

The Main Character's Speech Style in the Television Series *Miranda*

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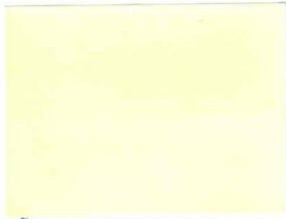
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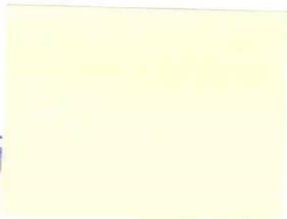
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ABSTRAKT

Cílem této bakalářské práce je analyzovat řeč hlavní postavy seriálu *Miranda* z lingvistického hlediska. Práce je rozdělena na teoretickou a praktickou část. Teoretická část se zabývá humorem, zejména humorem v lingvistice, sitcomem v souvislosti s britskou kulturou. Druhá kapitola je zaměřena na analýzu řeči hlavní postavy seriálu *Miranda* z fonetického a lexikálního hlediska. Dále zkoumá, jakým způsobem Miranda tvoří humor. Bylo zjištěno, že Miranda staví svou postavu na principech tradičního britského humoru například prostřednictvím kritiky společenských tříd.

Klíčová slova: Humor, sitcom, *Miranda*, lingvistická analýza, analýza idiolektu

ABSTRACT

This Bachelor's thesis aims to analyze the speech of the main character of the TV series *Miranda* from a linguistic point of view. The paper is divided into two chapters. The theoretical part deals with humour, especially humour in linguistics and culture, namely British. The analysis is based on the main character's speech in the series, focusing on the features of Miranda's idiolect. Chapter 2 also examines how Miranda creates humour. It was found that Miranda builds her character on the principles of traditional British humor, for example through a criticism of social classes.

Keywords: Humour, sitcom, *Miranda*, linguistic analysis, idiolect analysis

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INTRODUCTION

Humour symbolizes emotions, which are the same for all people - happiness, joy and laughter. With a great dose of humour, we can easily get through challenging times in our lives or simply enjoy the time on our planet more. Nevertheless, humour can be unique, because it differs in each country. What can be funny for one nationality can be an insult to another.

Humour has been discussed by various scholars in such fields as psychology (R. Martin, T. Ford, S. Freud), linguistics (N. Chomsky, S. Attardo), anthropology (Henk Driessen), or medicine (Norman Cousins). Humour is a very interesting topic from a linguistic point of view. It can serve as a useful way of learning a foreign language, understanding the customs and identity of the society.

This bachelor's thesis aims to analyze the speech style of the main character of Miranda television series. The thesis outlines the linguistic and social features of Miranda's idiolect as well as her humour.

The paper is divided into two chapters, theoretical and analytical. The first chapter deals mainly with humour from linguistic and cultural perspectives. I look at the British sitcom through the cinematic performance convention known as the fourth wall. The notion of idiolect is further defined. The chapter ends with the material and methods section which outlines the steps of the analysis.

Chapter 2 focuses on the features of Miranda's speech compared to the accepted pronunciation. The chapter also deals with Miranda's vocabulary and the way she creates humor. The humour is analyzed thematically, for example, through cultural jokes or jokes about Miranda's body.

The conclusions are as follows: Miranda's character reflects typically British humour. She can adhere to Received Pronunciation and her humour, for instance, includes criticism of social groups. Miranda, for instance, uses sexual innuendo jokes to create humour. These are also made up of euphemisms, most of which involve the genitals, due to Miranda's sex life complex. As for vocabulary, Miranda can use not only words of British origin. According to the analysis, Miranda proved her knowledge of Italian, Spanish and especially French words.

I. THEORY

1 UNDERSTANDING HUMOUR

Anything that invites laughter may be considered humour. Humour is subjective and despite the attention from such disciplines as linguistics, anthropology or psychology, there is no uniform view on how humour works. Different generations, social groups and individuals may find different things to be amusing. At the same time, the cultural background is perhaps the most influential part in determining what is humorous (Gardner 2008, 9). Still, what may be considered funny in one situation may be interpreted ironically in a different context. Because of this, there is no single definition of humour. For example, Allison Ross (Ross 1998, 1) defines humour as: "something that makes a person laugh or smile". On the other hand, Viktor Raskin states, that humour is a phenomenon in which the person finds the auidial or visual stimulus funny. He considers humour a universal human trait (Raskin 1985, 1-2).

Humour is so important in our lives that it led Norman Cousins to study how humour can be used for medical reasons and thus affect the quality of life. Due to his diagnosis - ankylosing spondylitis – he wondered, whether laughter can heal or not. He believed that humour used therapeutically can enhance a patient's well-being. Therefore, he developed his own therapeutic program using humour to treat himself when in pain (Pattillo, Itano 2001, 40-41).

The researchers of humour distinguish between three essential theories of humour. The first group of theories is based on theories of incongruity/inconsistency/contradiction. The second group of theories rely on the understanding of superiority/disparagement/criticism. Finally, the third group of theories are the theories of release/relief/relaxation. These are also known as psychoanalytic theories (Freud qtd. 1905) (Krikmann 2006, 27). I will address these theories below.

1.1 Humour in linguistics

Interest in the linguistic side of humour is not fading. Linguistics perceives humour as a human being product of communication. Most humour uses the linguistic units to shape the message even though some humour may be presented as pictures/photos such as memes. As an important part of humour, language is undoubtedly the centre of linguistics studies. Linguistics gives a platform for the researcher to do researches on humour.

Engagement in the linguistics of humour is extensive and dates back to classical times. According to Attardo (Attardo 2014, 31), linguistics deals with the semantic and pragmatic aspects of language that produces humor.

1.1.1 Theories of humour

Humour theory has its roots in philosophical tradition. Since ancient times, three general approaches to humour can be traced: superiority, incongruity and relief theories (Raskin 1985; Attardo 1994).

From a linguistic point of view, incongruity theories becomes the most popular theory to analyze humour. Incongruity theories are fundamentally cognitive, which means they are built on some objective characteristics of a humorous text or other act (a situation, picture, and more). They see humour as based on a simultaneous occurrence of elements that are incompatible with each other and their connection is meaningless, which can seem humorous or shocking.

Secondly, the theory of superiority emphasizes usually negative attitude against the producer or a user of humour towards its target. This kind of humour is known for being purposely offensive for such reasons as gender or ethnicity. Humour has become a weapon with which we can ridicule someone and express our superiority over him. That's why people initiate offensive humour when they feel threatened by their identity – for example when members of minority groups are more successful than the majority.

Third group includes the theories of relief. These focus on the recipient of the humour. In this sense, humour is a valve for instincts the realization of which is incompatible with social morality. Within this approach humour is viewed as "one of the so-called substitution mechanisms which enable to convert one's socially tabooed aggressive impulses to acceptable ones and thus avoid wasting additional mental energy to suppress them" (Krikmann 2006, 27).

Most of the modern humour theories are actually mixed theories, and many modern researchers believe that humour is too huge and a complex a phenomenon to be incorporated into a single theory (Krikmann 2006, 27-28).

1.1.2 The classification of modern theories of humour

To characterize the factors that define a joke, to describe the components of jokes and their internal relationships, and to provide a model for the analysis of joke texts, I should turn to the Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH) and its successor, the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH).

Viktor Raskin introduced SSTH in his seminal work *Semantic Mechanisms of Humor* in 1985. It is the theory that approached humour as an exclusively linguistic phenomenon. The essence of this theory is the fact that if a text is to be considered a text carrying a single joke, it must be (1) compatible, fully or in part, with two different scripts, and (2) the two-scripts with which the text is compatible are opposite. The linguistic scripts include, for any given word a piece of semantic information surrounding the word (Raskin 1985, 325).

In 1991, Raskin and Attardo decided to revise the Semantic Script Theories of Humour. The result was the emergence of a new theory – General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH). This theory contains a hierarchical model of joke representation consisting of six “Knowledge Resources Informing the Joke” (Attardo 2017, 127).

1.2 Use of humour for stylistic purposes

A branch of linguistics that is interested in humour is stylistics, focusing on the connections between patterns of style and aspects of verbal humour or in humorous discourse related to the wider study of verbal play. Another level of stylistics analysis of humour aimed at showing differences between humorous discourse and ‘ordinary’ discourse thanks to observations of texts and a humour impulse (Simpson 2006, 426).

An axiom which is a foundation of almost every stylistics research on humour reads as follows: if a text is supposed to be humorous, the presence of a stylistic incongruity is necessary (Simpson 2006, 426). According to Attardo (Attardo 2017, 159), it can be caused by any stylistic twist, such as puns.

Verbal plays and mostly puns clearly show the sort of incongruity. In case of puns, the incongruity is recognized when any kind of linguistic feature contains two unrelated meanings. Character's speech style and the context of the discourse within the text is another issue that draws the attention of most stylisticians (Simpson 2006, 427).

There is another technique which is associated with the principle of incongruity. As it was mentioned above, a stylistic twist is used to help us with a mismatch between what one says and true meaning. It is similar to the concept of irony, which is viewed along with satire and parody as two forms of verbal humour (Simpson 2006, 427).

Wordplay is a way of using the language in a clever way to create an intended, funny effect in someone's mind. It is used, for instance, in jokes, puns, tongue twisters. Ambiguities (double meaning) that appear in verbal humour are also used to create jokes (Ross 1998, 8-9).

1.3 Sitcoms and humour

Situational comedy, also sitcom is a specific genre of a comedy. It focuses on the main character or a small group of people who tend to be funny. These characters usually remain the same till the end of the show. Sitcoms are popular because the characters face similar difficulties every day as we do. That is why the plot is usually simple and set to the familiar environment such as work, the office or home (Ross 1998, 89).

Sitcoms originally appeared in a radio form in the early sixties. After comedy as a genre became popular on TV, the sitcom shifted from radio to television as well. At that time, television offered a lot of possibilities for the comedy genre, but sitcom was a major conqueror (Corner 1991, 75).

Humor is essential for sitcoms because it attracts the audience's attention. Humor in sitcoms is often culture-specific. For example, British comedy has a reputation for common use of dark humor (Ross 1998, 89). In Britain, it was common for British television to have a relationship with British society. The British television comedy, which has been present since the first days of broadcasting, can be seen in the form of sitcoms, stand-up comedies or sketch shows. No doubt sitcoms are one of the most enduring genres in British television (Bignell 2010, 187).

1.4 Culture-specific humour

According to (Milner Davis 2013, 7), societies developed rules or conventions to help regulate humour and its impact. As studies of European cultural history have confirmed,

from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century, the books of manners states that laughter in polite society is supposed to be regulated.

There exists a common ground between all humans across all cultures. For now, one only knows that in intercultural settings, the practice of humour is delicate due to cultural differences. Therefore, in the following subchapters, I will focus on the perception of the British sense of humour and the associated dark humour.

1.4.1 The British sense of humour

Comedy shows originally came from the BBC Radio. Since then, British comedy has rightly grown in popularity. The British sense of humour is known internationally, mainly because only a few topics are taboo. Jokes are mainly based on allusions, puns, intellectual jokes, sarcasm or taboo themes. The British Class system is also worth mentioning since it represents a great source of humour for the British (Wood 2014, 2-3).

Due to the British class system, people used to “know their place” and all they could do was to accept their status as upper-class, middle-class or working class. They supposed to behave in a certain way appropriate to their class. People who tried to pass themselves off as a member of a higher class were, indeed, laughed at (Lockyer 2010, 122).

White, poor and socially insignificant groups, also called ‘chavs’, have become a comedy target in recent years. The main ingredient of British television comedy since the 1950s has been the dynamics and intrigues of the British class system. However, these classes are important for television because they play a socio-political role in it. Comedy character types need to be easily recognizable and understandable to allow viewers to appreciate the jokes (Lockyer 2010, 122-123).

As Attardo claims, “British humour has been shaped by freedom from invasion and the relative stability of society as a whole. It ridicules reality by satirically revealing the absurdity of everyday life, relying largely on puns and intellectual humour. Sexual humour is found to be prominent, consisting of innuendo and the delight one gets from breaking taboos (Attardo 2014 542).

If we compare the British and American sense of humour, Simon Pegg mentions that the British, unlike the Americans, are not against heartfelt or emotional expression. Pegg

claims that as a device it works well, especially in sitcoms and adds that the British are much more ironic (Pegg 2007).

1.4.2 The dark comedy

When doing analysis of the humour, humorous potential of the situation should be taken into account. The type of humor of a given culture is usually based on these situations. For example British comedy has a high reputation for common use of dark humor (Ross 1998, 89).

According to the Cambridge dictionary, dark humour is a humorous way of looking at or treating something or someone serious or sad. This genre is also known as a black comedy. The majority of such jokes are launched against an individual or people, who somehow stand out of the society because of their religion, colour, appearance, health, age, social position and others. Other themes that are involved in dark humour can be taboos such as death or divorce (Medgyes 2002, 4).

In contrast, Connard (2005, 8) states that the most widely known definition of dark humour held by film practitioners is that dark humour describes a type of humour that attaches itself to the grotesque, morbid or suffering.

2 MIRANDA TV SERIES

Miranda is the main character of the popular British sitcom *Miranda* TV series. Not only is she the main heroine, she also wrote this sitcom. *Miranda* TV series aired from 2009 to 2015 and includes 3 seasons with episodes of about 30 minutes.

The story revolves about its main character Miranda, who as a child attended a boarding school for the middle and upper classes. In the sitcom she interacts with her former school friends Tilly, Stevie and Fanny. In the secondary school Miranda met Gary, whom she started to like and later feel sexually attracted to.

According to the story line, Miranda is 34 and single. She runs her own shop with Stevie. Her bossy middle-class mother Penny is desperately trying to find Miranda a husband as well as a proper job. Although Miranda owns a joke shop, she lacks a complete sense of business.

The series also features a restaurant owned by Clive Evans, in which Gary, Miranda's first love, works as a chef. The restaurant is located next to Miranda's Joke Shop. In series three, the restaurant's chef, Gary Preston, purchases the restaurant from Clive Evans. After many failed attempts at dating, Miranda and Gary, decide to be just friends. Nevertheless, when Gary gets a girlfriend called Rose, it provokes Miranda to start a new relationship with Michael Jackford, a local reporter whose work soon takes him to Africa. Upon his return, he proposes to Miranda, as does Gary when he realises his love for her. Miranda accepts Gary's proposal rather than Michael's and they get married in the final episode (*Miranda TV Series*).

2.1 The Creation of the *Miranda*

Miranda a purely original work by an actress, comedian and writer Miranda Hart. In 1994 a film director Jo Sargent offered Miranda to write a comedy during the Edinburgh Festival. She opted for a sitcom, and in 2009 the BBC broadcast the first episode. The series was preceded by the autobiographical radio show *Miranda Hart's Joke Shop*, which aired in 2008 by BBC Radio 2. The show was so successful for the BBC that it attracted millions of viewers.

Not only did Miranda Hart invent this sitcom, she also wrote the scripts, played the main character and was a co-producer. She was able to create an original show based on her individual style. The show was unique for the time of production since a woman was in

control over the whole process from idea to production. Earlier British sitcoms or Britcoms were typically created by at least two well-known and educated comedians, and directed by at least two well-known and educated comedians (Hart 2014, 8; Bucknall-Hołyńska 2016, 4).

2.2 Miranda as the Main Character

In the center of the narrative is a proud owner of a Joke shop, the 34-year-old character Miranda played by Miranda Hart. She runs the store with her friend Stevie, who is also the co-owner of the store. While Stevie is a real blonde girly girl with a healthy interest in men, Miranda is extraordinarily tall with dark brown short hair and does not handle sex well. She is also called "massive" and "sir" on various occasions throughout the series.

When it comes to Miranda's behaviour, she often gets herself into awkward and bizarre situations. She has low self-esteem and childlike behaviour, thanks to which she is unable to find the right man. Miranda is a fun, easily irritable, yet also easily amused lady who often embarrasses herself in front of others. On the other hand, she is very kind-hearted, caring and brave. Her behaviour has earned many nicknames during the series, such as Queen Kong, The Empress of Kong, Congoleeza Rice or Rafael Nude-al. Miranda identifies with her character through her body, which she frequently uses for comedy effect (*Miranda TV Series*).

2.3 The fourth wall

The "fourth wall" is a cinematic device which allows the audience to "voyeuristically" follow the lives of the characters (Auter and Davis 1991, 165). It is also a way of interaction of actors with the spectators who are not present. We can say that it is an invisible "wall", and while viewers can see through this "wall", the actors can not.

This phenomenon has been known since the time of theatre and over time it has moved to television. This device is effective if the director engage the audience in unexpected ways, which is why it gained its popularity in sitcoms. Clark (2011) states that the fourth wall means the embrace of reality. The directors use it for great effect. As a technique, they mostly use the direct-to-camera audience address. Clark claims that this will take the audience out

of the comfort zone and will provoke a reaction. This trick can be funny, shocking or irritating, but it is guaranteed to require a bold decision by the filmmaker (Clark 2011).

Miranda Hart used this device in almost every episode. This added humor to the situation as the character addressed the audience for reminiscences, inner thoughts, comments to embarrassing or shameful moments, or as an element of burlesque.

3 IDIOLECT AND ITS FEATURES

Each person has their idiolect, which reflects the special features of the person's language expression. The idiolect changes throughout an individual's life. In this chapter I will deal with its definition and features.

3.1 Defining idiolect in linguistics

David Wright (2018) says that every native speaker has their own distinct and individual version of the language they speak and write – their idiolect. The word comes from the Greek *-idio*, which means "own, personal", and *-lect* meaning "social diversity of language". Wright (2018) writes: "idiolect refers to an individual's unique variety and/or use of language, from the level of the phoneme to the level of discourse".

From a theoretical point of view, it is obvious that two people sharing a common language cannot have the same language repertoire. Usually, a person's language production is influenced by a dialect or register, but also by his/hers personal language preferences. These preferences can be influenced, for example, by the environment in which the individual lives, life experiences, family, workplace, and so on.

Idiolect explains what features are typically analyzed. Additionally the main features include, for example, interaction habits, popular catchphrases, or recognizable features of voice. There is a degree of predictability because the choice of words (code) is influenced mainly by the situation, purpose or selected characteristics of the participants (age, social background) (Ferenčík 2004).

The idiolect is also related to the speech style because if everyone has a different idiolect, they also have a distinct speech style. As we already know, Miranda wrote the sitcom herself and according to (Semino and Short 2004, 25) the authors tend to have highly individualized styles. According to Nørgaard (Nørgaard qtd. 2010, 155), style is defined as a variation of language usage. Style may also be related to the degree of formality or may be seen as a social variable. It is definitely a particular way of writing or speaking (Nørgaard qtd. 2010, 155-156).

4 METHODOLOGY OF IDIOLECT ANALYSIS

The analysis will be based on Miranda's lines collected from six episodes of the first season. A total of 46 lines were selected. The analysis of Miranda's speech style is in 3 steps: (1) analysis of Miranda-specific phonetic features; (2) focus on the lexical features, such as peculiarities of word formation, and origin of words; (3) means to create humour. Unfortunately, the limitations of the paper do not allow me to look at other features that constitute the idiolect of the character.

Abbreviation 1: S - stands for the season

Abbreviation 2: E - stands for the episode

4.1 Step 1: Phonetic features

As for the phonetic features, I will focus mainly on contrasting Miranda's British accent to the Received Pronunciation and its essential features. The British accent also mimicked other accents which will be duly analyzed.

4.1.1 Received pronunciation

An accent is a means of pronunciation typical to a particular individual, location, or nation. According to Roach (2009, 3), people have different accents, meaning their pronunciation is different from the socially accepted standard or norm due to their geographical region, social classes or educational background.

The standard of British pronunciation is Received Pronunciation. Received Pronunciation (also known as The Queen's English or 'posh') is a well-known English accent spoken by the royal family and other members of the upper classes in the UK. It is an accent that fascinates many non-native speakers. It represents the high-prestige varieties of British English and it is usually spoken by those, who learned it at home or in the public schools (Simpson 2004, 103).

Received Pronunciation (RP) acquired its drive when it was chosen in 1922 by the BBC Advisory Committee on Spoken English as a broadcasting standard. Since then, it has also been called the BBC English. The Committee believed that Standard English associated with the RP accent would be the most widely used and widespread variety of English (Robinson 2019).

According to (Vincent 2015), some of the features of RP include:

- The long /ɑ:/ sound in words such as *bath*, *palm* and *start*,
- RP speakers never drop the letter /h/ at the beginning of words,
- Some words pronounced with a /j/ sound after pronouncing /d/ or /t/, such as in word *individual*.

On the other hand, Robinson (2019) emphasizes vowel sounds in an RP accent according to the lexical set. The concept lexical set was introduced by John Wells. The set represents a single word (identification word) that refers to the pronunciation of a particular group of English words. When it comes to the Received Pronunciation, I will highlight the pronunciation of the NURSE set (similarly pronounced words as the word *nurse*) and START set similarly pronounced words as the word *start*) (Robinson 2019).

The nurse set is based on the vowel /ə:/ which is a long schwa. It occurs in words such as *nurse*, *bird* or *hurt*. The start set is represented by a vowel /ɑ:/ - a long 'a' sound and appears in words like *aunt* or *heart*.

4.1.2 Other accents used

In Season 1, Miranda also changed accents for comic effects. The accents are identified as Yorkshire, Indian and French. Miranda mostly imitated these accents when she found herself in hilarious situations.

4.2 Step 2: Lexical features

Concerning the lexical features, there are three criteria according to which I will analyze Miranda's speech. The first criterion is the frequency: with the help of AntConc, a software for the text analysis, I categorize the words Miranda uses the most. The second criterion is word-formation patterns such as derivation and blending. Finally, the third one is the origin of words.

4.2.1 The most frequently used words

Miranda's lines collected for the analysis were uploaded to the software called AntConc, which created a list of the most frequently used words in the corpus. I have noticed that two groups of words, namely fillers, or words or sounds in spontaneous speech like 'er', 'oh' that do not carry conventional meaning but allow time to think. These are sometimes called discourse markers (Ross 1998, 111; Urbanová 2008, 53). Also modal verbs, seemed to be

used in Miranda's speech unusually frequently. Therefore, I will focus on both of these groups of words.

4.2.2 Word formation

Word formation is a process of creating new words which enriches the lexis. (Denham and Lobeck 2013, 191). Crystal (2008, 523) states that the term word formation refers to the whole process of morphological variation in the constitution of words. There are many ways to create new words, for instance, compounding, clipping or back-formation. The earlier analysis of the words used by Miranda also showed that Miranda creates new words mainly with the help of derivation and blending.

Derivational affixation is a way of creating new words with the help of affixes, which are added to other morphemes. This process helps to create new words in the dictionary and/or change the grammatical class of morphemes to which they are attached. Affixes are divided into two groups: prefixes and suffixes. For instance, derivational affix (suffix) *-able* attaches to verbs, therefore it derives a new word as is shown in the example below (Crystal 2008, 138): e.g., verb *like* + suffix *-able* = new adjective *likeable*.

Another phenomenon that leads to creation of new words is called blending. According to David Crystal (2008, 56), in blending two elements, which do not normally co-occur, come together within a single linguistic unit. For example, if we combine the word *breakfast* together with the word *lunch*, we get a new blended word *brunch*.

4.2.3 Origin of words

Since Miranda belongs to the upper class, it is expected that the words of French and British origin will dominate in her speech (Ayto 2005, 1). Using the book by John Ayto *The Hidden Histories of English Words from A to Z* and *Cambridge Dictionary*, I will look at Miranda's wordstock from the point of view of the origin. I will explain the cultural background and use of words of the British, French, Spanish and Italian origins, since they are numerous in Miranda's speech.

4.3 Step 3: Verbal humour in Miranda's speech

According to Goldstein (1990, 37-38), there is not a single formula in the world for creating verbal humour. Even so, we can immediately generate humour in a conversation, and it is understood with even greater speed.

Miranda Hart has been creating her screen persona since 1994. She has found great success as a comedy and character actress by embracing her unique characteristics and features, making them a crucial point of her performance. Miranda's interest in using her foibles, idiosyncrasies and struggles is similar in that some of these aspects appeal to their audience since the audience can identify with the characters (Bucknall-Hołyńska 2016, 10).

Therefore, I believe it is important to analyze her idiolect through different types of humour tracked in Miranda's speech. The humor is analyzed thematically as jokes about her body, humor based on cultural references, sexual innuendo, as well as idioms and figurative language in jokes.

4.3.1 Jokes about Miranda's body

In the series, Miranda constantly makes many references to herself with jokes making fun of herself being single or clumsy. Miranda states in her book *Is it Just Me?:* "Our bodies are expected to look a certain way. Or at the very least, most of us wouldn't mind looking a little bit more like him or her from "Men's Health" or "Grazia" magazine, and a little bit less like, well, a sackful of ham. I know it's not just me" (Hart 2012, 134).

Miranda's body is frequently pointed out at. Attention is paid mainly to her height. As she claims, height was always her "thing" and sometimes she was even called "Sir" (Hart 2012, 134). Through her clothes, movements and incompatibility with other people, Miranda simply "doesn't fit". Miranda ridicules such expectations on stage, screen and in her books, and rebels against them by ignoring any expectations of her appearance. Instead, she takes her body as the main focus of her performance (Bucknall-Hołyńska 2016, 10-11).

I will analyze how the humour related to her body is represented verbally in the series.

4.3.2 Cultural jokes

Crystal describes the reference as a term for the entity (object, state of affairs, etc.) in the external world to which a linguistic expression challenges (Crystal 2008, 408). Across the series, Miranda refers several times to cultural issues. She mentions, for example, famous names, brands or songs in a humorous way. Sometimes it is because she finds herself in an uncomfortable situation, other times is Miranda just trying to make fun of things to encourage herself. I will look at how cultural references are used in the first series.

4.3.3 Sexual innuendo jokes

Alisson Ross (1998, 64) claims that sexual innuendo is a hidden reference to a taboo subject. She argues that innuendos or euphemisms are one of the factors that influence an audience's reaction. When it comes to ordinary words with a sexual connotation, such as a ball or a cucumber, it evokes laughter (Ross 1998, 64, 70).

The jokes about Miranda's sexual experience, as well as her laughing at anything sexual, are quite numerous. I will focus on how she creates humour based on sexual ambiguity or allusion.

4.3.4 Euphemisms

In day to day figurative language, euphemism can be used to intentionally alter a sentence to lessen the harshness of its meaning without actually removing the meaning. J. A. Cuddon defines euphemism as "the substitution of an offensive or disagreeable term by one considered more acceptable" (Cuddon 2013, 257). Euphemisms are used "to avoid saying an unpleasant or offensive word" (*Cambridge Dictionary*). An example of a euphemisms are synonyms to the word *die*. Instead of using the word *die*, we can soften it so that it does not sound so harsh, and replace it with the word *pass away*.

4.3.5 Idioms in puns

According to Cuddon (2013, 353), an idiom is a form of expression in which words in a phrase possess a different meaning. *Cambridge Dictionary* describes idiom as "A group of words in a fixed order that has a particular meaning that is different from the meanings of each word on its own." The example of an idiom is as follows: *Break a leg*. Its grammatical meaning is to break a bone in a human leg, but the combination of those words as an idiom means *Good luck*.

A noticeable trait of Miranda's humor is creating puns using idioms. I will look at how idioms are used by Miranda Hart to create humorous moment.

II. ANALYSIS

5 LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS INTRODUCTION

The analytical part of this bachelor's thesis will deal with the speech style of the main character of the series *Miranda*. I will analyze Miranda's style of speech from three points of view, namely from the phonetic and lexical perspectives, and from the point of view of what means Miranda uses for creating humour.

5.1 Step 1: Phonetic features

As for phonetic features, I will focus Miranda's adherence to Received Pronunciation (RP). I will compare her features of pronouncing sounds /a:/ and /ə:/, /j/ sound after /d/ or /t/ and the unskipped sound /h/ at the beginning of the word. Miranda's mimicking of accents will also be discussed.

5.1.1 Received pronunciation

As the result of the analysis of 46 lines of Miranda's speech, it could be stated that in almost 7% (3 examples), Miranda used RP. For example:

Example 1: (S01E04, 00:11:43 - 00:11:48)

Miranda: *Every night in a hotel. And sometimes the sheets feel a bit crisp and cold, don't they? So you do the warming-up-bed dance.*

The transcription of the last sentence would be as follows: səʊ ju: du:ðə 'wɔ:mɪŋʌp bed da:ns. The word *dance* Miranda pronounced with a long vowel /a:/ that is typical of British English, unlike American *dæns*.

Example 2: (S01E03, 00:23:13 - 00:23:23)

Trying to cancel her gym membership, the receptionist tries to figure out reasons why Miranda should stay.

Receptionist: *And if you sign up to our exclusive 36-month contract... ..we'll give you a free towel robe.*

Miranda: *Do I look stupid?*

Transcript of Miranda's sentence: du: aɪ lək 'stju:pɪd? Notice the consonant /j/ is pronounced after the consonant /t/ in the word *stupid*.

Example 3: (S01E04, 00:08:44 - 00:09:02)

Miranda is sitting at the computer, looking where she would go on vacation.

Miranda: Right, holiday search. Hotel, England, Surrey. It's too expensive, it's a bit far... Oh, hang on, brilliant! The Hamilton Lodge. I know where that is.

Transcription: raɪt, 'hɒlədeɪ sɜ:ʃ. həʊ'tel, 'ɪŋglənd, 'sʌri. ɪts tu:ɪks'pensɪv, ɪts ə bɪt fɑ:...əʊ, hæŋ ɒn, 'brɪljənt! ðə 'hæməltənɪdʒ. aɪ nəʊ weə ðæt ɪz. In this example, we can see two figures. The first in the words *holiday* and *Hamilton*, where Miranda fully uttered the consonant /h/ and then in the word *search*, which she pronounced with a long schwa /ə:/ belonging to the lexical nurse set according to Wells (1982, 499).

5.1.2 Other accents used

Miranda uses various accents. She uses Yorkshire accent to imitate someone or an Indian accent to mistakenly embarrass herself. She mimicked Yorkshire accent 2 times in the season. However, she uses the French accent the most because it is more related to Received Pronunciation. For example:

Example 4: (S01E04, 00:19:27 - 00:19:44)

Amanda Barnes is to lead a business seminar. However, she has not arrived yet and coordinator Colin thinks by mistake that Miranda is Amanda. Because Amanda Barnes is originally from Yorkshire, Miranda tries to imitate this accent.

Colin: *So, Amanda.*

Miranda: *That's me.*

Colin: *How was the trip from Yorkshire?*

Miranda: *Oh, aye, t'were great.*

Colin: *I thought you were just there on business.*

Miranda: *No, turns out I'm from...thu-u-ur. The minute I hear Yorkshire, the accent just comes flooding back.*

The sign of the Yorkshire accent includes, for example, the loss of the word *the* in pronunciation, marked as *t'* in transcript, as in the word *t'were*. Furthermore, instead of *yes*, *aye* is used, which is pronounced the same as, for example, the word *eye* - ai.

Example 5: (S01E01, 00:13:42 - 00:14:00)

Gary invites Miranda to dinner. According to him, it's not a date, just a thing. However, Miranda is already nervous.

Gary: *Do you fancy grabbing a bite later? I'm not working, it would be good to catch up. We could go to the restaurant, free food. Don't worry, it's not a date, it's just a thing.*

Miranda: (with an Indian accent) *I do like, I do like very much! Why am I doing an Indian accent?*

For an incomprehensible reason, Miranda decided to speak with an Indian accent, she was probably really nervous. Unlike standard British English, the pronunciation is very sharp, for example, /r/ in the word *very*. Indian English uses clear /l/ that can be heard in the pronunciation of the word *like*.

Since Miranda belongs to the upper class, she also mimicked the French accent as well. She used it, for example, to make her look more sublime in front of Gary.

Example 6: (S01E01, 00:22:09 - 00:22:26)

Gary has come for Miranda because they are having a dinner together. Unfortunately Miranda is dressed as a transvestite and therefore she has to change her clothes.

Miranda: *Hi*

Gary: *Hi. Did we say it was fancy dress tonight?*

Miranda: *This isn't fancy dress. I'll be in just two seconds. I'll just get changée.*

Miranda said she will *changée*, but instead of the English word *change*, she used the French word *changée* (shahn-zhay) with a French accent. She did so, probably because she was dressed as a transvestite and wanted to be more feminine and romantic.

Example 7: (S01E02, 00:09:47 - 00:10:14)

Stevie took Miranda to a French class. However, Miranda meets a teacher who used to teach her, so she decides to run away. At the door, though, the teacher notices her.

Teacher: *Bonjour la classe. Qu'est ce que ce'st passez?*

Miranda: *Pardon, monsieur. Je suis dans le...(with french accent) wrong room.*

Teacher: *Miranda?*

Miranda: *Ce ne pas me, zut alors! Je suis...on me way oot! Sounded Scottish?!*

The teacher asked Miranda: *What's going on?* Miranda said: *Sorry sir. I'm in the ... wrong room.* Here Miranda could only speak half a sentence in French, and since she didn't know how to say wrong room in French, she helped herself by simply saying it in English, but with a French accent. That sounded funny after all. Then she did the same situation once more when the teacher recognized her. She said: *That's not me, damn it! I am ... on me way oot!* Again, she didn't know what to say on her way out, so she said it in English with a French accent. Yet the word out didn't work out for her, so it sounded, as she said, a bit Scottish.

5.2 Step 2: Lexical features

As for the lexical features, I will first look at what kinds of words Miranda uses the most. According to the results of AntConc application, Miranda uses the following word categories (see table 1)

Table 1: Word categories

<u>Word class</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Most frequent word</u>
<u>noun</u>	82	Gary
<u>pronoun</u>	1060	I
<u>adjective</u>	70	good
<u>adverb</u>	71	really
<u>verb</u>	187	do
<u>article</u>	536	a
<u>interjection</u>	256	oh

Of the word stock, I will focus on fillers and modals as specific feature of Miranda's speech. Next, I will show and describe words related to word-formation, because Miranda uses several types of word formation in her speech, namely derivation and blending. Finally, I will describe the word stock from the perspective of the word origin. Because Miranda has noble roots, we can find in this category not only words typically British but also French, Spanish or Italian.

5.2.1 The most frequently used words

Miranda uses the following fillers (see Table 2):

Table 2: The most frequent fillers

<u>Fillers</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
oh	256
well	134
right	95
yeah	128

As we can see from table 2, filler "oh" is used 256 times in the first season, followed by "well" used 134 times, "right" 95 times and "yeah" 128 times. Miranda uses these fillers because they give her time to figure out what to say. Sometimes she combines these fillers. For example:

Example 8: (S01E03, 00:01:41 - 00:01:47)

At the beginning of the third episode, Miranda welcomes Stevie to the store in the morning. She sees a new pirate collection in the distance.

Miranda: *Morning!*

Stevie: *Morning!*

Miranda: *Oh, brilliant, new pirate stock! Ha-ha!*

This kind of *Oh* is *Oh* by surprise. Miranda saw the new pirate collection she was happy about, so she used *Oh* at the beginning of the sentence to express surprise and happiness.

Example 9: (S01E04, 00:00:02 - 00:00:09)

The introduction to the fourth episode is illustrated by Miranda reading a magazine while holding a coffee. It's morning and as Miranda's day begins, another episode begins as well. That is why Miranda welcomes her viewers first while heading to sit on the sofa.

Miranda: *Well, come along then, please. Settle. That's it. Well, good evening to you. Here we are again in the excitement that is each other's company.*

In speaking, she often uses *well* at the start of what she says. In this case the first *well* is a discourse marker, which means that the new episode is starting. Second *well* she used represents a discourse marker as well, but this time, it represents a calm and kind welcome to the viewer.

“Right” is also used by Miranda as a discourse marker, but she uses it for different reasons than “Oh” or “Well”.

Example 10: (S01E01, 00:17:48 - 00:17:58)

Miranda is supposed to have a date, so she decided to go shopping. On the way to the shops, she complains to herself about what it's like to shop when you're bigger than average.

Miranda: *Right, clothes shops. Just because people are taller or bigger than average, why do we have to shop in patronisingly named places?*

The discourse marker *right* used in this case expresses Miranda's determination. When she says *right, clothes shops*, it sounds like Miranda takes shopping as a challenge she has to handle because it is sometimes impossible for her to find clothes that would fit her.

Another feature typical of Miranda is an increased use of modal verbs. The most frequently used modal verbs are "could" and "would". The verb "would" have been used 49 times and "could" 47 times. Other modals she uses are for example, “can” or “shall”. Miranda uses “would” to wonder. It appears in second conditionals, as in the example:

Example 11: (S01E01, 00:27:04 - 00:27:19)

Miranda went to see her friends in the wedding salon and decided to try on a wedding dress for fun.

Miranda: (With the dress on) *I don't think I have ever felt more beautiful.*

Friend Tilly: *Really?*

Miranda: *No. I look like I've had a chiffon-based anaphylactic shock. It would be a nightmare if my mother walked past and fainted with joy.*

Miranda uses the word *would* as a second conditional because she wondered what it would be like for her mother to see her dressed in a wedding dress in the salon. It occurred to her because, according to Miranda's mother, Miranda should already be married.

Example 12: (S01E03, 00:15:47 - 00:15:59)

Miranda is taking part in an interview for a new job. The job interview started while the potential employer finds out what Miranda's qualities are and what she is good at.

The Head of Marketing: *It's a pleasure. So let's get straight to it, what do you think you could bring to this job?*

Miranda: *Bring to it? Oh, erm... I think I could bring...some tea and cakes to it, would it like that?*

Miranda replied that she *could bring* tea and cakes. The pun is created because Miranda played with the modality: the word *could* can be interpreted as a suggestion and as a marker of possibility when answering the question.

5.2.2 Word formation

In her speech, Miranda actively coins new words. Of these the most frequently used word-formation techniques are derivation (2 words) and blending (3 words). In the majority of cases these new coinages are used to describe someone or something.

Example 13: (S01E03, 00:04:35 - 00:04:43)

Miranda, her mother Penny and friend Stevie found out that Miranda's school friend Tilly had just been promoted. That makes Miranda a little outraged.

Miranda: *Look, who cares if Tilly's got a promotion? She's the idiot with everything "fabbifun". Oh! Gosh, she's coming.*

In a single word, "fabbifun", Miranda can describe her friend Tilly. The word "fabbifun" is a blending of the two adjectives fabulous and fun. It is created to imitate Tilly's speech and to make fun of her.

Some of the new coinages are the result of Miranda's awkwardness. Usually they appear in her speech when she doesn't want to admit the truth, so she comes up with a new word. For example:

Example 14: (S01E01, 00:26:32 - 00:26:50)

Miranda goes wedding dress shopping with Tilly and Fanny, but when the shop assistant asks for a size, Miranda feels ashamed of her bigger size and decides to lie a bit.

Shop assistant: *Oh, sorry, yes, I think we may have something. Size?*

Miranda: *Ten. Tenty. I am a size twenty.*

Shop assistant: *I think we have one in a "tenty"!*

Not to feel so bad about herself, Miranda said that she is a size tenty, which is a blend word for numbers ten (she wished she was of such size) and twenty.

She also uses coinages to decently criticize the British social stereotypes. In this way she draws attention to a cleaning agent used mostly in America. For example:

Example 15: (S01E05)

Miranda explains to Gary and Clive the difference between a man and a woman according to sports manoeuvres.

Miranda: *You know, sports mimes. Men that can't help themselves suddenly practising a sport move - a bit of golf. Ah! That, for me, is the main difference between men and women. Men feel the need to announce their manlihood by a quick, er, sport move. Women don't do that, do they?*

You don't suddenly find women going, "Hoovering, missed a bit."

"Take your shoes off, dear."

"And Febreze."

In a demonstration, Miranda explained what she thought was the difference between a man and a woman. The woman does not need to show how good she is at cleaning. At the end of the monologue, she used the word *febreze*, which was supposed to indicate that she was refreshing the air with a scent. Nevertheless, *febreze* is a blend word that stands for *fabric* and *easy*.

Example 16: (S01E01, 00:01:53 - 00:02:02)

It's morning, Stevie is already working, but Miranda is late. She goes down the stairs and makes excuses that the train journey to work was terrible (she lives on the second floor).

Miranda: *Morning, Stevie.*

Stevie: *Afternoon. It's nearly lunchtime.*

Miranda: *Oh, the trains are a nightmare. It was a hellish journey.*

Stevie: *You live upstairs.*

Miranda describes the journey as *hellish*, which means terrible. The adjective *hellish* was derived from the word *hell* + adding the suffix *-ish*. Miranda uses the words with this suffix at least two times.

Example 17: (S01E02, 00:04:08 - 00:04:25)

Gary asked Miranda to be his safety wife, and Miranda wondered what would happen if there was a moment between them before the agreed term of the safety wife.

Miranda: *Gary has asked me to be his safety wife. But, he said, obviously, if something happens before then we wouldn't ignore it. If there was a moment. He's considering there might be a moment between us, Stevie. I've got to create a moment and do some wooing. It's harder to say than you imagine, that. Wooing. Wooing.*

Miranda often likes to “taste” words she finds interesting for this or that matter. Thus, she repeats the word or emphasize it with her voice. In this episode she said she needed to make some *wooing* – meaning she needed to seduce Gary.

5.2.3 Origin of words

Miranda actively uses the words of British, Spanish, Italian and French origin. (see table 3):

Table 3: Origin of words

<u>Origin</u>	<u>Number of words</u>	<u>Examples</u>
British	3	Hoover, blimey, the nutter
Spanish	2	Adiós, dos - uno
Italian	2	Occasioné, Boungiorno
French	4	Nonchalant, sachet, là-bas, à demain

Words of Anglo-Saxon origin, as expected, were used the most. At the same time, Miranda uses some old-English words to sound more ‘posh’. For example:

Example 18: (S01E02, 00:06:46 - 00:07:22)

Miranda makes sure she can be romantic. That's why she practices it on her vacuum cleaner named Gary. But then Stevie unexpectedly enters the apartment and Miranda panics.

Miranda: Stevie always underestimates me. I knew I could do romance. Ooh, it's our song! (Starts singing Summer nights while Stevie enters the room) This is not a hoover being a man!

Instead of vacuum cleaner, Miranda used the word *hoover*, a commonly used term in the UK and Ireland. The word *hoover* was derived from The Hoover company, a company that makes vacuum cleaners.

Example 19: (S01E03, 00:25:11 - 00:25:23)

Tilly thinks Miranda has a new job at Evergreens, where she is supposed to replace someone they just fired.

Tilly: Are you replacing that nutter who got fired before they started?

Miranda: Blimey, news travels fast out there. Well, let's just say some eccentric, to give the nutter her due. Or his due, whoever's due it was, it wasn't my due.

There are even two typically British words in Miranda's answer. The first Miranda used the old-English word *blimey*, which is an expression of surprise. Secondly, she used the word *nutter*, which is a term for a stud.

Foreign words and borrowings of the Spanish origin appear in the Miranda's speech two times. She uses them to sound more romantic in order to make the conversation special.

Example 20: (S01E02, 00:18:36 - 00:18:51)

As for Miranda, she has always been more uptight than romantic. But she decided to change that and is getting ready for a tango lesson with Gary.

Miranda: *Tonight, "Adios, uptight Miranda." She will be swept aside for a feisty Argentinean damsel. I am going to create a romantic moment. For tonight is the night when "dos become uno".*

To make her look relaxed and romantic, Miranda used the term *Adios*, which is the Spanish term for *goodbye*. She said *Adios uptight Miranda*, indicating that from now on she would only seem romantic and sexy. There was also mentioned: *when dos become uno*, which is supposed to depict Miranda and Gary that they merge into one body. *Dos* is the number two in Spanish and *uno* is the number one.

Italian foreign words and borrowings appear 2 times and are usually associated with the greeting or the metaphor for celebration.

Example 21: (S01E03, 00:26:39 - 00:26:56)

Tilly is celebrating a promotion. Miranda told her where she works (and that there are a lot of places) and Tilly is therefore confused. That's why Miranda had to admit the truth.

Tilly: *Miranda, you're on the verge of turning my fiesta into a fiasco.*

Miranda: *OK, I'll explain.*

You're probably confused. One minute I'm working in television, the next I'm in Evergreens, and now I'm a waitress. Well, OK, do you know, for once at a social occasione, I'm going to proudly say what I do for a living.

When Miranda mentioned *social occasione* with an Italian accent, she meant the word event. English acquired via Italian word *occasion*, but here Miranda uses it as an expression for Tilly's annoying celebration of promotion.

Example 22: (S01E05, 00:00:02 - 00:00:04)

The fifth episode begins with an unusual Italian greeting.

Miranda: *Buongiorno which is Italian for hello.*

As Miranda herself said, the greeting *Buongiorno* means hello in English. It can also mean Hello everyone! so probably she used it because the next episode is just starting and Miranda wanted to say hello to her audience.

Words of French origin are strongly associated with the RP accent. They sound more royal and classy. Miranda uses these to be more elegant in front of Gary or when she is drunk.

Example 23: (S01E01, 00:25:08 - 00:25:14)

Miranda is standing at the bar, waiting inconspicuously for Gary to arrive. Meanwhile, she pretends to read a menu. Suddenly Clive notices her standing so strangely and unnaturally.

Clive: *What are you doing?*

Miranda: *I am being nonchalant for Gary.*

Clive: *Good luck.*

Nonchalant is taken from the French *nonchalant* (literally "which does not heat up"). The word suggests that you are not interested or do not care. Miranda, of course, uttered a *nonchalant* with a French accent.

Example 24: (S01E04, 00:08:44 - 00:09:09)

Miranda chooses a place to go on vacation. She chooses a hotel that is in the same city where she lives.

Miranda: *Right, holiday search. Hotel, England, Surrey. It's too expensive, it's a bit far... Oh, hang on, brilliant! The Hamilton Lodge. I know where that is. La bas. Round the corner, no travel, no language barrier, book.*

Là-bas is the French term for *there*. Miranda probably used the French word because she was choosing a vacation. However, it seems funny when she chose a hotel that can be seen from the window.

Example 25: (S01E04, 00:12:30 - 00:12:42)

Miranda is at the hotel, looking around at what is in her room. Suddenly she sees a tea and coffee tray.

Miranda: *Ooh, tea and coffee tray. Nowhere else, but in a hotel room is one so excited to see free tea and coffee sachets. Good word, "sachet".*

Sachet is a word of French origin and means a small bag. Miranda chose a *sachet* instead of a small bag, probably because she just liked the word.

Example 26: (S01E04, 00:22:15 - 00:22:27)

Miranda, though unplanned, held a party in her hotel room. God forbid Gary came and Miranda said goodbye to all the guests.

Miranda: *All right, then. Night, guys. À demain. Which I always think sounds a bit like Adam Ant.*

À demain means see you tomorrow and its origin is French. Miranda said that probably because she was very drunk but she still wanted to look classy.

5.3 Step 3: Verbal humour in Miranda's speech

Since Miranda is a comedian, we can find a lot of well-thought-out humorous elements in the series. This last subchapter, therefore, focuses on jokes made by Miranda.

5.3.1 Jokes about Miranda's body

Miranda makes fun of her body at least three times in the first series. The jokes range from her weight to her breasts. To make fun of herself, she often uses comparison or she tells straight away what she is doing.

Example 27: (S01E01, 00:07:14 - 00:07:56)

After a long time, Miranda met her friend Gary, who enrolled in the gym. To find a common theme, Miranda made up she was a gymnast.

Miranda: *Yeah, no, I'm really into keeping fit, Gary.*

Gary: *Great. What's your sport?*

Miranda: *Gymnastics. I mainly do ribbons. You might have seen me at the last Olympics, actually. Although I wasn't on telly much cos you will have noticed that a lot of gymnasts are quite manly, have no curves or breasts. That's one category, not mine. I'm in the bustier section. It's less televised. It's only in widescreen.*

In this case, Miranda used the word *widescreen*, which serves as a comparison to being in a bustier section. What is also worth thinking about is the fact that as a sport she said she do ribbons which, due to her figure and character, do not fit at all, because there is no *bustier section* when it comes to the ribbons.

She also uses home stories to make fun of her extra weight. For example:

Example 28: (S01E5, 00:20:09 - 00:20:14)

In this scene, Miranda tried to prove that she is not so bad when it comes to flirting.

Miranda: *Hi.*

Random boy in a club: *Oh, hi.*

Miranda: *When I'm naked in bed and I roll over, my breasts clap.*

Unfortunately, she turned it against herself again and made fun of herself instead. She used her body as a tool, but she did not introduce it in the best way.

Example 29: (S01E06, 00:10:23 - 00:10:35)

Miranda excelled again when she went to the Henley Royal Regatta, which is a British rowing event. Important people are invited there and therefore it is a very cultivated and polite event.

Polite lady: *And that is why we must tackle the Chinese human rights record. (Turned to Miranda) What do you think?*

Miranda: *I think, if my thighs are sweaty and I stand up, it sounds like I've done a fart.*

There was talk of Chinese human rights records, and Miranda had produced a very unsuitable sentence. She speaks of herself in an embarrassing way which produces humorous effect.

5.3.2 Culture reference jokes

As a British national Miranda makes jokes about British famous people, songs or even shops. She uses allusions to refer to someone or something familiar to produce humorous effect. For example:

Example 30: (S01E01, 00:12:21 - 00:12:37)

After years, Miranda meets Gary, who wonders if Miranda is married or has children.

Gary: *Look, I just popped in to ask, you're not with anybody, or married or anything at the moment?*

Miranda: *Yep, yep, of course, yeah.*

Gary: *Oh, really? Kids?*

Miranda: *Yeah, got two. There's Orlando...Orlando and, er...Bloom.*

Miranda tried to act like she was no old virgin, so she made up she had two children and was married. However, in her nervousness, she came up with the names of the imaginary children, which refer to the famous English actor Orlando Bloom. He was considered the most attractive man. Through this reference, Miranda may be trying to tell Gary that she had an affair with Orlando Bloom and that she has two children with him - *Orlando* and *Bloom*, to make Gary jealous.

Example 31: (S01E01, 00:14:17 - 00:14:29)

Miranda has a date, so as a true girl she decides to go shopping.

Miranda: *I've got a date! Oh, what to do? OK, what would the girls do Shopping, of course. Something to wear. I'll Trinny and Susannah myself.*

Miranda decided to be a rough stylist to herself. She used a term: *I'll Trinny and Susannah myself*. Hereby refers to the well-known British fashion advisors - Trinny Woodall and Susannah Constantine.

She also plays with the names of famous brands because she wants to make fun of them. They don't have the size of clothes for someone like her. The audience would understand the reference through the similarity of the pronunciation. For example:

Example 32: (S01E01, 00:17:52 - 00:18:06)

Because Miranda is taller and bigger than other girls, she has to shop at specific stores. On the way to the store, she gets upset that just because she is different, she has to shop in patronisingly named places.

Miranda: *Just because people are taller or bigger than average, why do we have to shop in patronisingly named places? What's next? Lanky and Sweaty? Huge and Gross?*

When Miranda mentions huge and gross, she actually refers to Hugo Boss. Hugo Boss is known for producing small size clothes and hiring thin models. But because Miranda is too large for their size numbering, she changed their name to Huge and Gross.

A lot of cultural allusions are references to famous songs and performers of 80's. For example:

Example 33: (S01E02, 00:21:49 - 00:22:11)

Through the series, Miranda often refers to well-known songs that adapt to the situation. She agrees with Gary to give her a cooking lesson. But she meant something completely different.

Gary: *Tomorrow night, I'm going to give you a proper...*

Miranda: *Take me!*

Gary: *Cooking lesson. What?*

Miranda: (Singing) *Take...me...on. Take on me. I'll be there, Ooh, ooh-ooh, ooh! Just some A-ha.*

Miranda intended to get Gary's heart, and in a moment of passion, she said: Take me. But Gary had completely different intentions - to give her a cooking lesson. To get out of that awkward situation, Miranda started singing a song from A-ha - Take on me.

Since Miranda is not too sporty, she often refers to the names of famous athletes, in this case swimmers. For example:

Example 34: (S01E02, 00:24:40 - 00:24:44)

Miranda has a conversation with Stevie, who explains to her that having sex is a normal thing and everyone does it. Miranda then metaphorically mentions how they were taught about conception at a boarding school.

Miranda: *I mean, what's weird about a man pushing his Michael Phelps to reach her li-lo?*

A man pushing his Michael Phelps to reach a li-lo means a woman (the ovum), lying on the lounge (li-lo), and a man representing swimmers (penis/sperm) trying to achieve fertilization. In this case "the swimmer" is a well-known swimmer Michael Phelps.

There are also direct quotations from poems. Miranda does that to make her sound smarter to seduce Gary. For example:

Example 35: (S01E06, 00:14:01 - 00:14:08)

Stevie and Miranda have a crush on the same guy. It's Miranda's turn to show how good she is when it comes to dating boys.

Miranda: *Right, listen, Robbie, Robert, The Robmeister, just Rob. "Why don't you step into my parlour?" said the spider to the fly.*

Miranda tries to convince him to invite her to dinner. That's why she used a modified verse from Mary Howitt's poem *The Spider and the Fly*: "Why don't you step into my parlour?"

5.3.3 Sexual innuendo jokes

Miranda has a complex of talking about sexual life. This reflects her her years spent in boarding school. The jokes about sexual innuendo appear at least four times. The jokes involve the use of various euphemistic names for sexual organs. For example:

Example 36: (S01E01, 00:00:50 - 00:01:04)

In this example, Miranda explains what usually happens when she meets Gary Preston. As Gary returns from his travels, Miranda is very much looking forward to him.

Miranda: *And today I'm over-excited because apparently Gary Preston's back from his travels. He's lovely. But I always make a cockup if I see him. Well, there's never any cockup involved, if you see what I mean. How naughty!*

The word *cockup* is here used with double meaning. Using the word *cockup* she meant she always ruin the moment by doing something wrong. Then she used the word *cockup* again, but this time she meant a penis.

In the series, Miranda uses the following names for sexual intercourse, for example:

Example 37: (S01E02, 00:26:13 - 00:26:30)

Gary and Miranda share a cooking lesson, and Miranda believes that if she acts impulsively but lovingly, Gary will want her.

Gary: *You're acting as if you're six. You're excitable, then you're angry.*

Miranda: *It's the new me. I'm being impulsive, a lover of life, a lover. New tastes, new experiences...(Tastes garlic) Ooh, urgh! Garlic...It's not funny. I'm being erotic. Puncture my li-lo.*

Miranda said what she said because when she was in boarding school, they taught them how to fertilize a woman. There is a woman (ovum) on the lounge and the pool is full of

men (sperm) who have the task of breaking through to the lounge. When she said *puncture my li-lo*, she meant to have sex with him, not for Gary to have her lounge burst.

Miranda also uses the following names for male sexual organ:

Example 38: (S01E03, 00:07:44 - 00:07:56)

Miranda decided to go to the gym. She is however not able to open the door at the gym with a press knob.

Miranda: *Excuse me, I don't think these doors are working. If it's a press the knob and release, it is not functioning. I'm really banging the knob now. Don't!*

She demands help from the receptionist, but he opens the door only when she shouts "*I'm really banging the knob now*". Judging from Miranda's facial expression and the fact that then she said Don't! the sentence has a double meaning. The word *knob* means either the rounded door handle or in this case, a British taboo slang word for "penis" or "to have sexual intercourse".

Example 39: (S01E03, 00:11:04 - 00:11:31)

When Miranda finds out that Gary was the RAF Air Cadet for a while after school, she recognizes the movie Top Gun and starts singing the song Take my breath away, which is strongly connected with the movie.

Miranda: *You were in the RAF? With the uniform?*

Gary: *Just the cadets for a bit when I left school.*

Miranda: *Oh, Maverick, you stud. (Singing) Take my breath away-ay-ay-ay-ay-ay... Pilot your jet into my flight path. Said it all out loud!*

Once she said: *Pilot your jet into my flight path*, she metaphorically meant a sexual intercourse. She literally said that she wanted to have sex with Gary because she finds the topic of pilots, Top gun and uniforms incredibly sexy.

Miranda also uses sexually ment euphemisms to create a humorous effect. For example:

Example 40: (S01E02, 00:24:27 - 00:24:36)

When Stevie says goodbye to her boyfriend, she is encountered by Miranda, who immediately starts talking about how normal it is for people to have sex.

Miranda: *We all do it, don't we? Well, some of us try. But it doesn't matter! No. It's all just willies and front bottoms. We all have them.*

Because Miranda is very reluctant about everything relating to sex, she was not brave to pronounce the word penis and vagina. Instead, she used the euphemism of *willies and front bottoms*, which sounds funny, given that she is an adult woman and this is taught to young children.

Example 41: (S01E02, 00:04:46 - 00:05:16)

At the beginning of the second episode, Miranda and Stevie lead a debate about how Stevie, unlike Miranda, speaks the language of love. Stevie claims that Miranda is "just very British" because she can't even say the word sex.

Stevie: *You're just, you're just very British aren't you? I mean, say "sex".*

Miranda: (Sex) *You know I don't like to say it. I prefer the term "shenanigans". Sounds nicer. And you're British!?*

Stevie: *British in nationality, yeah, but when it comes to the language of love, I'm practically Spanish.*

As for the term *shenanigans*, it refers to secret or dishonest activities, usually of a complicated or humorous type. In this case, Miranda refers to sex with the word *shenanigans*.

Example 42: (S01E03, 00:21:18 - 00:21:51)

Miranda came back to the gym demanding the cancellation of her membership. The receptionist tells her he cannot do anything because the contract is foolproof. So Miranda comes up with crazy ideas that would be considered antisocial behaviour because that's the only way they can expel her.

Miranda: *So if you don't cancel my membership I'm going to... I will...I will shit all over your towels!*

Receptionist: *We'll just wash 'em.*

Miranda: *Fine, OK. Fine! Well, you'd bar a lunatic for defacing equipment, wouldn't you? So I tell you what I'm going to do, I'm going to wee all over the ball pool! Wee!*

Wee is a euphemism for urination. Miranda used the euphemism *wee*, probably because she was standing in a children's ball pool and threatened to urinate him if he did not revoke her membership. It all seemed very childish but funny.

5.3.4 Idioms in puns

Miranda uses idioms to create puns (at least 4 times). She typically plays with the literal meaning of each component and the figurative one, which produces humorous effect and help Miranda to ridicule herself even more. For example:

Example 43: (S01E01, 00:12:47 - 00:13:25)

Gary and Miranda met after a long time. When he asked her if she had any children, she lied and said yes. But then she made up a story to get rid of the children and be without commitments - so she can start dating Gary.

Gary: *And the kids?*

Miranda: *Dead.*

Gary: *Really? What happened?*

Miranda: *They froze. They froze to death, Gary. It's a funny story, actually. Not funny, haha. But, funny in that it's almost unbelievable. We were on holiday in the Himalayas at the base camp of Everest, and they were just running around in shorts and T-shirt, and I kept saying, "Put your coat on, you'll catch your death!" And they did.*

Gary: *None of that's true, is it?*

Miranda: *No.*

The idiom “*you'll catch your death!*” means, that if you don't dress properly, you will become ill. But Miranda changed this meaning into the literal meaning. She said that the children were running around and then they caught their death – they literally died.

Miranda also uses idioms in the sexualized context. For example:

Example 44: (S01E02, 00:11:29 - 00:11:40)

In French class, Miranda sat down in a children's chair and got stuck in it. They called it the chair issue. Then she ran away from the classroom and talked to herself in the hallway.

Miranda: *Right. Just need to pull myself off. Don't. Oh... And, released. God.*

When Miranda said she had to get out of that chair, she said *to pull off*, which means getting out of something.

There is a second meaning of *to pull off*, and that is the idiom *to pull someone (myself) off*. It can mean masturbating in a vulgar slang. That's why after the idiom to pull myself off she also added *Don't!*

Most of the idioms that Miranda plays with, are slengisms. She uses them to create humorous effect. For example:

Example 45: (S01E02)

Miranda bought a takeaway kebab on her way home, but Gary is trying to persuade her it is not a good quality food and she should not eat it.

Gary: *You're not actually going to eat that kebab are you?*

Miranda: *No, I bought it just to chuck in a bin(!)I'm unashamed to admit that, for me, this is the dog's bollocks.*

Gary: *It probably literally is. You should put it in the bin.*

Miranda likes it and opposes that for her it is "*the dog's bollocks*" - British slang for something extremely good. Gary answers "It probably literally is" suggesting the kebab is made of the "dog's bollocks" - male dog reproductive organs, therefore she should throw it out.

Example 46: (S01E04, 00:15:41 - 00:16:31)

For the holidays, Miranda went to a hotel in the city where she lives. When the room service arrives, Miranda starts talking.

Miranda: *Just drop it there. We've done pretty well, haven't we, Jason?*

With the whole room service issue. Cos it can feel awkward, can't it?

Somebody coming in to deliver a meal that you don't know, when you're in pyjamas. I mean, imagine if I turned up at your house and walked into your bedroom with a plate of food?

Jason: *Please don't do that.*

Miranda: *No, no, I won't! I was just saying it's a sort of weirdly intimate scenario, isn't it? I was a bit worried that the room might smell. But I'm told that my natural smell - because we've all got them - is lemons. So... I don't know what your smell is. (Smells Jason) Boyish, yet manly! There's a chance I've got verbal diarrhoea because I've been on my own for a while.*

Verbal diarrhoea is a term for someone who talks continuously or too much. Miranda used this idiom because she realized what she was doing. She became a person that speaks their mind without any filter and the consequences could be profoundly funny or insulting to the person listening.

CONCLUSION

This bachelor thesis focuses on the analysis of selected features of speech style of main character of the British television series *Miranda*, which was broadcast in 2009 - 2015 on the BBC. For the analysis, I chose three criteria, according to which I analyzed Miranda's idiolect: phonetic and lexical features as well as verbal humor strategies. In fact, Miranda uses a variety of linguistic resources to create humorous effect, and phonetic and lexical features of her speech largely contribute to it.

The analysis showed that Miranda builds her character on the principles of traditional British humour through the body jokes to sexual innuendo or criticism of social classes. She uses the variety of accents to create humorous effect or to imitate someone. At the same time, she adheres to the Received Pronunciation as she is using the long sound /ɑ:/ or /ɜ:/. She also uses French words that sound more classy and thus more 'posh'. Miranda also uses old-English words a lot. The thing that I noticed during the analysis is, that Miranda doesn't use typical British black humor.

It can be said that the idiolect of Miranda played by the famous British comedian Miranda Hart, has the following features: she uses various types of accents, words of various origin or sexually intended jokes. Her style is also based on idioms or jokes of cultural references. However she uses jokes about her body most of the time. Her speech style is very unique and brave. Miranda uses not only words of British origin. According to the analysis, Miranda proved her knowledge of Italian, Spanish and especially French words.

The best humour in *Miranda*, however, comes from Hart's love of wordplay. Specific words or phrases that just happen to sound funny. Miranda is cut from a very specific, very white, very straight corner of the whole British society. Her handling of race and sexuality isn't great. According to her, the boarding school is to blame, where also her classy friends come from. Despite all the embarrassment and the awkward situation, Miranda still manages to be herself, which we should appreciate.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation 1: S - stands for the season..... 21

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