became the student at Christ Church College in Oxford - his main interest was in Mathematics and Logic. During his stay at college, he became friend with Dean Liddell. After studies in Oxford Dodgson was appointed the Lecturer in Mathematics there (Drabble, 2000). Charles Lutwidge Dodgson died on 14th January in 1898.

When Dodgson was twelve years old, the family moved to the Croft Rectory in Yorkshire. Being the first son in a family, Dodgson tried to entertain his siblings. One of these activities was the production of family magazine, called “the Rectory Magazine”, in which all members of their family were supposed to contribute. The greatest contributor was Charles Lutwidge Dodgson himself; it influenced his further life and literary career because he made up various games later in his life. Being the main contributor and editor, “the magazine, which exists in a unique copy in the Ransom Center, is an early indication of Carroll’s love of wordplay and puns, satire, and parody, as well as his interest in drawing” (Oram & Wilson, 2007).

Since as a child he lived in isolation from other people and was in contact mostly with his siblings, he was a very shy person. He was used to take care of younger children, play with them and read them stories, which did not make him any difficulties. Later he took care of three little daughters of Henry Liddell, Dean of Christ Church, and the result of this relationship is *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. On 4 July in 1862, Dodgson, his friend Duckworth and three Liddell daughters made a trip on the boat. These three little girls, called Lorina, Alice and Edith, were told the story about the young girl in a very strange land based on actual Alice, who Dodgson liked the most. Several aspects in the book are taken from real life of little Alice. The middle one called Alice begged Carroll to write it down for other children to read it; in 1864 the story called *Alice’s Adventures*

Underground was introduced to Alice Liddell. The relationship between Dodgson and Alice became the main issue of many debates (Oram & Wilson, 2007).

As Gardner (2000) pointed out:

There has been much argumentation about whether Carroll was in love with Alice Liddell. If this is taken to mean that he wanted to marry her or make love to her, there is not the slightest evidence for it. On the other hand, his attitude toward her was the attitude of man in love (p. 7).

Dodgson was also an amateur photographer and this fact caused later various debates about his sexual orientation because most of his models were children with very little clothes on them. There are many opponents to Dodgson's photos but many critics claim that "Carroll's photography allowed the natural child and the fanciful artist to combine in the production of memorable images" (Oram & Wilson, 2007).

Lewis Carroll and His Language

As mentioned above, Carroll's ability to work with language, in way he did, came from his childhood, when he produced family magazine. With proceeding time he wrote many books where he could show his literary mastery. The interesting thing from the literary point of view is the difference, the author himself made, between him as Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, a man who wrote especially mathematical works; and as Lewis Carroll, the author of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. As Darton explained (2011), Dodgson "was punctilious about the difference between the two persons, though by all accounts Lewis Carroll crept into Dodgson's logic lectures, and certainly also into his *Symbolic Logic*" (p. 265).

Lewis Carroll's use of language was so special that many of his followers failed in an effort to be as good as him. His language was full of logic in which he was very deeply interested.

As Darton (2011) claimed:

The fault of the many imitators of Lewis Carroll – who are to this day a permanent plague to all editors and publishers of literature for children – is that they force the transition from one nature to the other; they invent, but they have not the logic (p. 269).

As mentioned above, Lewis Carroll was famous for his interest and excellence in logic and mathematics, which led him to use them in his writings. As O'Neill (2011) has suggested, "Carroll's works are full of games, riddles, and logic problems that he created based on his love for logic and other mathematical concepts" (p. 12). Therefore some critics claim that without knowing about Carroll's life and career, it is almost impossible to understand his literature (Darton, 2011, p. 268). According to Gardner (2000), Alice's books are full of nonsense written for readers of that time and today readers have to know a lot to understand all jokes and language playing because some of them are clear only to "residents of Oxford, and other jokes, still more private, could be understood only by the lovely daughters of Dean Liddell".

As Bayley (2009) has suggested:

Outgunned in the specialist press, Dodgson took his mathematics to his fiction. Using a technique familiar from Euclid's proofs, reduction ad absurdum, he picked apart the "semi-logic" of the new abstract mathematics, mocking its weakness by taking these premises to their logical conclusions, with mad results. The outcome is Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.

As O'Neill (2011) has described, "[b]y playing with language, Carroll went beyond nonsense writing and created logical nonsense. With this paradoxical genre, he could express his worldview, amuse readers of all ages, and offer them an escape from the chaos of reality" (p. 2). For Lewis Carroll, the language was something which can be treated like numbers and other symbols in mathematics (O'Neill, 2011, p. 9).

Lewis Carroll played with English language in a specific way - he transformed well known poems as well as names, made up new riddles, usually without answers, and last but not least he treated words in very humorous way. Throughout the reading of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* the readers find out that almost every page includes some kind of language game (Lemos, 2009). Many of these language games are for the first time unrecognized but when the reader focuses on the text in detail, they just appear. What children may considered to be the book of adventures, may seem as the great puzzle to the adult reader.

Lewis Carroll did not only write the great piece of literature, but also contributed to the language by various new words. The most of these words were used in his nonsense poem "Jabberwocky" (1872). Nonsense poem is defined as "a kind of humorous poetry

that amuses by deliberately using strange non-existent words and illogical ideas” (Baldick, 2001). Carroll often made up new words by the techniques called “blending” which is based on the combination of two words into one. Among Carroll’s invented words belong for example “chortle” (snort + chuckle), “slithy” (lithe + slimy), or “frumious” (fuming + furious). These words did not become the part of spoken English but they were purposefully used in Carroll’s literature (Huebert, 2010).

Wordplay

Throughout whole *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* the language and playing with it has the main role. As a mathematician and logician, Lewis Carroll had a great talent to treat English language in a very humorous way. Children who read this book for entertainment may not recognise all of these word games but the adults may see some kind of language play in everything. His playing with language had a great impact on the readers and these so-called language-games became very popular. There exist various definitions of the term “language-game” and the following quotation offers one of them. As Wittgenstein suggested:

We can (...) think of the whole process of using words as one of those games by means of which children learn their native language. I will call these games “language-games” and will sometimes speak of a primitive language as a language-game. I shall call the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, the “language-game” (as cited in Lemos, 2009, p. 24).

Playing with language may be a very good opportunity for readers to train their brains because some of the wordplay can be very tricky. It is a kind of literary tool that makes text more interesting and exciting but to be able to play with language properly, it is necessary to have very good knowledge of the language system itself. As Pollack pointed out, puns are “a tacit acknowledgment of rules, because you have to know rules if you’re going to cleverly break it” (as cited in Nordquist, n. d.).

According to Merriam Webster Dictionary (n.d.), the wordplay is defined as “playful use of words.” This definition describes the way in which the wordplay is created by transforming the language. Other definitions suggest that wordplay is any difference from common language with particular intention, mainly to entertain the readers. This literary technique is also considered to be “written or spoken wit or jokes based on certain

elements of language: various forms of play on the signifier or signified” (Dupriez, 1991, p. 473).

In general, wordplay can be understood as unusual use of a word or words and these are also known as figures of speech. As Crystal (1997) claimed, “playing with words is a universal human activity, but it is particularly noticeable in the way literate societies have devised word games, based largely on the written language” (p. 64). There exist many types of wordplay used in English language. According to Encyclopædia Britannica (n.d.) wordplay can be divided into following types:

1. Figures of resemblance or relationship
2. Figures of emphasis or understatement
3. Figures of sound
4. Verbal games and gymnastics
5. Errors

The first one includes the use of simile, personification, euphemism or metaphors. The second category consists of rhetorical questions, paradox, oxymoron or irony; the third of alliteration or repetition; the fourth of puns and anagrams; and the last category includes for example malapropism.

According to Crystal (1997) people love playing with words, transforming them or finding new meanings. All these things are an integral part of informal language and humour involving “the choice of funny or silly words, grammatical patterns, pronunciations, and tones of voice” (p. 62). There exist many kinds of wordplay, for example Crystal (1997) lists acrostics, grid games, chronograms, word-squares, anagrams, palindromes, tongue twisters or doublets (p. 65).

The main purpose of wordplay is to attract the readers’ attention, to amuse them and mostly to convince them. That is the reason why most of the wordplay are used in advertisements, slogans or in headlines of particular articles (Dvořáková, 2012). Though some critics do not consider wordplay to be the best area of language, their place in literature is irreplaceable.

As Kjerkegaard (2011) has suggested:

Puns and wordplay occupy a significant position in literature as well as in various ways of reflecting on and conceptualizing literature. They can be used to produce and perform a poetic function with language and they can be used critically, which

entails considering them from a distance as utterances that undermine meaning and sense and that ultimately accomplish a deconstructive performance (p.1).

Talking about the undermining sense, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* full of nonsense is a great example.

Wordplay in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

The everlasting success of Lewis Carroll's book has been a question of many literary or other discussions. According to Lemos (2009), "the endurance of Carroll's tale may be explained by its particular work on language and the kaleidoscope of effects, meanings, and games that it produces thereby creating a remarkable literary work" (p. 23). The focus on language and its transformation is noticeable throughout the story and it alters usual communicative rules.

In common conversation between two speakers, there is a certain assumption that the communication should be comprehensible for both sides. It is not the case of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* because in most of the dialogues there is some kind of misunderstanding between Alice and other characters of Wonderland. These situations are obvious when the characters want to tell Alice something for them completely understandable but Alice has a trouble to identify what they are talking about (Lemos, 2009, p. 24).

To sum it up, most cases of this misunderstanding are caused by Lewis Carroll's language. As mentioned above, Lewis Carroll was very interested in playing with language - transforming poems, names, making up riddles and playing with words in general. The following parts of this thesis will cover the most frequent wordplay in detail.

Puns

There is a problem in distinction between wordplay and pun because some resources claim that pun is one of the wordplay forms and the others are convinced that these two terms are the same. Apparently there are many cases in which these two terms are overlapping but generally wordplay expresses much wider category than pun and includes other forms of wordplay.

Definition of Pun

To make a clear distinction between wordplay and pun, it is necessary to explain the meaning of this term. In many literary dictionaries there exist various definitions of term pun and this paragraph introduces some of them. According to definition in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* pun is considered to be “a play on words that are either identical in sound (homonyms) or very similar in sound, but are sharply diverse in meaning” (Abrahams, 1999, p. 253). *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* explains this term as “an expression that achieves emphasis or humour by contriving an ambiguity, two distinct meaning being suggested either by the same word or by the similar-sounding words” (Baldick, 2001, p. 209). More concise definition can be found in *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, where the term pun is explained as “a figure of speech which involves a play upon words” (Cuddon, 1992).

In other dictionaries there can be found many other definitions but all of them are various transformations of previous words. Strictly speaking, puns are usually described as the unusual use of words that sound the same or words that sound alike but have different meanings. It will be discussed later in detail. Puns can be explained in the terms of linguistics, as mentioned above in the first definition, or from a different point of view. One of them may be the explanation of Jonathan Swift who treated puns from the humorous point of view.

According to Jonathan Swift:

Punning is an art of harmonious jingling upon words which, passing in at the ears, excites a titillary motion in those parts; and this, being conveyed by the animal spirits into the muscles of the face, raises the cockles of the heart (Wiggin, 2001).

Since puns are irreplaceable part of humour, Jonathan Swift wrote very apt remark about it.

Classification

As Attardo (1994) claimed, “the subject of puns is the area of humour research in which linguistics has traditionally been most active” (p. 108). Allan & Kuiper (2004) pointed out that “puns are a form of word play which relies on a word being polysemous or homonymous” (p. 57). Allan & Kuiper (2004) demonstrated it on the example of Shakespeare’s play *Hamlet*, where Hamlet uses pun based on homonymous word ‘recorder’ – according to Macmillan Dictionary (n.d.) it is either “a musical instrument that

you play by blowing into a hole at the top while putting your fingers over other holes,” or “someone whose job is to make an official record of what is said in a court.” In addition to polysemy and homonymy, Ducháček puts forward that puns can be also inspired by paronymy, antonymy, association of ideas, etymological, tendency to motivation or lexical attraction (as cited in Attardo, 1994, p. 113).

According to Attardo (1994) “any linguistic item can be used as punning material.” There exist many classifications or taxonomies of puns but as Attardo (1994) claimed, puns are usually grouped according specific features to four language fields: by linguistic phenomenon, by linguistic structure, by phonemic distance, and eclectic” (p. 112). Among taxonomies based on linguistic phenomenon belongs Ducháček’s one (as cited in Attardo, 1994, p. 113-114):

1. Homonymy

- (a) Homophony

- i. Between different words
 - ii. Two or more words
 - iii. A simple word with a composed one
 - iv. One word with a group of two or more words
 - v. Two groups of words

- (b) Homography

- (c) Paronymy¹

2. Polysemy

3. Antonymy

4. Morphemic attraction (e.g., *delirium tremens* => *délire d’un home très mince* /Delirium of a very thin man/),

5. Tendency to motivation²

6. Contamination³ (*Français* from *Français* and *Anglais*)

According to Allan & Kuiper (2004) there can appear two various words with randomly same form – for example ‘sight’ vs. ‘site’, ‘weak’ vs. ‘week’, ‘not’ vs. ‘knot’, ‘hour’ vs. ‘our’ or ‘dry’ vs. ‘dry’, ‘school’ vs. ‘school’, ‘bow’ vs. ‘bow’. These words are

¹ According to Bussmann (2006), paronymy is „phonic similarity between two expressions from different languages, e.g. Eng. *Summer* and Ger. *Sommer*.”

² „A word form is motivated if its whole meaning can be ascertained from the sum of the meanings of its individual elements, e.g. *bookstore*, *garbage man*, *movie theatre*.” (Bussmann, 2006)

³ According to *Dictionary.com*, contamination in linguistics means „the process of forming blends.”

called homonyms and can be found in written (homographs) as well as in spoken form (homophones). Native speakers with certain knowledge of their mother tongue have the advantage in recognizing these differences (p. 56). On the one hand, there are homophones, defined as “a word that is pronounced in the same way as another word but differs in meaning and/or in spelling; thus a kind of homonym” (Baldick, 2001). On the other hand, there are homographs, defined as “special type of homonymy, where two expressions are orthographically identical but have different meanings and usually different pronunciations, e.g. *bass* (fish) vs. *bass* (tone) and are not normally etymologically related to one another” (Bussmann, 2006).

The words forming puns may be also polysemous, which means they have “different but related meanings, when this happens one can often see quite clearly how the meanings relate to one another” (Allan & Kuiper, 2004, p. 55). According to Bussmann (2006) “one speaks of polysemy when an expression has two or more definitions with some common features that are usually derived from a single basic meaning” (p. 918). In general, sometimes it is very difficult to recognise whether two words are polysemous or homonymous (Allan & Kuiper, 2004, p. 56).

As mentioned above, puns are considered to be words presenting two diverse meaning and they have to follow particular rules (Baldick, 2001). As Attardo (1994) explained, “in order for an utterance to have two different senses, both senses must be present at the same time” (p. 134). In contrast with the previous claim about presenting two senses at once, Attardo (1994) added that, “any pun will first introduce one sense to the text, and then a second one” (p. 136). Following as well as breaking basic rules of pun forming can distinctively influence the final quality of pun. Considering all these peculiarities, there is the assumption that “the best puns are those in which either the two senses coexist in a difficult balance, or in which the connotating sense brings a meaningful contribution to the global senses of the text” (Attardo, 1994, p. 138).

The Origin of Puns

According to Online Etymology Dictionary (n.d.), the origin of term pun is dated back to 1660s, where the first reference of its use was attested. The term pun is probably derived from the word ‘pundigron’ which is taken from Italian ‘puntiglio’. Both previous terms supposedly mean trivial objection. On the other hand, it is supposed to be Latin

diminutive of term punctum meaning the point. The person who makes puns is generally called punster, “a low wit who endeavours at reputation by double meaning.” Since the amount of information about the history of pun is limited, it is very difficult to tell whether these dates are correct or not.

Many sources claim the origin of puns goes much deeper in the history and the first appearance of this term are connected with the Ancient Rome and Greek. The Greek term of pun is called paronomasia and it is supposed to be the earliest form of wordplay which spread in many literary genres and is considered to be the basis of humour (Cuddon, 1992). According to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, paronomasia is “the term used in ancient rhetoric to refer to any play on the sounds of words” (Baldick, 2001, p. 185). It is quite possible that puns existed long time ago their first reference in literature, probably under a different term but as Kjerkegaard (2011) claims, “actual descriptions of wordplay do not appear until the rhetorical studies of Cicero and Quintilian” (p. 1). In the English, according to Redfern, puns were a very popular figure of speech used during the Tudors, Elizabethan as well as the Victorian period. The examples of puns can be seen in Shakespeare or Donne and many other writers (as cited in Dvořáková, 2012, p. 8).

Main Opinions about Puns

As mentioned above pun is a literary device which is used not only in literature but mainly in spoken language. Though being a part of humour, it is not always celebrated. On one hand there are some writers and critics who adore them, on the other hand there are many opponents as well.

As Crystal (1997) claims:

Puns have been called verbal practical jokes, and are either loved or hated according to temperament. Their popularity varies greatly between languages and cultures, though the reasons for this are unclear; it has been said, for example, that they are far more popular in Britain than in the USA and in France than in Germany (p. 63).

However, hated or loved, puns always catch our attention.

Samuel Beckett in his novel *Murphy* (1938) tries to point out the necessity of puns by the statement that “at the beginning was the pun,” (as cited in Kjerkegaard, 2011, p. 1). Throughout the centuries puns influenced many writers and each of them had a particular

opinion about them. The contradictory opinion may be the one of John Dryden, who interpreted puns as “the lowest and most grovelling kind of wit,” (as cited in Crystal, 2007, p. 63). Other negative opinion about puns may be from W. D. Redfern, who claims that puns are “bastards, immigrants, barbarians, extraterrestrials: they intrude, they infiltrate,” (as cited in Dvořáková, 2012, p. 6). At the end Redfern actually points out that in fact, puns “are inferior, accidental and need to be apologized for,” (as cited in Dvořáková, 2012, p. 6). Although Redfern is not in favour of puns, he considers them to be the most common kind of wordplay (Dvořáková, 2012, p. 6).

Since the use of puns was already known in Rome, there appeared some interesting opinions suggesting that, “The Roman orators Cicero and Quintilian believed that “paronomasia”, [...], was a sign of intellectual suppleness and rhetorical skill,” (Davies, 2013). On the contrary, Sigmund Freud, the founding father of psychoanalysis, did not like puns at all. He considered them to be the worst kind of joke and he “identifies [them] as an admission of weakness, a psychic release – valve in which humour alleviates the stress of repressing unpleasant truths,” (Davies, 2013). However contrasting these opinions are, it is obvious that puns endured till today and they are used in many various ways.

The Use of Puns in English Literature

From the historical point of view, puns were, with some English writers, very popular. Authors usually used them for humorous effect but there were also examples of serious puns. As Nash claims, “[we] take punning for a tawdry and facetious thing, one of the less profound forms of humour, but that is the prejudice of our time; a pun may be profoundly serious, or charged with pathos,” (as cited in Dvořáková, 2012, p. 6). In the following paragraphs some examples of puns in English literature are listed.

Some examples of puns are also in the New Testament but they are more comprehensible in French than in English language (Crystal, 1997). Among the most famous writers using puns belonged William Shakespeare, who used them in both serious as well as comic way. Talking about Shakespeare’s plays, the most famous examples of puns appeared for example in *Romeo and Juliet* or in *Hamlet*. In *Romeo and Juliet* it is the scene where dying Mercutio says, “[ask] for me tomorrow and you shall find me a grave man,” (Abrahams, 1999, p. 253). Here, pun is made by the use of word ‘grave’, which in a spoken form has different meaning. According to Macmillan Dictionary (n.d.), on one

hand, it can be used as an adjective “used for emphasizing how serious something is” or as a noun representing “the place where a dead body is buried in a deep hole in the ground.”

Another example of puns in English literature can be found in John Donne’s poem “Hymn to God the Father” (1633):

I have a sin of fear, that when I have spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
But swear by Thy self, that at my death Thy Son
Shall shine as he shines now, and heretofore;
And having done that, Thou hast done;
I fear no more.

There are presented serious puns by words ‘son’ and ‘done’. ‘Son’ stands here for the word ‘sun’ and ‘done’ is a pun on Donne’s name (Cuddon, 1992). Another writer who used serious puns was John Milton in his *Paradise Lost*. As Abraham (1999) claims, “[i]n the eighteenth century and thereafter, however, the literary use of the pun has been almost exclusively comic” (p. 253).

Further Use of Puns, Their Advantages and Disadvantages

Recently, as Crystal (1997) claims, “puns are a feature of many linguistic contexts, such as black comedy, sick humour, T-shirt, lapel badges, car stickers, trade names, book titles, and graffiti,” (p. 63). Being the part of humour, puns and their advantages are used especially in advertisements because as Li points out, “they draw attention and make advertisements attractive and memorable” (as cited in Dvořáková, 2012). However, the examples of best and worst puns can be seen especially in common everyday conversation (Crystal, 1997). So called punsters have to be aware of the fact, that puns should not be used frequently but “economically so as not to seem childish or to monopolize the listener’s attention” (Kjerkegaard, 2011, p. 2).

According to Attardo (1994) “a field in which considerable attention has been paid to puns is literary criticism” (p. 111). Li mentions that particular differences or lack of reader’s knowledge of cultural and historical backgrounds can caused troubles in understanding (as cited in Dvořáková, 2012). Besides, this lack of knowledge can caused the difficulties with translation of a particular pun. According to Crystal (1991), “exact equivalent is of course impossible: no translator could provide a translation that was a

perfect parallel to the source text, in such respects as rhythm, sound symbolism, puns, and cultural allusions” (p. 344). The translators have very hard job because without particular knowledge they have to decide whether they should “preserve elements of irony and social criticism even when the actual rendering of the play on words is not possible [...]”, or “minimize those elements and tend to concentrate on the story line” (Borba, 2008, p. 118). Borba (2008) is dealing with this problem in his article, while trying to concentrate on two different translations of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*.

III. EXAMPLES OF WORDPLAY IN Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

This part of my graduate thesis presents several examples of wordplay found in Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Each example is further analysed and particular wordplay are explained. Specific words are written in bold intentionally for better orientation in individual excerpts. In original version these words are printed in common type.

1st Chapter – Down the Rabbit-Hole

- 1) "I wonder if I shall fall right through the earth! How funny it'll seem to come out among the people that walk with their heads downwards! *The antipathies*, I think-" (she was rather glad there was no one listening, this time, as it didn't sound at all the right word)"- ... (Carroll, 2006, p. 7).

Alice is trying to find out what would happen after her fall through the earth and she incorrectly used the word 'antipathies' - noun in plural form described in Cambridge Dictionaries Online (2013) as "feelings of strong dislike, opposition, or anger" instead of 'the Antipodeans' derived of the word 'the Antipodes' "referring to Australia and New Zealand by people living in the northern hemisphere."

- 2) After a while, finding that nothing more happened, she decided on going into the garden at once; but, *alas* for poor *Alice*! (Carroll, 2006, p. 12)

According to Gardner (2000), it is very difficult to be sure whether word 'alas' – "used to express sadness or feeling sorry about something" (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2013) is here used as a pun to the name of main protagonist, Alice.

- 3) "Well, I'll eat it," said Alice, "and if it makes me *grow larger*, I can reach the key; and if it makes me *grow smaller*, I can creep under the door; so either way I'll get into the garden, and I don't care which happens!" (Carroll, 2006, p. 12)

It can be considered as some kind of paradox because the verb grow is usually connected with increasing in size or amount but together with the adjective smaller it seems little strange.

2nd Chapter – The Pool of Tears

- 1) “*Curiouser and curiouser!*” cried Alice (she was so much surprised, that for the moment she quite forgot how to speak good English). (Carroll, 2006, p. 14)

This comparison form is incorrect because it does not follow the rules of comparison of adjectives. In English, there is the distinction between inflectional and periphrastic comparison. Comparison of adjectives that are monosyllabic is formed by inflection (low – lower). When using disyllabic adjectives, one can decide whether to form them by inflection (polite – politer) or alternatively by periphrastic form (polite – more polite). Trisyllabic adjectives are formed only periphrastically; since adjective ‘curious’ is trisyllabic, it takes only periphrastic forms. According these rules the correct comparison of adjective ‘curious’ should be – curious – more curious. (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 155)

3rd Chapter - A Caucus-race and a Long Tale

- 1) “I’ll soon make you *dry* enough!” They all sat down at once, in a large ring, with the Mouse in the middle. Alice kept her eyes anxiously fixed on it, for she felt sure she would catch a bad cold if she did not get *dry* very soon. “Ahem!” said the Mouse with an important air, “are you all ready? This is *the driest thing* I know. Silence all round, if you please! (Carroll, 2006, p. 25)

There is the pun based on homonymous words ‘dry’. According to Macmillan Dictionary (n.d.), ‘dry’ as a verb means „to remove the water from something by wiping it, heating it, or blowing air onto it”. It can function as an adjective and then it has several meanings. The most frequently used meaning is that „something that is dry has no water in it or on it”. But it can be also used to describe something that is „very serious and boring”, which is the case of this example (Macmillan Dictionary, n.d.).

- 2) „Edwin and Morcar, the earls of Mercia and Northumbria, declared for him; and even Stigand, the patriotic archbishop of Canterbury, *found it* advisable –“
„*Found what?*” said the Duck.
„*Found it,*” the Mouse replied rather crossly: „of course you know what ‘it’ means.”

„I know what ‘it’ means well enough, when I find a thing,” said the Duck: „it’s generally a frog, or a worm. The question is, what did the archbishop *find*?”
(Carroll, 2006, p. 25)

The combination of a verb ‘found’ together with a pronoun ‘it’ is considered to be a grammatical pun. The confusion in the previous dialogue is caused by misunderstanding in the past tense of verb ‘find’ and its complementation. Since verb ‘find’ is transitive, it is followed by an object (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 205). As Macmillan Dictionary (n.d.) describes this verb means either „to discover something, or to see where it is by searching for it” or „to experience something in a particular way.” In the first case, verb ‘find’ can be used as ‘find something for somebody’, ‘find somebody something’, ‘find somebody/something’ or ‘find somebody/something + adjective’. In the second case this verb is used in the form of ‘find somebody/something + adjective/noun’ (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 2011). The verb in the phrase ‘find it advisable’ is complex and its object needs the complementation. Personal pronoun ‘it’ is used as a prop (‘dummy’) subject because it has very little or no semantic content and it is used to fill the free space (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990, p. 113). The Duck is confused because it thinks that pronoun ‘it’ refers to something or someone.

3) „Mine is a long and sad *tale*!” said the Mouse, turning to Alice, and sighing. „It is a long *tail*, certainly,” said Alice, looking down with wonder at the Mouse’s *tail*: „but why do you call it sad?” (Carroll, 2006, p. 28)

The pun in this example is created by the use of two homophones – ‘tale’ and ‘tail’. At the beginning there is the Mouse talking about her long and sad tale. Alice, looking at its long tail, misinterprets it and talks about the tail. According to Macmillan Dictionary (n.d.), ‘tale’ is a noun and means „a story about imaginary events or people“ or „a spoken account of someone’s experiences, especially when they are made to seem more exciting or unpleasant than they really were”. Alice’s ‘tail’ is „a part at the back of an animal’s body that can move.” At the same time, this pun is highlighted in the form of the poem which can be considered as a visual pun (see Appendix B).

4) „I beg your pardon,” said Alice very humbly, „you had got to the fifth bend, I think?” „I had *not*!” cried the Mouse, sharply and very angrily. „A *knot*!” said

Alice, always ready to make herself useful, and looking anxiously about her. „Oh, do let me help to undo it!” (Carroll, 2006, p. 30)

Again, there are puns created by homophones of two different words – ‘not’ and ‘knot’. On the one hand, there is an adverb ‘not’ that according to Macmillan Dictionary (n.d.) is „used for making negatives” and on the other hand there is a noun ‘knot’ that describes „a point where string, rope, or cloth is tied together, or twisted together and pulled tight.”

4th Chapter - The Rabbit Sends in a Little Bill

1) There ought to be a book written about me, that there ought! And when I *grow up*, I’ll write one – but I’m *grown up* now,” she added in a sorrowful tone: “at least there’s no room to *grow up* any more here.” (Carroll, 2006, p. 35)

The comical effect of this paragraph is caused by the use of phrasal verb ‘grow up’. According to Macmillan Dictionary (n.d.), talking about people ‘grow up’ means “to change from being a baby or young child to being an older child or adult”, which is the first example of this verb. Alice is worried because she is ‘grown up’ now which suggests being an adult who behaves responsibly (Cambridge Online Dictionaries, 2013). In Alice’s case it means that she has become taller and she has no space to grow up any further.

2) Next came an angry voice – the Rabbit’s – “Pat! Pat! Where are you?” And then a voice she had never heard before, “Sure then I’m here! *Digging for apples*, yer honour!” “*Digging for apples*, indeed!” said the Rabbit angrily. (Carroll, 2006, p. 36)

While reading these lines about apples, readers can imagine an apple tree and are confused about ‘digging for apples’ because apples are normally picked. According to Gardner (2000) this dialogue may be an Irish joke, since Pat is an Irish name and in the nineteenth century, term Irish apples was in slang used for Irish potatoes. If this statement is true, then ‘digging for apples’ makes suddenly sense (pp. 134-135).

- 3) “Now, who did that? – It was **Bill**, I fancy – Who’s to go down the chimney? – **Bill’s** got to go down – Here, **Bill!** The master says you’ve got to go down the chimney!” (Carroll, 2006, p. 36)

In this chapter, Alice is trapped in the Rabbit’s house and cannot get away because she is very tall. White Rabbit sends little lizard called Bill to the house to get Alice out of there. According to Borba (2008) there is a significant wordplay based on lizard’s name, Bill. In English it is not just name but in spoken form it can be also understood as a notice (p. 116). According to Cambridge Dictionaries Online (2013), noun ‘bill’ means “a notice giving information about something, especially an event or performance.” Wordplay is based on homonymy of word ‘bill’, which is homograph and homophone at the same time.

5th Chapter – Advice from the Caterpillar

- 1) “What do you mean by that?” said the Caterpillar, sternly. “Explain **yourself!**” “I ca’n’t explain **myself**, I’m afraid, Sir,” said Alice, “because I’m not **myself**, you see.” “I don’t see,” said the Caterpillar. “I’m afraid I ca’n’t put it more clearly,” Alice replied, very politely, “for I ca’n’t understand it myself, to begin with; and being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing.” (Carroll, 2006, p. 44)

The Caterpillar wants to explain what she means, but Alice thinks he wants to know who she is. She tells him that she does not know that because she has changed a lot during the day. The Caterpillar is confused and wants Alice to explain her words to him. Alice is misunderstood and tells him that she cannot explain herself because she is not herself. She means she has not the right height and does not feel very well.

‘Yourself’ can be used as reflexive pronoun “when the subject of the verb is ‘you’ or the person being spoken to, and the object is the same person”, or it can be understood as the state of mind when someone does not “be, seem, or feel as happy or healthy as usual” (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2013). Alice is talking about her ‘self’, which is in Macmillan Dictionary (n.d) defined as “who you are and what you think and feel, especially the conscious feeling of being separate and different from other people.”

- 2) Alice is trying to explain the Caterpillar that she is not herself because she has changed many times during the day and that she cannot remember things that she

used to. Therefore the Caterpillar wants her to repeat the song *'You are old, Father William'*:

*"You are old, Father William," the young man said,
"And your hair has become very white;
And yet you incessantly stand on your head –
Do you think, at your age, it is right?"* (Carroll, 2006, p. 45)

As Gardner (2000) pointed out this poem is "one of the undisputed masterpieces of nonsense verse" (p. 135). It is Carroll's parody of poem "The Old Man's Comforts and how he gained them" written by Robert Southey. The original beginning of this poem is:

*You are old, Father William, the young man cried,
The few locks which are left you are grey;
You are hale, Father William, a hearty old man,
Now tell me the reason, I pray.*

The original version by Robert Southey is considered to be didactic poem that is for most people forgotten. As Rumens (2012) claimed, this poem is "a deeply Victorian poem; that's to say, it's Victorian in the worst sense, dishonest in the interests of piety." The Father William preaches his son how he should behave and he explains that his virtue in youth is now rewarded. Carroll's version is very humorous and it makes fun of the Father William's advices in the original poem. As Rumens (2012) pointed out, in Carroll's poem, not only words but also quotation marks, missing in the original version, are transformed.

6th Chapter - Pig and Pepper

- 1) "Just think what work it would make with the day and night! You see the earth takes twenty-four hours to turn round on its *axis* –"

"Talking of *axes*," said the Duchess, "chop off her head!" (Carroll, 2006, p. 59)

In this chapter, the Duchess is furious because she wants everybody to mind their own business because then the world will round much faster. Alice, always ready to make some clever comment, thinks about the earth and its turning. She is talking about 'axis', which according to Macmillan Dictionary (n.d.) means "an imaginary line through the middle of an object such as a planet, round which it seems to spin." In contrast to Alice, the Duchess is talking about 'axes', which is plural form of a noun 'axe' – "a tool used for cutting down trees and cutting up large pieces of wood, consisting of a long wooden handle

and a heavy metal blade” (Macmillan Dictionary, n.d.). This pun is based on two homonymous words, more closely homophones.

2) The Duchess is nursing her baby and begins with this lullaby.

*“Speak roughly to your little boy,
And beat him when he sneezes:
He only does it to annoy,
Because he knows it teases.”* (Carroll, 2006, p.59)

This poem is again transformed by Lewis Carroll for the purpose of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. As Gardner (2000) mentioned, the original name of this poem is “Speak Gently” and its origin is unclear, since it is ascribed either to G. W. Langford or David Bates. The original version of this poem is:

*Speak gently! It is better far
To rule by love than fear;
Speak gently; let no harsh words mar
The good we might do here!*

On the one hand, there is the original poem that is written in very pleasant tone and gives advices how to behave in various life situations. On the other hand there is Carroll’s version that made the poem more or less negative.

3) “I’ve seen hatters before,” she said to herself: “the March Hare will be much the most interesting, and perhaps, as this is May it wo’n’t be raving mad – at least not so mad as it was in March.” (Carroll, 2006, p. 64)

In this book, Carroll used the March Hare and the Hatter as the names of two protagonists. As Gardner (2000) claimed, in English it was very common to use phrases – ‘mad as a hatter’ and ‘mad as a March hare’ – to symbolize that someone is crazy (p. 141). According to Macmillan Dictionary (n.d.) to be ‘mad as a hatter/March hare’ is used often in humorous way in means to be “extremely silly or strange, sometimes because of mental illness.”

7th Chapter - A Mad Tea-party

- 1) The Hatter opened his eyes very wide on hearing this; but all he said was “Why is a raven like a writing-desk?” (Carroll, 2006, p. 68)

In these lines Carroll’s ability to play with language is demonstrated in the riddle that has no answer. Thinking about the right answer to Hatter’s riddle, Alice is confused because she cannot find any answer and complains about it. As Gardner (2000) mentioned, there had been various speculation on this topic and many essays suggesting the correct answer had been written (p. 145).

- 2) While March Hare wants to know the right answer to his riddle, he is arguing with Alice:

“Do you mean that you think you can find out the answer to it?” said the March Hare. “Exactly so,” said Alice. “Then you should say what you mean,” the March Hare went on. “I do,” Alice hastily replied; “at least – at least I mean what I say – that’s the same thing, you know.” “Not the same thing a bit!” said the Hatter. “Why, you might just as well say that ‘I see what I eat’ is the same thing as ‘I eat what I see’!” “You might just as well say,” added the March Hare, “that ‘I like what I get’ is the same thing as ‘I get what I like’!” (Carroll, 2006, pp. 68-69)

In previous example, Carroll used his knowledge of Math because these sentences may be transformed into the mathematical exercise, where one statement represents ‘x’ and the other represents ‘y’. Thinking about the right answer of Hatter’s riddle, Alice is confused because she cannot find any answer and complains with Hatter about it. According to Bayley (2009) in this example all participants used non-communicative algebra, which means that $x \neq y$ is not the same as $y \neq x$. As Bayley (2009) claimed this kind of algebra “contradicted the basic laws of arithmetic and opened up a strange new world of mathematics, even more abstract than that of the symbolic algebraists.” By contradicting the basics of mathematics Carroll altered the laws of language as well.

- 3) “I think you might do something better with the time,” she said, “than wasting it in asking riddles that have no answers.” “If you knew Time as well as I do,” said the Hatter, “you wouldn’t talk about wasting it. It’s him.” (Carroll, 2006, p. 70)

Alice is confused by the Hatter's idea of time. Alice understands a noun 'time' as "the quantity that you measure using a clock" but the Hatter means by this notion something else (Macmillan Dictionary, n.d.). Alice refers to 'time' as to 'it' but the Hatter refers to it as 'him'. Time in this case is considered to be a particular character.

- 4) "I dare say you never even spoke to Time!" Perhaps not," Alice cautiously replied; but I know I have to beat time when I learn music." "Ah! That accounts for it," said the Hatter. "He wo'n't stand beating. Now, if you only kept on good terms with him, he'd do almost anything you liked with the clock." (Carroll, 2006, pp. 70-71)

The Hatter continues to talk about Time as about a character and Alice tries to find out who the Time is and she can remember that when she learned to play music, she had to beat the time. According to Macmillan Dictionary (n.d.) 'time' in music represents "the speed at which a piece of music is played, measured as the number of beats in each bar". In this example 'beat time' means "to make regular movements or sounds to show how fast a piece of music should be sung or played" (Macmillan Dictionary, n.d.).

- 5) The Hatter explains how he had to sing a song at the Queen of Hearts concert and he starts to sing it again.

'Twinkle, twinkle, little bat!

How I wonder what you're at!

'Up above the world you fly,

Like a tea-tray in the sky.

Twinkle, twinkle -' (Carroll, 2006, p. 71)

There is another example of parody in the Hatter's song. As Gardner (2000) pointed out, Carroll transformed the first verses of poem "The Star" written by Jane Taylor (p. 146). The original version of this poem is:

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,

How I wonder what you are!

Up above the world so high,

Like a diamond in the sky.

As Gardner (2000) mentioned there is the possibility that ‘little bat’ may symbolize Carroll’s friend and professor of mathematics at Oxford, Bartholomew Price, who was among his students known as “The Bat” (p. 136).

- 6) The Dormouse wants to tell Alice the story about three girls living in a treacle-well but Alice does not believe there can be something like a treacle-well and regularly interrupts him by various questions:

“If you ca’n’t be civil, you’d better finish the story for yourself.” “No, please go on!” Alice said very humbly. “I wo’n’t interrupt you again. I dare say there might be one.” “One, indeed!” said the Dormouse indignantly. However, he consented to go on. “And so these three *little sisters* – they were learning *to draw*, you know -” “What did they *draw*?” said Alice, quite forgetting her promise. “Treacle,” said the Dormouse without considering at all this time. [...] “But I don’t understand. Where did they *draw* the treacle from?” (Carroll, 2006, pp. 74-75)

In this excerpt the reader can find two examples of pun. The first example may be seen in complex noun phrase ‘little sisters’, which is probably pun based on homophony of adjective ‘little’ and surname Liddell. The second example of pun is made by homonymy of verb ‘to draw’, which means either “to make a picture of something or someone with a pencil or pen” or “to pull or direct something in a particular direction” (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2013). In this example verbs ‘to draw’ are both – homophones and homographs.

- 7) “You can draw water out of a water-*well*,” said the Hatter; “so I should think you could draw treacle out of a treacle-*well* – eh, stupid?” “But they were in the *well*,” Alice said to the Dormouse, not choosing to notice this last remark. “Of course they were,” said the Dormouse: “*well in*.” (Carroll, 2006, p. 75)

Alice is confused because she cannot understand how it is possible for these sisters to draw something out of the well since they are in it. The pun in this example is made by homophony of word ‘well’. In this conversation, word ‘well’ is three times used as a noun and it in Cambridge Dictionaries Online (2013) it is explained as “a deep hole in the ground from which you can get water, oil, or gas.” In the last example the word ‘well’ can

be understood as an idiom which means “to have a good relationship with a person or group which give you an advantage” (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2013).

9th Chapter - The Mock Turtle’s Story

- 1) “[T]here’s a large *mustard-mine* near here. And the moral of that is – “The more there is of *mine*, the less there is of yours.” (Carroll, 2006, p. 91)

Alice is talking to the Duchess who likes telling the moral of everything. She talks about flamingos and mustards and that they both bite. Alice replies that it might be true but since mustard is not a bird, it is very unlikely. Alice thinks that mustard is some kind of mineral, which is not the correct answer either. According to Macmillan Dictionary, ‘mustard’ may be “a plant whose seeds are used to make mustards” or it may be “a yellow substance with a hot taste made from the seeds of a plant” (Macmillan Dictionary, n.d.). The Duchess claims that there is a large mustard-mine and then she makes a moral of it. In these two sentences there is a pun made on homonymy of word ‘mine’ that is homophone as well as homograph. In the first example the word ‘mine’ is used as a noun and according to Macmillan Dictionary (n.d.) means “a large hole or tunnel in the ground from which people take coal, gold etc.” In the second example ‘mine’ is used as a pronoun with the meaning introduced in Cambridge Dictionaries Online (2013) as “the one(s) belonging to or connected with me.”

- 2) “When we were little,” the Mock Turtle went on at last, more calmly, though still sobbing a little now and then, “we went to *school* in the sea. The master was an old Turtle – we used to call him *Tortoise*-.” “Why did you call him Tortoise, if he wasn’t one?” Alice asked. “We called him Tortoise because he *taught us*,” said the Mock Turtle angrily. (Carroll, 2006, p. 96)

A noun ‘school’ in this example may be understood in two various ways. The first and the most common meaning is “a place where children go to be educated” but there may be another explanation in this case because it is story of sea creatures, a noun ‘school’ may be understood as “ a large number of fish or other sea creatures swimming in a group” (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2013). It is not sure whether this homonymy is used intentionally. Humorous effect is in the next lines where the

Mock Turtle is telling the story about their teacher in the school who was called Tortoise. As Gardner (2000) mentioned, “[i]n Alice’s day the word tortoise was usually given to land turtles to distinguish them from turtles that lived in the sea” (p. 151). Alice does not understand why they call him Tortoise if he was not one of them and she gets the explanation that it is because he taught them. The pun here is made by homophony of a noun ‘tortoise’ and ‘taught us’ – the past form of verb ‘teach’ that means “to help students to learn something in a school, college, university etc. by giving lessons.” Both these words have nearly the same pronunciation /'tɔ:(r)təs/ (Macmillan Dictionary, n.d.).

3) “**Reeling** and **Writhing**, of course, to begin with,” the Mock Turtle replied; “and then the different branches of Arithmetic – **Ambition**, **Distraction**, **Uglification**, and **Derision**.” (Carroll, 2006, p. 98)

While talking about their subjects at the sea school, the Mock Turtle makes puns of various English subjects. ‘Reeling’ stands here for the subject called ‘Reading’. According to Macmillan Dictionary (n.d), on one hand there is a verb ‘to reel’ that means “to move backwards quickly, on the other hand a verb ‘to read’ that means “to look at and understand words in a letter, book, newspaper etc.”

The subject called ‘Writhing’ is formed from a verb ‘to writhe’ that means “to make large twisting movements with the body” but according to Cambridge Dictionaries Online (2013), subject called ‘Writing’ represents the activity of creating pieces of written work, such as stories, poems, or articles.”

The form of subject called Arithmetic – “the part of mathematics that involves basic calculations such as adding or multiplying numbers”- is not changed but particular branches have altered (Macmillan Dictionary, n.d.). ‘Ambition’ as a noun that means “a strong wish to achieve something” is replaced with ‘Addition’ as “the process of adding numbers or amounts together” (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2013).

According to Macmillan Dictionary (n.d.), ‘Distraction’ is “something that gets your attention and prevents you from concentrating on something else” and it represents ‘Subtraction’ in everyday school, which means “the process of subtracting one number or amount from another.”

A word ‘uglification’ does not exist in English language and in this conversation stands for ‘Multiplication’ – “the process of adding a number to itself a particular number of times” (Macmillan Dictionary, n.d.).

The last subject in the sea school called ‘Derision’ in fact means “the situation in which someone or something is laughed at and considered stupid or of no value”, whereas ‘Division’ is “the calculation of how many times one number goes into another” (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2013).

4) “And how many hours a day did you do lessons?” said Alice, in a hurry to change the subject. “Ten hours the first day,” said the Mock Turtle: “nine the next, and so on.” “What a curious plan!” exclaimed Alice. “That’s the reason they’re called *lessons*,” the Gryphon remarked: “because they *lessen* from day to day.” (Carroll, 2006, p. 99)

Alice is talking with sea creatures about their school system and how often they are going to school. After their answer she is very confused because they do not have to go to school every day and hours of their lessons reduced from day to day. There is the pun made by homophony of words ‘lesson’, which is a noun and according to Macmillan Dictionary (n.d.) means “a period of time in which students are taught about a subject in school”, and a verb ‘lessen’ which meaning is “to become smaller in amount, level, importance etc or make something do this.”

5) “*Mystery*, ancient and modern, with *Seaography*: then *Drawling* – the Drawling-master was an old conger-eel that used to come once a week: he taught us *Drawling*, *Stretching*, and *Fainting in Coils*.” (Carroll, 2006, p. 99)

In these examples there are again puns on various subject based on similarity. ‘Mystery’ at the beginning, which is “something strange or not known that has not yet been explained or understood”, is considered to be a pun on ‘History’ – “the study of or a record of past events considered together, especially events of a particular period, country, or subject” (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2013). Subject called ‘Seaography’ that is not found in dictionaries stands for “the study of the systems and processes involved in the world’s weather, mountains, seas, lakes, etc. and of the ways in which countries and people organize life within an area” – ‘Geography’ (Cambridge

Dictionaries Online, 2013). ‘Drawling’ is derived from a noun ‘drawl’ that means “a slow way of speaking, with long vowel sounds”. It is a pun on the subject called ‘Drawing’ which according to Macmillan Dictionary (n.d.) is “the activity or skill of making pictures with a pen or pencil.” Since these subjects belong to the area of art it is possible that subject called ‘Stretching’, which is considered to be “a movement or exercise in which you make a part of your body as straight as possible so that your muscles become long and tight” is substitution for ‘Sketching’ that means “to draw picture quickly and with few details” (Macmillan Dictionary, n.d.). Final pun is made by similarity of ‘Fainting in Coils’ and ‘Painting in Oils’. According to Gardner (2000) the Drawling-master was the art critic John Ruskin who visited Liddell sisters once a week to teach them how to draw, sketch and paint in oils (p. 152).

10th Chapter - The Lobster-quadriple

- 1) *“Will you walk a little faster?” said a whiting to a snail,
 “There’s a porpoise close behind us, and he’s treading on my tail.
 See how eagerly the lobsters and the turtles all advance!
 They are waiting on the shingle – will you come and join the dance?
 Will you wo’n’t you, will you, wo’n’t you, will you join the dance?
 Will you, wo’n’t you, will you, wo’n’t you, wo’n’t you join the dance?”* (Carroll, 2006, p. 103)

According to Gardner (2000) the Mock Turtle’s song is parody on the first lines and meter of poem called “The Spider and the Fly” written by Mary Howitt. Mary Howitt’s version of this song is:

- “Will you walk into my parlour?” said the spider to the fly.
 “ ’Tis the prettiest little parlour that ever you did spy.
 The way into my parlour is up a winding stair,
 And I’ve got many curious things to show when you are there.”
 “Oh, no, no,” said the little fly, “to ask me is in vain,
 For who goes up your winding stair can ne’er come down again.”*
- 2) “Oh, as to the whiting,” said the Mock Turtle, “they – you’ve seen them, of course?” “Yes,” said Alice, “I’ve often seen them at *dinn* -” she checked herself

hastily. “I don’t know where *Dinn* may be,” said the Mock Turtle; “but if you’ve seen them so often, of course you know what they’re like.”

Alice already knows that she has to be careful about what she is saying because the creatures in the Wonderland are very easily offended. When they are talking about the experience with the whiting, Alice agrees she knows them well because she often seen them at dinner but then she thinks about it and does not finish a noun ‘dinner’ not to offend the March Hare again. So she says only that she has often seen them at ‘dinn’ and this causes the misunderstanding because the Mock Turtle thinks that ‘Dinn’ may be some kind of place.

- 3) “Why, if a fish came to me, and told me he was going a journey, I should say ‘With what *porpoise*?’” “Don’t you mean ‘*purpose*?’” said Alice. “I mean what I say,” the Mock Turtle replied, in an offended tone. (Carroll 2006, p. 106)

Humorous effect of this dialogue is caused by the pun of words ‘porpoise’ and ‘purpose’. These two words are homonymous and their similarity is based on the sounds; they are homophones. The first ‘porpoise’ with pronunciation /'pɔ:.pəs/ is a noun marking “a mammal that lives in the sea, swims in groups, and looks similar to a dolphin but has a shorter rounder nose.” A noun ‘purpose’ with pronunciation /'pɜ:.pəs/ is homophone to ‘porpoise’ and signifies the reason “why you do something or why something exists” (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2013).

- 4) The Gryphon wants Alice to repeat ‘*'Tis the voice of the sluggard*’ but Alice’s mind is full of other things and she cannot concentrate on the right words. Her version of the song is:

“Tis the voice of the Lobster: I heard him declare

‘You have baked me too brown, I must sugar my hair.’

As a duck with its eyelids, so he with his nose

Trims his belt and his buttons, and turns out his toes. (Carroll, 2006, p. 107)

As Gardner (2000) pointed out, Carroll made a parody of the first line of poem called “The Sluggard” written by Isaac Watts. The first lines of original poem are:

“Tis the voice of the sluggard; I heard him complain,

“You have wak’d me too soon, I must slumber again.”

*As the door on its hinges, so he on his bed,
Turns his sides and his shoulders and his heavy head.*

- 5) Alice is begging the Mock Turtle to sing her a song and the Gryphon suggests that a song called 'Turtle Soup' would be the best idea.

*"Beautiful Soup, so rich and green,
Waiting in a hot tureen!
Who for such dainties would not stoop?
Soup of the evening, beautiful Soup!
Soup of the evening, beautiful Soup!
 Beau – ootiful Soo – oop!
 Beau – ootiful Soo – oop!
Soo – oop of the e – e – evening,
 Beautiful, beautiful Soup!"* (Carroll, 2006, p. 109)

According Gardner (2000) this is another example of Carroll's fondness for parody. It is a parody of James M. Sayles's song "Star of the Evening" who was an author of words as well as music. Carroll put this song in his book because it is one of popular songs that the Liddell sisters once sang for him. The first stanza of the original song is:

*Beautiful star in heav'n so bright,
Softly falls thy silv'ry light,
As thou movest from earth afar,
Star of the evening, beautiful star.
 Beautiful star,
 Beautiful star,
Star of the evening, beautiful star.*

11. Chapter - Who Stole the Tarts

- 1) The Hatter is supposed to give his evidence at the court but he is so nervous that his speech began like this:

"I'm a poor man, your Majesty," the Hatter began, in a trembling voice, "and I hadn't begun my tea – not above a week or so – and what with the bread-and-butter getting so thin – and the twinkling of the tea –" "*The twinkling of what?*" said the King. "It began with the tea," the Hatter

replied. “Of course twinkling begins with a T!” said the King sharply. “Do you take me for a *dunce*? Go on!” (Carroll, 2006, pp. 115-116)

The Hatter has to give his evidence about what has happened but when he talks about it, he is interrupted by the King and that is the reason of their misunderstanding. When the Hatter says “the twinkling of the tea-”, he is interrupted by the King. According to Gardner (2000), “if the Hatter had not been interrupted he would have said ‘tea tray’ (p. 158). There is a pun made of a noun ‘tea’ and the letter ‘T’. The King is confused because he does not know what begins with ‘T’ and he is furious because it is obvious that ‘twinkling’ begins with ‘T’ and it is not necessary for the Hatter to emphasise it.

12. Chapter – Alice’s Evidence

- 1) “Then again – ‘*before she had this fit*’ – you never had *fits*, my dear, I think?” he said to the Queen. “Never,” said the Queen furiously. [...] “Then the words don’t *fit* you,” said the King looking round the court with a smile. (Carroll, 2006, p. 126)

The King deliberately tries to make a pun but no one seems to get it until he tells them so. The pun is made by homonymy of word ‘fit’ which may be used as a noun or a verb. Noun ‘fit’ describes “a strong sudden physical reaction you cannot control, for example coughing or laughing”, whereas verb ‘fit’ means “to be suitable or right for something” (Macmillan Dictionary, n.d.). These words are both homophones and homographs.

IV. METHODOLOGY

In previous part of this work, the analysis of individual puns was introduced and further discussed. This part of the graduate thesis will deal with methods used in further research. The examples described in previous part will be the integral part of this research. This part describes basic information about the research –the subject, where it was taken, who the respondents were and which research tools were used.

Introduction to the Research

At the beginning, this research supposed to be taken during my teaching practice but the classes I taught were mostly beginners and it would be very complicated to do this research with them. At the end, the research was taken at Faculty of Education, Department of English at the University of West Bohemia. The respondents were the students of the first year of undergraduate programme who study English as their second field. Students were from 19 to 22 years old; average age being 20 year. In total, there were 22 students - 14 females, 5 males and 3 students did not mention their sex.

The aim of this research was to find out whether the Czech students of English language are able to identify and understand humorous side of individual puns used in excerpts from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. The exact research questions were as follows:

Can students identify individual puns in English language?

Do students understand the humorous effect of these puns?

Research Tool

To find out the students ability in identifying and analyzing individual puns, I decided to design three different worksheets (see Appendix C, D, E). At the beginning of each worksheet the definition of 'pun' is included because there is a high probability that this is student's first experience with this topic. After explanation of the term 'pun' the specific examples are introduced for better understanding. Each worksheet includes four basic tasks based on the issue of puns in the book. The exercises were as follows:

Look at the example bellow and find puns in these.

Why do you think it is a correct answer?

What is humorous about these examples?

Are individual puns based on homophones, homographs or both?

In each worksheet, the attention is focused on three different examples of puns used in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. The research was taken during one lesson of their Practical language and they were supposed to read the introductory information and look at the tasks. They had a chance to use Czech language if it would be necessary. The task was to read the examples from the book and find particular puns in them. Then they were supposed to explain their choice and analyze it according to the previous questions.

Students filled individual worksheets and their answers and other commentaries were further analyzed. I analyzed each excerpt from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* used in worksheets individually and collected the answers on each question. Then I made conclusions and gathered results.

This chapter of my graduate thesis briefly explained main features of my research that has been taken. Following chapter will present the results arising from this research accompanied by my own commentaries about the progress and the outcome of this research.

V. RESULTS AND COMMENTARIES

This chapter introduces the results of this research and further analysis of particular findings is also included. Firstly, each worksheet is discussed individually and the results of each example including puns from particular worksheets are described and analyzed according to four main questions. These results are depicted in graphs. The overall results and final commentaries are introduced at the end.

Worksheet A

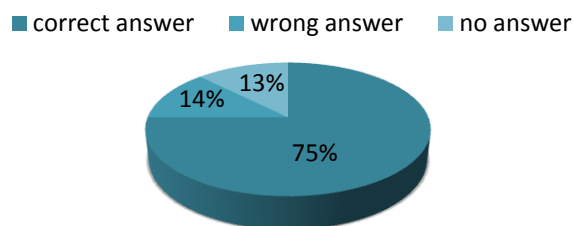
This worksheet (see Appendix C) was filled in by eight students – five women, one man and two students did not fill their sex. This worksheet proved to be the most successful one because only one student did not complete it. Further in this section, each example will be described and analyzed individually according to each question.

Analysis of example a)

In this example, students were supposed to find puns expressed by two homophonous words – ‘tale’ and ‘tail’.

Question 1. This question was based primarily on the ability to identify individual puns according to the definition given at the beginning of the worksheet. The correct answer was that puns used in this excerpt were both nouns - ‘tale’ and ‘tail’.

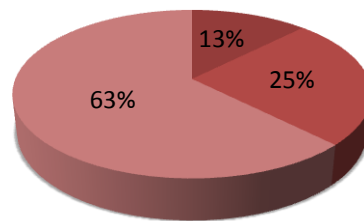
Only six students were able to identify these puns correctly. They either underlined the words or wrote them down below the excerpt. One student underlined just a noun ‘tale’ used in the sentence “Mine is a long and sad tale!” but did not underline anything else and therefore her answer was not considered to be correct. One student neither underlined nor wrote anything.



Graph 1. This graph shows student's success in the first question.

Question 2. In second question students were supposed to explain why did they choose particular example and why did they think it is correct answer. After the research I have realized that this question might be little bit confusing but the answer I wanted to hear can be found in the definition of ‘pun’ which students could read at the beginning of particular worksheet. According to this definition, students can be sure of the fact how the puns are made and the expected answer was that individual puns they chose are correct because these words are either identical in sound or very similar in sound, but sharply diverse in meaning. Only one person was able to answer this question correctly. Two students tried to answer this question but their answers were wrong and five students did not write any answer or possible explanation.

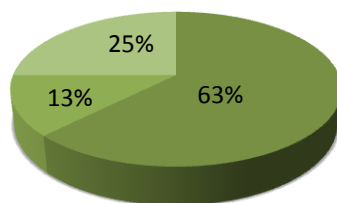
■ correct answer ■ wrong answer ■ no answer



Graph 2. This graph shows student’s ability to explain their choices from question 1.

Question 3. In this question, students were supposed to explain why the examples, they have chosen, are humorous and how. The humorous effect is caused by the exchange of these words throughout the conversation between the Mouse and Alice. Only five students were able to write down the reason of humorous effect in this example and they explained the misunderstanding between the two characters. One student just wrote down the words and translated them to the Czech but he did not provide any other explanation and the rest of the students did not write anything.

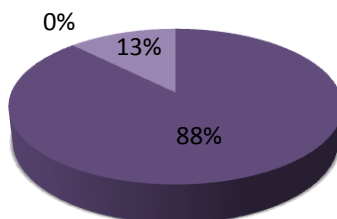
■ correct answer ■ wrong answer ■ no answer



Graph 3. This graph shows whether the students are able to explain reasons why are particular puns humorous.

Question 4. In the last question, students were asked to decide whether individual puns are homophones, homographs or both. The students were supposed to identify the form of particular words - correct answer was that words 'tale' and 'tail' are homophones. This question was answered correctly by almost all students – seven students wrote that these two words are homophones. Only one student did not write anything.

■ correct answer ■ wrong answer ■ No answer



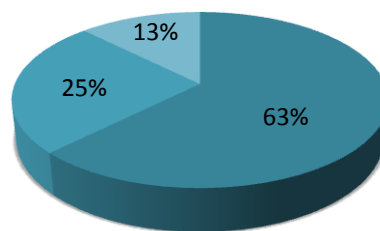
Graph 4. This graph shows students' ability to distinguish between homophones and homographs.

Analysis of example b)

In this example from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, students are supposed to find puns expressed by words 'tortoise' and 'taught us'. The meanings of both words are defined above in the section dealing with individual examples from the book. This excerpt might be little bit difficult because a word 'tortoise' does not belong among words which are used every day and students might have problems with correct pronunciation. On the other hand, they had the opportunity to use dictionaries, where they could find correct pronunciation as well as the meaning.

Question 1. Students were supposed to identify particular puns in the excerpt and write them down or underline them. In this case, only five students were able to find puns caused by humorous use of words ‘tortoise’ and ‘taught us’. Two students answered the question but their answers were wrong. One of them claimed that puns in this example are expressed by words ‘turtle’ and ‘taught us’ and the other wrote that words expressing puns are ‘turtle’ and ‘tortoise’. One student wrote only ‘turtle’ and nothing else therefore this answer is not considered to be either correct or wrong.

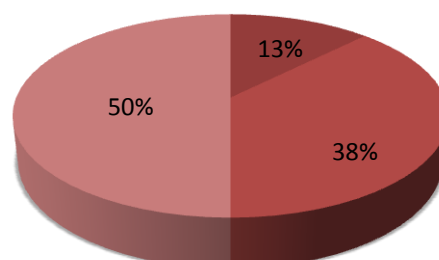
■ correct answer ■ wrong answer ■ no answer



Graph 5. This graph shows student’s success in the first question.

Question 2. Students’ answers should contain explanation that they chose particular words because they are pronounced the same or sound very similarly but have diverse meaning. Only one student answered correctly and that these words are puns because they sound similarly. Answers of three students were wrong because they mostly claimed that the reason why it is correct is that word ‘tortoise’ is a nickname of the turtle, which is in fact true but it does not explain why they chose these words to be puns. Four students did not write anything at all.

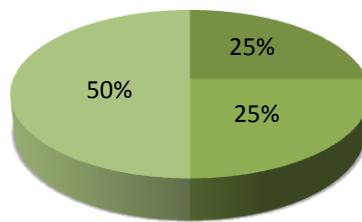
■ correct answer ■ wrong answer ■ no answer



Graph 6. This graph shows student’s ability to explain their choices from question 1.

Question 3. According to previous information, students were asked to identify why the use of these words causes a humorous effect. Only two students were able to write the reason why this pun is humorous one and it is that the teacher was called Tortoise and at the same time he taught them. The similar pronunciation caused the funny moment while reading this example aloud. Two students tried to explain the reason but they were wrong and four students did not explain the reason.

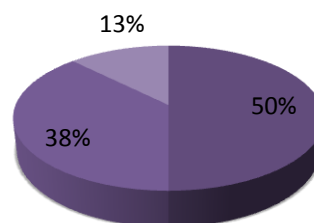
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Graph 7. This graph shows whether the students are able to explain reasons why are particular puns humorous.

Question 4. Students were supposed to distinguish whether particular puns are considered to be homophones, homographs or both. Only four students knew that the use of these words was based on homophony, which means that these words sound alike. Three students claimed that words in this example are homographs. One of them made a mistake and thought that pun is based on words ‘turtle’ and ‘tortoise’ but still the student claimed they are homographs. Another two students answered correctly that pun is based on words ‘tortoise’ and ‘taught us’ but their answers were that these are homographs. Again one student did not write anything.

■ correct answer ■ wrong answer ■ no answer



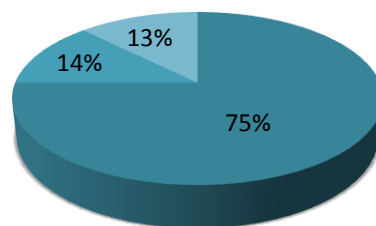
Graph 8. This graph shows students’ ability to distinguish between homophones and homographs.

Analysis of example c)

Following example is based on homophones as well as homographs – ‘mine’ and ‘mine’.

Question 1. As expected, puns in this example were identified by six students, who wrote these words down or underlined them in the text. One student did not write anything and the other student wrote part of this excerpt but did not explain which words are considered as puns.

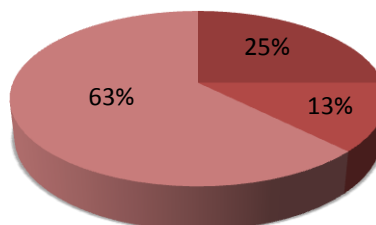
■ correct answer ■ wrong answer ■ no answer



Graph 9. This graph shows student’s success in the first question.

Question 2. In this question, students were supposed to write down that their answers are correct because a noun ‘mine’ and pronoun ‘mine’ sound identically and in addition they are written in the same way. One student wrote that her answer is correct because it is humorous effect but she did not explain the reason why it is humorous. Only two students were able to write that it is correct because of the exchange of noun and pronoun ‘mine’ that sound and look like the same. Five students did not answer this question at all.

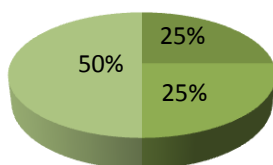
■ correct answer ■ wrong answer ■ no answer



Graph 10. This graph shows student’s ability to explain their choices from question 1.

Question 3. To understand these puns properly, it is necessary to understand meaning of individual words and their difference. Students have to know that in first example word ‘mine’ is used as a noun and in the second example it is a possessive pronoun in objective form. Only three students wrote that this example is humorous because on the one hand, there is a noun ‘mine’ and on the other hand there is a possessive pronoun ‘mine’. These students probably knew the right translation of these two word forms and for them the example might sound funny. Four students did not write anything and two students wrote explanation that was not correct.

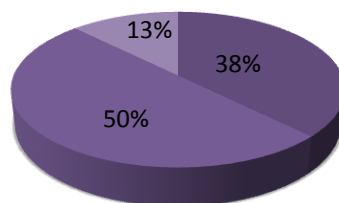
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Graph 11. This graph shows whether the students are able to explain reasons why are particular puns humorous.

Question 4. Distinguishing between homographs and homophones proved to be very difficult issue for most of the students. A noun ‘mine’ and pronoun ‘mine’ are considered to be homographs as well as homophones. Only three students identified these words as both, homographs and homophones. Three students wrote that these words are just homographs and one student claimed these words to be homophones. Again one student did not respond to the question. Though four students write only homographs or homophones, their answers are considered to be incomplete and therefore wrong.

■ correct answer ■ wrong answer ■ no answer



Graph 12. This graph shows students’ ability to distinguish between homophones and homographs.

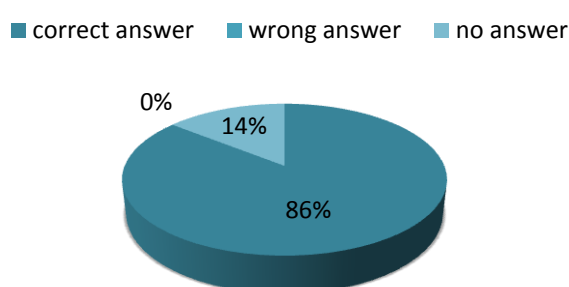
Worksheet B

Second worksheet (see Appendix D) is constructed in the same way as the previous one, the only difference being the choice of particular puns examples. This worksheet was filled in by seven students – five women and two men. From an overall impression, this version proved to be the difficult one, which is described further in detailed analysis.

Analysis of example a)

In this example, particular puns are expressed by the exchange of words ‘not’ and ‘knot’. These words are pronounced in the same way, therefore they are considered to be homophones. Students’ task was to identify these words and answer four main questions to prove their understanding.

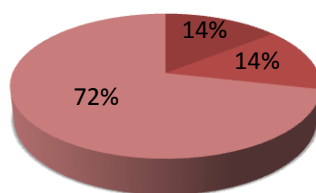
Question 1. The first task proved to be very easy because almost all students answered correctly – six students recognized that puns in this example are expressed by words ‘not’ and ‘knot’. These students mainly underlined words in the text but they did not provide any other explanation or translation of them. One student underlined wrong word and did not write anything else.



Graph 13. This graph shows student’s success in the first question.

Question 2. This question should prove whether students only underlined similar words and did not understand why or whether they are sure about their choice. The correct answer is that words ‘not’ and ‘knot’ are considered to be puns because they are either identical in sound or very similar in sound, but sharply diverse in meaning. Only one person wrote something to this question and it was correct. One student wrote that it is obvious but did not explain it further. Five students did not write anything.

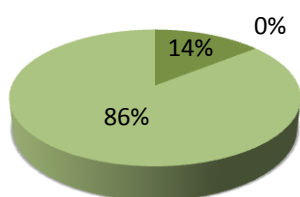
■ correct answer ■ wrong answer ■ no answer



Graph 14. This graph shows student's ability to explain their choices from question 1.

Question 3. The humorous effect of this example is caused by exchange of both words. This student added the explanation that the mouse did only negative statement but Alice thought it has a knot at its tail and wanted to help it. Six students did not write their explanation even though they correctly identified these words to be puns.

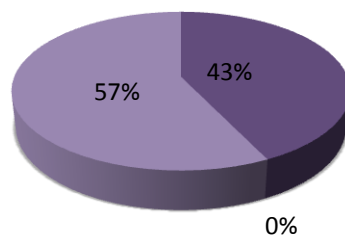
■ correct answer ■ wrong answer ■ no answer



Graph 15. This graph shows whether the students are able to explain reasons why are particular puns humorous.

Question 4. Though this question is not considered to be a difficult one, most of the students had problems with answering. The task was to distinguish whether these words are homophones, homographs or both. Only three students answered correctly and wrote that words 'not' and 'knot' are homophone because they sound alike.

■ correct answer ■ wrong answer ■ no answer



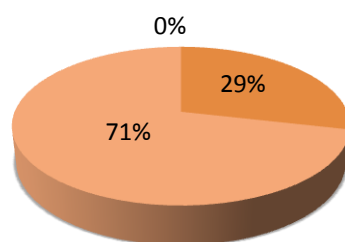
Graph 16. This graph shows students' ability to distinguish between homophones and homographs.

Analysis of example b)

This excerpt is more difficult than the rest of them because it contains grammatical pun based on the use of 'yourself' in various meaning. None of the students found pun in this example. One student wrote that puns are based on the use of verb 'see'. One student underlined plural form of a noun 'sizes' and did not put any further explanation of her choice. Five students did not complete this task at all. This example seems to be the most difficult one in all three worksheets.

Example b)

■ correct answer ■ wrong answer ■ no answer

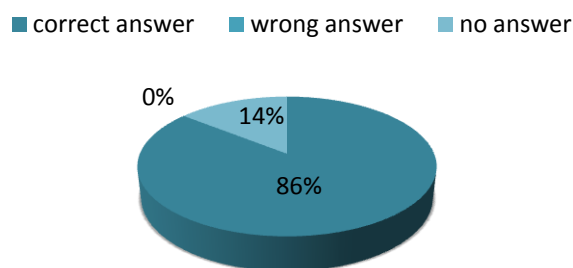


Graph 17. This graph shows an overall success in the example b).

Analysis of example c)

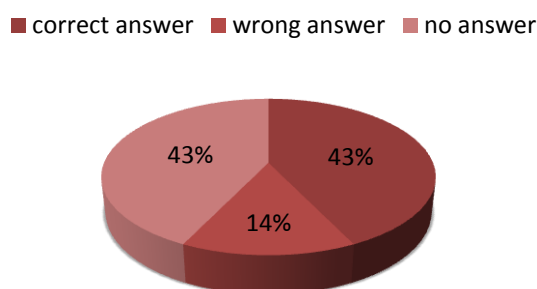
In this excerpt from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* students were supposed to find puns expressed by words 'lesson' and 'lessen'. Words have almost identical written form and their pronunciation is the same. In this case, puns are expressed by two homophonous words.

Question 1. In the first task, students were supposed to identify individual words expressing puns. Six students were able to do so and they answered correctly. Three of them just underlined words ‘lesson’ and ‘lessen’, the rest wrote that these words are puns because they are based on homophony. Only one student did not complete the task.



Graph 18. This graph shows student’s success in the first question.

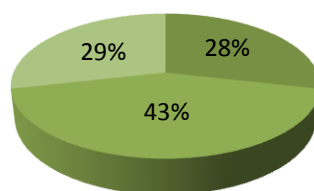
Question 2. This question was mostly answered by students in the first task, where they claimed that these two words are homophone; they sound alike. Still only three students answered this question correctly. Three students did not write anything and one student wrote an explanation that was wrong.



Graph 19. This graph shows student’s ability to explain their choices from question 1.

Question 3. Humorous effect of this example is caused by the exchange of words ‘lesson’ and ‘lessen’ with different meaning but the same pronunciation. Only two students wrote the reason why these words are funny and it is because the similarity of these two words but also the relationship between them in the story. Lessons were shorter and shorter; they lessened. Three students wrote their explanation but it was not correct. Two students did not write any explanation.

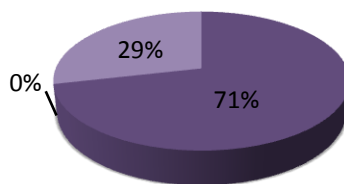
■ correct answer ■ wrong answer ■ no answer



Graph 20. This graph shows whether the students are able to explain reasons why are particular puns humorous.

Question 4. In this task, students were supposed to answer that though these words look almost identically, they are homophone because they are pronounced in the same way. This question seems to be very easy because mostly all students answer it correctly. In this case, five students wrote that individual puns in this example are based on homophones. Two students did not complete the task.

■ correct answer ■ wrong answer ■ no answer



Graph 21. This graph shows students' ability to distinguish between homophones and homographs.

Worksheet C

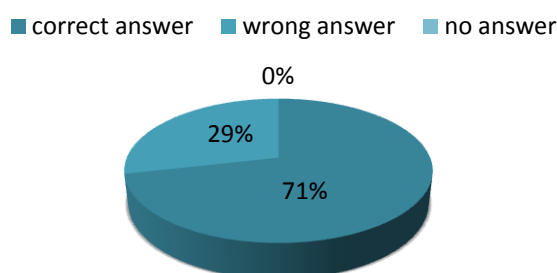
The last worksheet (see Appendix E) has the same organization as the two previous, including three different excerpts containing individual puns. This worksheet was answered by seven students – two men, four women and one student did not write anything.

Analysis of example a)

In this example puns are realized by words 'porpoise' and 'purpose', which have the same pronunciation. This example may be difficult because students may have

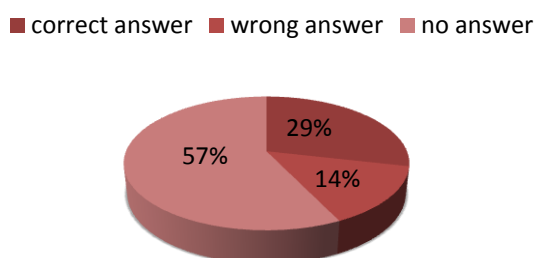
problems with understanding of word 'porpoise' that is explained above in the section dealing with individual examples from book.

Question 1. Puns expressed in this example were identified by five students. One student wrote that puns are based on word 'porpoise' that sounds like word 'tortoise', which is interesting because the word tortoise is not mentioned in this version. One student just underlined the word 'porpoise' but it was everything she did.



Graph 22. This graph shows student's success in the first question.

Question 2. Students had difficulties with explanations of their choices. Though most of them identified puns correctly, they were not able to write down why they chose them, which is surprising. Only two students mentioned that their answers are correct because particular words sound similar and the humorous effect has been made by the exchange in their meanings. One student answered wrongly and four students did not complete this task.

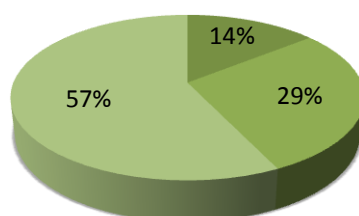


Graph 23. This graph shows student's ability to explain their choices from question 1.

Question 3. In this task there may be a problem with a noun 'porpoise' because it is not a word used in everyday conversation and many students might not know its meaning. On the other hand, most of the students has dictionary in their mobile phone and after finding the meaning, this task would not be complicated. In this example only one student wrote

the Czech translation of this word that she found and she wrote that the exchange of these words is funny. Two students tried to explain the humorous effect of these words but they were not successful. Four students did not write any explanation.

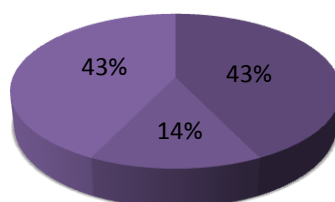
■ correct answer ■ wrong answer ■ no answer



Graph 24. This graph shows whether the students are able to explain reasons why are particular puns humorous.

Question 4. Only three students were able to distinguish that words ‘porpoise’ and ‘purpose’ are homophones, because they sound alike. One student wrote that these words are homographs but this student did not identified puns correctly in the first task. Three students were not able to distinguish between homophones and homographs and they did not write anything.

■ correct answer ■ wrong answer ■ no answer

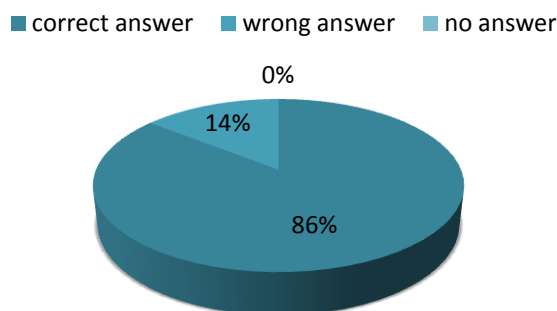


Graph 25. This graph shows students’ ability to distinguish between homophones and homographs.

Analysis of example b)

In this example, puns are based on a noun ‘fit’ and verb ‘fit’. Students were supposed to identify these words and make further analysis. Since in the excerpt there were no other two similar words, students should be able to identify these puns.

Question 1. As expected, this task was for students very easy and almost all of them identified these words correctly. Six students identified two forms of word ‘fit’ as puns – two of them wrote their Czech translation and individual parts of speech, four students just underlined the words in the text. One student underlined word ‘round’ but, she did not explain her choice; her answer is considered to be wrong.



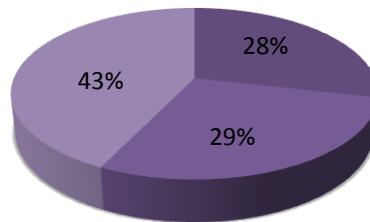
Graph 26. This graph shows student’s success in the first question.

Question 2. Although almost all students answered the first question correctly they were not able to complete this question. Their task was to explain why they underlined words ‘fit’ and sufficient answer would be that they sound similarly. None of the students was able to answer this question.

Question 3. The results of this question are influenced by the previous one. Since none of the students was able to explain their choices in the second task, it was obvious that neither this task would be successful. The results of second and third question of this example are identical; none of the students write anything.

Question 4. As well as in previous example, incomplete answer was considered to be wrong. Only two students identified these words as homophones as well as homographs. One student wrote that these words are homographs and the other claimed these are homophones. Both students were partially right. Three students were not able to decide about these words.

■ correct answer ■ wrong answer ■ no answer



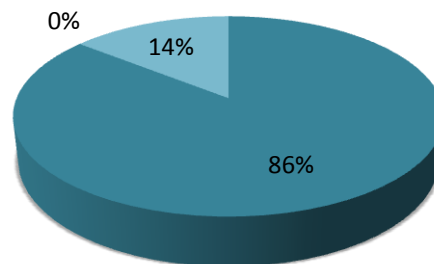
Graph 27. This graph shows students' ability to distinguish between homophones and homographs.

Analysis of example c)

This example is based on puns expressed by words 'axes' and 'axis' which look like almost identically and their pronunciation is the same. In this example there is a possibility that students overlook the difference between these two words because they differ only in one letter.

Question 1. My expectations were not confirmed and this task was a successful one. Six students answered correctly and they underlined words 'axes' and 'axis'. Only one student did not complete the task.

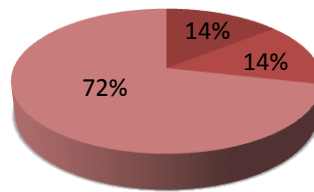
■ correct answer ■ wrong answer ■ no answer



Graph 28. This graph shows student's success in the first question.

Question 2. One student who correctly identified puns in this example did not understand to the meaning of these words and therefore was not able to explain it correctly. The other student answered that her choice is correct because these two words are pronounced in the same way, which is used in pun's definition. Five students did not answer this question.

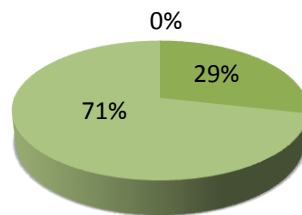
■ correct answer ■ wrong answer ■ no answer



Graph 29. This graph shows student's ability to explain their choices from question 1.

Question 3. This task was again very difficult and almost none was able to answer the question. It is possible that it was caused by the lack of knowledge and students did not know meaning of these words. Only two students tried to explain the reason of humorous effect but their explanation was not correct.

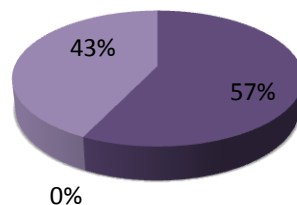
■ correct answer ■ wrong answer ■ no answer



Graph 30. This graph shows whether the students are able to explain reasons why are particular puns humorous.

Question 4. Four students identified words 'axes' and 'axis' as homophones, which is correct answer. Three students did not write anything though they identified these puns in the first task.

■ correct answer ■ wrong answer ■ no answer



Graph 31. This graph shows students' ability to distinguish between homophones and homographs.

Overall results

All worksheets were constructed to be at the same level of difficulty, nevertheless further analysis proved the differences between all three versions. Thinking about all three worksheet versions, it is obvious that the most successful worksheet was the first one – worksheet A. Worksheet B and C was for students little bit complicated.

Considering four main tasks students were supposed to do, the most successful one in all versions was the first task – identifying individual puns. This task was answered correctly in almost all cases; students only underlined or wrote individual words. The questions 2 – 4 were probably very difficult because students were mostly unsuccessful in completing these tasks.

Commentary

Though for most of the students this was the first experience with ‘pun’ issue, the results were still quite surprising and this topic proved to be very difficult for them. At the beginning of each worksheet, students were provided with basic information about this topic - the definition of the term ‘pun’ was introduced and few examples were given. Students could find out in which situations we are talking about puns and why they are humorous. Still, many students were able just identified two similar words but without any deeper comprehension.

The complication might be caused by the lack of knowledge, especially limited vocabulary. There is a possibility that if students would read whole book and know the context, their understanding would be better. For purposes of this research they read only the excerpts and it might cause particular difficulties.

Some students have problems with distinguishing between homophone and homographs and they were not able to decide which one is correct. These two terms are commonly used not only in English but also in Czech language and students had to learn them at the primary school therefore it was very surprising to find out that these generally used terms caused problems in all versions.

To sum up, students of English language are able to identify individual puns in the text but without any further comprehension. They seem to identify these words only on the basis of their similarities but they do not understand their humorous effect and mostly they have problems with their meaning.

The results and analysis introduced in this chapter will be very useful in the next chapter dealing with advice for teachers. The chapter will also discuss any problems or weaknesses of this research and finally suggestions for further research will be introduced.

VI. IMPLICATIONS

This chapter is divided into three main parts based on previous results. Firstly, the implications for teaching are discussed. This part contains advices for the teachers who would like to work with similar topic in their teaching. These advices are based on the results stated in previous section. Secondly, the problems and weaknesses of this research are discussed and improvements are suggested. Finally, this chapter provides suggestions for further research.

Implications for Language Teaching

As the research has shown, the students' ability to understand English puns is rather limited. Students do not have problems with identifying of particular examples in the text but they are not able to work with these examples any further. This might be caused by several aspects – the lack of knowledge, the lack of reading in English language or textbooks mostly concerned with grammar and not providing any humorous texts.

Obviously, sometimes it is very difficult to understand particular joke in our first language and when the second language is used, it might be even more complicated. The solution may be using jokes or other humorous stories in the language classes from time to time.

Teachers should be aware that for students of English language, it is complicated to understand the meaning of particular word and at the same time its humorous effect. When such situation occurs, the teacher should provide students with further explanation of it. In language teaching, teachers should avoid asking students to memorize vocabulary without any further context. It is important for students to know meaning of particular word and at the same time be able to use it appropriately in certain situation.

Students should be aware of the fact that separated knowledge of vocabulary will not provide them with the ability to use these words properly throughout communication. It is up to the students to increase their ability of vocabulary comprehension and ability to understand and use particular words in particular situation. In language learning process, students should take advantages of everything they can learn and should use it for increasing of their imagination and creativity, which is from psychological point of view one of the main goals of learning process.

Limitation of the Research

Obviously each research has its strengths as well as weaknesses and this part mentions and discusses main limitations of this research. Firstly, this research was taken during one lesson in one single class therefore its results cannot be understood as a determinant. The class where the research was taken was heterogeneous but there was significantly greater number of women.

The other limitation might be the duration because the research took place in one language lesson. The lack of time might cause the inability to answer all questions properly. For students to be able to understand this topic and be able to answer all questions, it would be better to increase the time. Because of time pressure, students might feel nervous and it might influence their performance in negative way.

Last limitation can be seen in the use of individual excerpts from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* without any further context. Although I tried to use as much from the text as possible for student to fully understand the meaning of it, it would be even better for them to have the opportunity find it out in the book. It might help increase students' comprehension.

Suggestions for Further Research

Of course, there are several possibilities how to improve or extended this research. Following section will introduce some of them.

One possibility of improvement is to enlarge the duration of the research. It will be divided into approximately five lessons and students will have better opportunity to understand this topic properly. Firstly, the teacher will explain theoretical background to this topic and then students will be given few examples for better understanding. In next lessons, individual texts including puns will be introduced and further discussed. In the last lessons, students will be given at least two chapters from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and their task will be to identify individual examples of puns in the text. The advantage will be that students will read whole text and identifying would be much easier. The teacher will observe how students work and he or she will provide the students with particular advice.

This research may be also done as a project which will be based mostly on individual students work. The project will be preceded by the theoretical lesson, in which students will be introduced the main information about the topic. Then their task will be

based on individual reading of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and identifying individual examples of puns with their explanation. Throughout entire project students can ask the teacher about things they are not sure of. Finally, there will be a colloquium where students and teacher will discuss their findings and overall conclusions will be made.

To sum up, this research can provide teachers as well as students with particular suggestions for their improvement. Though the research has several limitations, there are various possibilities of improvement and enlargement, as stated above.

VII. CONCLUSION

This thesis elaborates on the topic of puns in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. The theoretical background introduces the main information about the book and more particularly about Lewis Carroll and his interest in playing with language – using puns and other wordplay, creating new words, transforming well known poems or songs and making up new riddles. It was his ability to work with language that contributed to the success of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. As stated above, Carroll's book is full of language games including frequent use of puns. For better understanding of this topic, the main information about wordplay and puns are also discussed.

The main interest of this topic is based on the use of puns in English language teaching. The research is focused on two research questions dealing with student's ability to identify individual puns in the excerpts taken from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and their ability to understand the humorous effect of these language forms. For purposes of this research, three worksheet versions were designed and given to the group of students of University of West Bohemia.

The results of this research have shown that even though Czech students of English are able to identify particular examples of puns according to definition and examples included at the beginning of each worksheet, they have problem to defend their choices and explain how they understand the meaning of individual puns. It has shown that students are able to choose words expressing puns correctly but without any further comprehension.

According to the results that have been discovered, few possibilities of research improvement are suggested in order to increase students' ability in identifying as well as in analyzing of individual puns in the English text. Particular improvements should help the students to be able to understand individual meaning of words as well as their meaning in the context.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Illustrations by Lewis Carroll retrieved April 20, 2013 from
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/19002/19002-h/19002-h.htm>



Illustrations by John Tenniel retrieved April 20, 2013 from <http://www.victorianweb.org/art/illustration/tenniel/alice/gallery1.html>



APPENDIX B

“Fury said to
a mouse, ‘That
he met in the
house, ‘Let
us both go
to law: *I*
will prose-
cute *you*.—
Come, I’ll
take no de-
nial: We
must have
the trial;
For really
this morn-
ing I’ve
nothing
to do.’
Said the
mouse to
the cur,
‘Such a
trial, dear
sir, With
no jury
or judge,
would
be wast-
ing our
breath.’
‘I’ll be
judge,
I’ll be
jury.’
said
cun-
ning
old
Fury:
‘I’ll
try
the
whole
cause,
and
con-
demn
you to
death.’”

APPENDIX C

WORKSHEET

Puns in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

VERSION A

Gender:

Age:

Study Programme:

PUN is considered to be a play on words that are either identical in sound (homonyms) or very similar in sound, but sharply diverse in meaning. Puns are usually formed by homophones or homographs but they can be also based on polysemy of particular words. They have mostly a humorous effect but there are several examples of serious puns as well. Puns can be found in literature as well as in common life – adventures, graffiti etc.



Examples:

Seven days without a pun make one **weak**.

(It is based on homophones of an adjective 'weak' and a noun 'week')

"[ask] for me tomorrow and you shall find me a **grave** man"

(There is Shakespeare's pun in *Romeo and Juliet* made on homonymy of word 'grave'. In the first case it may be an adjective used for emphasizing how serious something is or as a noun representing the place where a dead body is buried in a deep hole in the ground.)

Exercise:

- 1) Look at the examples bellow and find puns in these.
 - 2) Why do you think it is a correct answer?
 - 3) What is humorous about these examples?
 - 4) Are individual puns based on homophones, homographs or both?
- !!! If it is necessary, you can use Czech language!!!

- a) “Mine is a long and sad tale!” said the Mouse, turning to Alice, and sighing. „It is a long tail, certainly,” said Alice, looking down with wonder at the Mouse’s tail: „but why do you call it sad?” (Carroll, 2006, p. 28)
- b) “When we were little,” the Mock Turtle went on at last, more calmly, though still sobbing a little now and then, “we went to school in the sea. The master was an old Turtle – we used to call him Tortoise-.” “Why did you call him Tortoise, if he wasn’t one?” Alice asked. “We called him Tortoise because he taught us,” said the Mock Turtle angrily.
- c) “[T]here’s a large mustard-mine near here. And the moral of that is – “The more there is of mine, the less there is of yours.” (Carroll, 2006, p. 91)

APPENDIX D

WORKSHEET

Puns in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

VERSION B

Gender:

Age:

Study Programme:



PUN is considered to be a play on words that are either identical in sound (homonyms) or very similar in sound, but sharply diverse in meaning. Puns are usually formed by homophones or homographs but they can be also based on polysemy of particular words. They have mostly a humorous effect but there are several examples of serious puns as well. Puns can be found in literature as well as in common life – adventures, graffiti etc.

Examples:

Seven days without a pun make one **weak**.

(It is based on homophones of an adjective 'weak' and a noun 'week')

"[ask] for me tomorrow and you shall find me a **grave** man"

(There is Shakespeare's pun in *Romeo and Juliet* made on homonymy of word 'grave'. In the first case it may be an adjective used for emphasizing how serious something is or as a noun representing the place where a dead body is buried in a deep hole in the ground.)

Exercise:

- 1) Look at the examples bellow and find puns in these.
- 2) Why do you think it is a correct answer?
- 3) What is humorous about these examples?
- 4) Are individual puns based on homophones, homographs or both?

!!! If it is necessary, you can use Czech language!!!

- a) „I beg your pardon,” said Alice very humbly, „you had got to the fifth bend, I think?” „I had not!” cried the Mouse, sharply and very angrily. „A knot!” said Alice, always ready to make herself useful, and looking anxiously about her. „Oh, do let me help to undo it!” (Carroll, 2006, p. 30)
- b) “What do you mean by that?” said the Caterpillar, sternly. “Explain yourself!” “I ca’n’t explain myself, I’m afraid, Sir,” said Alice, “because I’m not myself, you see.” “I don’t see,” said the Caterpillar. “I’m afraid I ca’n’t put it more clearly,” Alice replied, very politely, “for I ca’n’t understand it myself, to begin with; and being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing.” (Carroll, 2006, p. 44)
- c) “And how many hours a day did you do lessons?” said Alice, in a hurry to change the subject. “Ten hours the first day,” said the Mock Turtle: “nine the next, and so on.” “What a curious plan!” exclaimed Alice. “That’s the reason they’re called lessons,” the Gryphon remarked: “because they lessen from day to day.” (Carroll, 2006, p. 99)

APPENDIX E

WORKSHEET

Puns in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

VERSION C

Gender:

Age:

Study Programme:

PUN is considered to be a play on words that are either identical in sound (homonyms) or very similar in sound, but sharply diverse in meaning. Puns are usually formed by homophones or homographs but they can be also based on polysemy of particular words. They have mostly a humorous effect but there are several examples of serious puns as well. Puns can be found in literature as well as in common life – adventures, graffiti etc.

Examples:

Seven days without a pun make one **weak**.

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Exercise:

- 1) Look at the examples bellow and find puns in these.
- 2) Why do you think it is a correct answer?
- 3) What is humorous about these examples?
- 4) Are individual puns based on homophones, homographs or both?

!!! If it is necessary, you can use Czech language!!!



- a) “Why, if a fish came to me, and told me he was going a journey, I should say ‘With what porpoise?’” “Don’t you mean ‘purpose?’” said Alice. “I mean what I say,” the Mock Turtle replied, in an offended tone. (Carroll 2006, p. 106)
- b) “Then again – *‘before she had this fit’* – you never had fits, my dear, I think?” he said to the Queen. “Never,” said the Queen furiously. [...] “Then the words don’t fit you,” said the King looking round the court with a smile. (Carroll, 2006, p. 126)
- c) “Just think what work it would make with the day and night! You see the earth takes twenty-four hours to turn round on its axis –“
“Talking of axes,” said the Duchess, “chop off her head!” (Carroll, 2006, p. 59)

SHRNUTÍ

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá tématem slovních hříček v knize *Alenka v říši divů* od spisovatele známého pod pseudonymem Lewis Carroll. První část této práce se zabývá hlavními informacemi o kulturním a historickém pozadí, které čtenáři pomůžou lépe porozumět době, ve které byla kniha napsána. Další část je věnovaná obecným informacím o knize a o životě Lewise Carrola. Práce představuje hlavní informace o slovních hříčkách, konkrétně o jejich původu, klasifikaci a jejich využití v anglicky psané literatuře. V další části jsou uvedeny jednotlivé příklady slovních hříček z knihy *Alenka v říši divů*, které jsou detailně analyzovány. Výzkumná část této práce se skládá z rozboru tří různých pracovních listů, které byly vyplněny skupinou studentů Pedagogické fakulty, Západočeské univerzity v Plzni. Výzkum se snaží odpovědět na dvě základní otázky týkající se schopnosti identifikovat jednotlivé příklady slovních hříček v daném text a schopnosti porozumět jejich významu a humorné stránce. Závěrem této práce je rozbor získaných výsledků a návrh dalšího možného výzkumu.