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A Cognitive Linguistic Approach of Verbal  
Irony in “*The Nut Job*” through Berger’s  
(2014) Humor Techniques

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# A Cognitive Linguistic Approach of Verbal Irony in “*The Nut Job*” through Berger’s (2014) Humor Techniques

## Abstract

This research conducts a cognitive linguistic analysis of humorous techniques in "*The Nut Job*" which discusses some themes regarding unity, friendship, selfishness, and searching for power. Davis (2019) points out that humor contributes to understanding social, political, ironical, and satirical attitudes. Thereupon, the current research adopts the theoretical framework of Berger (2014) which sheds light upon irony, satire, parallelism, and paradox as elements of humorous techniques. Furthermore, the study adopts a multimodal analysis since it combines syntactic manipulations with literary devices in "*The Nut Job*". More clearly, this multimodal approach detects phraseological and clausal levels in attaining irony, satire, paradox, and repetition. Methodologically, the research follows a quantitative–qualitative approach. Data is collected from the "*The Nut Job*". The study concludes that irony, paradox, satire, and repetition are triggered by NPs, VPs, and AdjPs. Furthermore, the syntactic complementations of the uncertainty verb "think" attain some themes of "*The Nut Job*".

**Keywords:** Humor, Linguistics, Berger, Irony, Syntactic Categories, Multimodal, Phraseology, Clause.

## 1. Introduction

Berger (1995) points out that humor is a simple message involving those who are responsible for generating the message and those who tend to receive it. Besides, it can be transmitted via different forms within diverse contexts. Kuczok et al., (2020) stipulate that humor is a communicative way and a categorical interaction. Thereupon, humor is a phenomenon which is introduced within various methods and diverse environments. Its importance lies in that it is an essential part of human lives; as such, it can be existent everywhere. Humor succeeds in connecting people, entertaining, alleviating a lot of emotional distress, and helping one to go through hard times.

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Humor can be restricted in accordance with some criteria. Chiaro (1996) observes that the concept of what make people laugh or smile, is actually surrounded by lot of different boundaries, which are formulated in geographical, linguistic, sociocultural, and diachronic different factors which influences both one's intelligibility and his personal preferentiality of humor. These boundaries may tackle humor understandability in case it is discarded away from the society from which it originates (Autio, 2021).

## **2. The World of Disney**

González (2017) observes that amusement, laughter, and entertainment are appropriate to specify and define humorous techniques. These attributes are available within many animations which contribute to making people smile: either children or adults. One of the most famous animations, all over the world, is the World of Disney holding a unique place in many people's hearts (Davis, 2019). Successfully, Disney provides stories and fairy tales from life; it makes up original stories which the audience admire. For example, *Mickey Mouse* and *Tom and Jerry* are iconic famous cartoons which both adults and children love.

Disney is interested in many features. Firstly, Disney's stylish animation is featured by certain exaggerations (Thomas and Johnston, 1981). Secondly, Disney influences the way people see and understand animation (Dobson, 2009). In addition, Disney animations succeed in communicating with diverse generations, genders, ethnicities, nationalities, and religions (Selby, 2013). More clearly, the world of Disney echoes with many appeals to lots of people from diverse cultures and different backgrounds.

## **3. Multidimensional Approach of Humor in Animation**

Animated films, usually, are acknowledged to be funny (Wells, 2016); comedy is an optimal method and an ideal ground for expressive animation (Goldmark and Keil, 2011). In Disney animations, humor and comedic properties are included in diverse degrees. The notion of the current research is introduced for demonstrating the syntactic importance, as a linguistic branch, in decoding the intended utterances of irony indirectly within "*The Nut Job*". Therefore, the research adopts a multimodal (Bateman

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et al., 2017) approach in which some humorous techniques are investigated and detected through some syntactic manipulations.

Some different imageries are configured through this multimodal approach (Wells, 2016). This eclectic approach includes a spoken language, written texts, general soundscapes, and some different imageries: kinesthetic, tactile, or auditory. Accordingly, studying media requires a multimodal approach; in other words, data analysis is pertinent to visual, verbal, and occasionally auditory domains through phraseological and clausal features which facilitate both the message and the meaning to be simply comprehended (Kuczok et al., 2020).

#### **4. Statement of the Problem**

Humor is not only a vehicle of making people laugh but also it hides a lot of meanings behind lines. Bloomfield (1926) points out that a sentence is a formidable linguistic unit. In addition, writers use their linguistic creativity to deliver their messages directly or indirectly. Some keywords within texts are highlighted since they imply a great deal of a great meaning. This is why, the current research tries to explore, some humorous techniques which are used in specific utterances that cannot be configured inadequately. These utterances are prevalent in animations under consideration.

In "*The Nut Job*", the language is used in a way that makes the reader laugh; however, he/she is cannot facilitate the idea. In other words, meanings are clearly detected on the deep lines. Accordingly, this research sheds light upon the syntactic role of interpreting these humorous technique features. For example, Mole admits Surly's banishment of their Liberty Park. Ironically, the NP "Liberty park" denotes the animals stupidity since it infers a paradoxical content absolutely. In other words, paradoxical and ironical attitudes are allocated through a phraseological level.

#### **5. Limitations of the Study**

Language can be used as a vehicle with the aim of sending and receiving messages of what goes on and surrounds people to communicate, to solve, to respond, to hear, or to listen (Sapir, 1929). Accordingly, the current

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research is limited to analyzing an eclectic approach which combines the use of dialogic discourse in the form of a linguistic analysis applied to literary form shaped in prose. Thereupon, the current research examines humor through Berger's (2014) humorous techniques through linguistic manipulations in one of Disney animation.

The current research is restricted to a linguistic analysis of detecting irony in "*The Nut Job*" through Berger's (2014) typology of humor techniques. Linguistically, Berger's (2014) model conforms to the current research owing to its comprehensibility since it includes irony, satire, allusion, paradox, parallelisms, and repetition. This analysis is accomplished through analyzing phraseological and clausal levels found in the text to address some different themes such as self-deception, seeking for power and selfishness. Linguistically, some extracts are taken to conform to its comprehensibility to the framework of Berger's (2014) humorous techniques.

## **6. The Importance of the Study**

This research is essential; it helps the researcher of literature and linguistics to acknowledge how both domains are correlated for complementing each other. Thereby, the present research is a trial to arouse a literature researcher's interest for providing himself with the knowledge and tools that enable him to prove successfulness in the linguistic domain. The reason behind analyzing this animation is that there are some similarities between animals and humans since they are included in a main plot and a subplot. Both settings and circumstances of each plot share lots of similarities in many ways. Both incidents reflect a fictional world which is characterized by selfishness and self-deception. Characters, in both realms, share many common characterizations; furthermore, the places seem identical. In addition, these two plots are similar in a striking way.

## **7. Research Objectives and Questions (ROQs)**

The study aims to demonstrate the following points:

- To demonstrate the linguistic role of the uncertainty verb "think" and its complementation.
- To describe satirical tendencies between animals and humans.

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## 8. Former Studies Related to the Current Research

This section is pertinent to demonstrating some previous studies which are associated with detecting humor through linguistic devices. Saude (2018) conducts a linguistic analysis of verbal humor via the text of "*The Onion*". The study follows Raskin's (2011) General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH). The GTVH is a considerable broadening of the semiotic script theoretical Humor (SSTH). The GTVH is mainly composed of five knowledge resource which are narrative, language, situation, strategy, target, and logical mechanisms. The study follows a descriptive–qualitative approach. Furthermore, data is collected from twenty articles from *The Onion* through its official website from January to April in 2018. The study adopts the bottom–up theory of Attardo (2001). The study reveals that the lexical and sentential scripts can be explored for the identification of the essential meaningful jokes. To conclude, knowledge resources are valid for analyzing texts in accordance with contextual knowledge.

Hussein (2020) conducts a linguistic analysis of COVID-19 humor associated with Jordanian social media through a social semiotic approach. The study adopts the framework of Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic approach as a multimodal one. It is associated with demonstrating representational, interactive, and compositional processes according to Halliday's (1978) systemic-functional grammar (SFG). There are six processes: material, relational, metal, behavioral, existential, and verbal. The study adopts a quantitative-qualitative approach. Data is collected from an online questionnaire through the survey platform of Microsoft. There are 1274 collected responses. Participants are selected according to employment, age, gender, and their daily exploration of social media. Humorous techniques are mainly pertinent to the relational processes which contains 50% of the entire processes formulated in the copulative verb "be". The study concludes that humor can be triggered and stimulated through some lexical and grammatical pattern so as to reduce the feeling of fear and tensions.

Autio (2021) conducts a linguistic analysis of humor in Disney animation. The study adopts a multimodal approach in three animations.

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Multimodality means the characterization of some communicative situations relying upon different combinations i.e. it consists of spoken language, written texts, and visual imagery (Wells, 2016). The study follows a quantitative-qualitative approach. Data is collected from *Aladdin* (1992), *Lion King* (1994), and *Mulan* (1998). In addition, the study explores Berger's (1997) technical typologies of humor combined with Jaecle's (2013) methodology of dialogic discourse including multimodal discursive interaction. The research transcribes the required extracts for analysis. The study reveals that audio visual medium is a considerable appropriate method of attracting audience either children or adults. The study concludes that humor can be linguistically made so as to demonstrate different themes in the three animations.

To conclude, the former studies reveal that there is a possibility of combining more than one approach altogether to demonstrate some different humorous techniques tendency through linguistic structures.

## **9. Theoretical Framework**

This section sheds light upon the different theories pertaining to humor classifications. According to (González, 2017), there are tri-theoretical domains explaining humorous mechanisms. Only Conceptual Integration Theory (CIT) and Berger's Humorous techniques are configured. Furthermore, some phraseological and clausal structures are demonstrated.

### **9.1 Conceptual Integration Theory (CIT)**

CIT is, mainly, introduced by Fauconnier and Turner (1998, 2002). It explains how to create meaningful humor. Also, it introduces humor as an essential tool of satirizing reality (Dzanic and Berberovic, 2010). Humor is of a great concern for linguists, who are interested in cognitive linguistics (Coulson, 2000). Cognitive linguists claim that Attardo's (1994) the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH), developed from Raskin's (1985) SSTH, leaves some unanswered questions. This, in turn, emphasizes the advantages of analyzing humor within a theoretical approach of cognitive linguistics.

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In other words, the humorous linguistic theory together with CIT can provide answers to the questions. This theory can help to identify how humorous techniques are created, understood, and appreciated. Moreover, it explains why humor can be used as an effective tool of satirizing reality. CIT is regarded as an influential process providing human-scale understandability, global insight, and the new meaning (Fauconnier and Turner, 2002). In other words, CIT is a fundamental cognitive process operating over a CI network, comprising mental relationships holding between them (Dzanic & Berberovic, 2010).

The set-up of an integrated network requires the formulation of mental spaces, conformability within spaces, projection to a blend, allocation mutual structures, recruitment new structures to the blend or the inputs, and running diverse operations in the blend proper (Fauconnier and Turner, 2002). More clearly, mental spaces, upon which blended integration theory is built, are processes of building conceptual scenes and scenarios according to thinking and talking (Oakley and Pascual, 2017). They add that human minds build up meaning through the construction, connection and integration of these mental spaces (Oakley and Pascual, 2017). Accordingly, the basic principle of conceptual blending is to compress what is inherently diffuse and decompress what is inherently condense.

A CIT consists of generic and blended spaces. As for the generic space, it identifies the mutual elements of both inputs; furthermore, these elements are demarcated into the counterpart elements in the input space (Dzanic, 2013). A single network includes blended spaces and diverse inputs. Explicitly, most elements, from the inputs, are excluded from being projected into the blend. That is, the apparent structure, in the blended space, is not cloned from either input. The neo-generated structure, within the blend, is allocated in three ways: composing, completing and elaborating which all, unconsciously, operate (Dzanic, 2013).

Linguists claim that this theory can explicate broad variances of phenomena either linguistic or non-linguistic. Accordingly, it can be very effective in its application to humor. Moreover, Coulson (2000) states that



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most blends are not humorous; however, it is an inherent feature of humor. Incongruity is a fundamental element in creating and appreciating humor. This theory is, successfully, applied to different types of humorous textual techniques; it can explicate how to construct and appreciate meaning. Moreover, it explains why absurdities are criticized in the real world. This means that humorous techniques are created in a mentally-complicated operation of CIT.

In CIT, humor can be generated in the blended space owing to a cognitive clash of real and absurd worlds. The incongruity generates humorous effects; it is a characteristic of humorous blends. Simply, this theory accounts for the reason for human's laughter. Moreover, Dzanic (2013) points out that the fundamental element of creating humor, is the congruity generated in the blended space, prompting people to go back to the inputs to resolve incongruity (Dzanic, 2013). He adds that the viewer necessitates to unpack the blend and construct the input spaces, again, which proceed upon the cues verbally and visually explored in the text.

## **9.2 The Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH)**

SSTH is, mainly, explored by Raskin (1983), shedding light upon the idea of scripts to describe the production process of two or more interpretations regarding a humorous text. In addition, each joke needs two paradoxical scripts to demonstrate an incongruous and humorous opposition. The lexeme 'script' is a structured chunk of information about world parts. In other words, scripts are some informatively-organized pieces associated with something cognitively-structured and internalized by the speaker, formulating information on how things are accomplished (Attardo, 1994). The SSTH is, mainly, summed upon two paradoxical necessary and sufficient conditions for a text to be funny:

- A) Each joke, at least, contains two fully partially interpreted scripts.
- b) The two scripts must be paradoxical such as real /unreal, normal/abnormal, possible/ impossible. The SSTH major premise is that the two paradoxical interpretations are accomplished from a joke; both are scripts. These interpretations occur owing to a certain word or phrase. There

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is a favored interpretation which is placed or set according to a textual part, influenced by the revelation of the joke. The meaningful differences of the two interpretations lead to incongruity allocated in its determined opposition.

### **9.3 The General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH)**

GTVH is, fundamentally, developed by Attardo and Raskin's (1991) as an elaboration of the SSTH. In other words, it is a more sophisticated linguistic humorous theory. To clarify, it explicates the semantic efforts beyond humorous techniques.

### **9.4 Berger's Humorous Techniques**

Berger argues that all of the preceding theories are inadequate simply because the method of generating humor is the more universal aspect that should be the focus of humor theories (Berger, 2014). He believes that all theories of humor are inconclusive and limited. In addition, humor theories have to stop trying to know why people laugh and should rather investigate what makes them laugh (Ahmed, 2019). This justifies Berger's glossary of 45 techniques of generating humor that relies on congruity in language, logic and identity (Berger,1995). This classification is the most comprehensive as it presents content analysis of all humorous types in various media. Complex nature of humor makes different techniques operate at the same time although one mechanism may be more dominant than others. The following table demonstrates Berger's Linguistic Devices of Humor:

**Table 1 Berger's Linguistic Devices of Humor (2014)**

<b>Language</b>	<b>Identity</b>	<b>Logic</b>	<b>Action</b>
Allusion	Before/after	Absurdity	Chase
Bombast	Burlesque	Accident	Speed
Definition	Caricature	Analogy	Slapstick
Eccentricity	Catalogue	Exaggeration	

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Embarrassment	Coincidence	Facetiousness	
Exposure	Comparison	Insult	
Grotesque	Disappointment	Infantilism	
Imitation	Ignorance	Irony	
Impersonation	Mistakes	Misunderstanding	
Mimicry	Repetition	over literalness	
Parody	Reversal	Pun/wordplay	
Scale	Rigidity	Repartee	
Stereotypes	Theme/ variation	Ridicule	
Sarcasm		Unmasking	
Satire			

**Allusion** is the bread and butter of everyday humor (Berger, 1993). It is something suggested and not stated overtly; thus, the listener/reader tries to make a link between the target text and the source one to get the intended meaning (Autio, 2021). **Catalogue** is a humorous technique that uses nonsense, funny names, and different types of incongruity (Berger, 1993). **Exaggeration** is expressing something in an excessive manner to make it more noticeable or better or worse than it really is (Berger, 1997; Roshdy, 2022)..

**Irony** is usually saying something and meaning the opposite or pretending ignorance to make another person's false ideas more obvious (Berger, 1997). **Misunderstanding** is a linguistic phenomenon which implies miscommunications between characters as part of comic errors. Berger defines it as an incorrect interpretation of something that has been said

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(1997). **Pun** and **wordplay** represent one of the most famous techniques by one linguistic item which signifies two meanings or uses the different meanings of a word in an amusing way.

**Repetition** is a simple repeated pattern. It is regarded as one of the most common devices appearing in several movies and texts. It adds drama to a situation and makes people laugh (Roshdy, 2022). **Sarcasm** implies the use of 'biting' remarks, presented in a hostile manner (Berger, 2017, p. 49). It can be recognized through the tone of its delivery. **Satire** is a literary form of humor which pokes fun at those in power. It points out the foolishness of others and suggests some alternative ways that would better serve the status quo (Berger, 1997). It is a criticism of the cultural and traditional beliefs of a society.

## 9.5 Syntactic Categories

Leech and Short (2007) observe that grammatical categories are categorized into eight points as demonstrated hereby:

- 1) **Sentence complexity** includes both complex sentences, dependent and independent clauses, complex sentential variety, co-ordinations, subordination.
- 2) **Sentence type** in which the writer uses certain sentential types: declarative, questions, minor sentence or exclamations.
- 3) **Clause types** include nominal, adverbial, relative, finite or non-finite clauses.
- 4) **Clause structure** includes objects frequency, complements, transitivity and intransitivity.
- 5) **Noun phrases** includes either simple or complex nouns. It also determines location of modifiers through a prepositional phrase or a relative clause.
- 6) **Verb phrases** includes tenses either simple or compound. Also, it allocates linking or action verbs.
- 7) **Other phrases types:** it includes adverbial, prepositional, and adjectival phrase.
- 8) **Word classes:** It includes both content and function words.

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## 10. Methodologies

This section is concerned with research designation and data collection stages. Research designation sets up the study framework which formulates the researcher's layout for his notions (Kerlinger, 1973). The current research adopts a quantitative-qualitative approach. A quantitative research is associated with statistics and numerations. However, qualitative research sheds light upon specifying and reporting the way in which things are formulated (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). This design is conformable to the current research since it mainly highlights the description of some certain themes existent in some extracts of "*The Nut Job*" within the framework of Berger's (2014) humorous techniques. Leech and Short (2007) point out that there are four main categories placed within four general headings: lexical categories, grammatical categories, figures of speech, and text and cohesion. The current study addresses all the four heading except for cohesion.

As for data collection, there are two stages. The first of which is the content selection which demonstrates conformability of humor relation to animations through some linguistic patterns. The researcher downloads the script from the internet. Consequently, she specifies some extracts which configure certain humorous techniques, relating it with some syntactic manipulations. Thereupon, the text of "*The Nut Job*" is the most appropriate one as it conforms of demonstrating some irony and satire within the animation movie.

The frequency use of different linguistic techniques is to be computed so as to establish the appropriate strategies used in the Berger's (2014) humor techniques. Such an analysis helps the researcher to attain the answers of both questions which are stated in the ROQs.

## 11. A Plot Summary of The Nut Job

It is a 2014 computer-animated comedy film directed by Peter Lepeniotis. Some animals live in Liberty Park. A squirrel called Surly accidentally destroys their winter food supply of nuts. Accordingly, Raccoon, the leader of animals, banishes him to the streets of Oakton city. Buddy, a mute rat, refuses to leave Surly alone, accompanying him. Surly and Buddy

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find a nut store, in city. They plan to rob the nuts to feed themselves. They do not know that the shop is a hideout place for criminals: King, Fingers, and Lucky. These criminals plan to rob the next-door bank. They want to replace money with nuts. At this time, Raccoon sends Grayson, the park's hero, and Andie to find food for the park.

Nonetheless, they are separated because of Grayson's fighting with a rat. Precious, a female dog, works as a guard for nut shop; she fears from whistle. Thereupon, Surly and Buddy decide to get the whistle to threaten Precious to help them in their robbery of nuts. Andie meets them and gets the whistle. Andie agrees to give Surly the whistle only for one condition namely to share the park nuts fifty-fifty; Surly, reluctantly, agrees. Knowing the robbery plan, Raccoon refuses to give Surly his share. He insists on betraying him till they get the nuts and deprive him of his share. Raccoon's true bad intentions are revealed: he wants to control the park for ever by keeping food away from animals. He declares his motto: little food, more power.

Andie tells Surly the entire truth of Raccoon's betrayal. At this time, animals with Andie dig a tunnel to get nuts to the park. Raccoon sends Mole to sabotage their tunnel by flooding it and by drowning the Twins. Altogether, Surly and Grayson save the animals. Mole reveals Raccoon's bad intentions to his friends; however, they do not believe him. Surly hurts Buddy's feelings in front of their friends which stimulates Buddy to leave him and go with the other animals. Surly is captured by the criminals; nevertheless, he is released by Precious' friend Lana. He gets his share of nuts, but street rats, working for Raccoon, capture him. Grayson meets Surly who tells him of a way to save the team and to get nuts to a safe place. Animals meet Raccoon who tells lies about Surly, the accused of treason.

Raccoon locks animals up in one truck of two trucks used by the criminals. The trucks carry both money and nuts which are pursued by the police. Grayson and Surly, with the pigeons' help, rescue their friends who are locked in the van. Mole appears and reveals Raccoon's lies and betrayals in front of all animals. The trucks fall into the river. Raccoon tries to throw Surly in the river. Surly sacrifices himself to rescue his friends and sinks in the river with Raccoon. Animals see this scene themselves. They feel sorry

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for Surly who appears as a hero and not as a selfish one as they think of him before.

The food, in water, makes its way to the park. They take it in joy; however, Andie and Buddy feel extremely sorry for Surly's death. Precious finds Surly's apparent dead body beside the river. She comes with Buddy to say good bye to him; nonetheless, they discover that he is alive. Andie embraces him and asks him to come and tell the park of his heroic actions. He refuses to do this and tells her that he is going to bring food to the park for ever; nonetheless, he will not live in the park. Buddy says his first two words best friend. The movie ends with animals dancing 'Gangam style'.

The next section is associated with the analysis, manifestation, and interpretation of data.

## **12.Data Analysis , Manifestation, and Interpretation**

Data analysis is associated with demonstrating humor through some literary linguistic devices. It configures humor through satire, irony, and parallelisms.

### **Extract (1):**

**Surly:** Yes! You were there. I was! Wait... Where? You think it was me, don't you? No! No one said that. Just explain yourself. Buddy, did you see anything? Wait, you're asking him? He can't help you. You're wasting your time! He's useless! Can't speak!

Only knows how to take orders! Kinda like you, Andie. (P. 66)

This extract uses satire and insulting as techniques of creating humor. This scene revolves around the reality of saving the Twins and how Surly contributes to the process of saving; however, the animals do not believe him; he wants to recall Buddy as a witness of his good deeds when he catches Mole flooding the tunnel with water. He asks Buddy as the only witness; nonetheless, he cannot answer because he is mute. Grayson says that he is useless. The use of the negative suffix “-less” increases the hyperbolic tone of satire; in other words, the morphological structure of the adjectival phrase contributes to the satirical feature of Buddy. Another scene describes the

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insulting and the satirical approach between Surly and the Raccoon as shown hereby:

**SURLY:** That's not his face. (SCREAMS) So, you're the mole, double entendre intended!

**MOLE:** Nah, I'm a chicken.

**SURLY:** I saw you sabotage our tunnel. Was it Raccoon? Talk! Hey, you want me to hurt him? Keep a lookout. (SIGHS) Yeah, boss. Do your worst. Go on!

**MOLE:** I am a sealed vault, resistant to questioning. A tough nut to crack. A concrete pillar. A jar with a... (SCREAMING) My retinas! Raccoon's trying to stop the heist! I'm not buying it. (SCREAMING)

**SURLY:** Less food means more control! If the heist succeeds, Raccoon will lose control of the park! But so what? You don't care about the park, do you? I don't. But when I tell the team, I'll get double.

**RACCOON:** You think they'll believe a criminal like you? After what I did for them? Oh, they'll listen. Yeah, don't kid yourself.

This scene occurs when Mole informs the Raccoon about Surly's plan to get into the store to take the nuts. In addition, they dig a tunnel. Raccoon tell Mole to go and to flood the tunnel with water. However, Surly observes Mole when he opens the tap. On being monitored, he tries to escape, but Surly catches him confessing that Raccoon plans to damage their plan. Raccoon follows all incidents with his dirty rats. Surly is caught and Raccoon begins to inquire him sarcastically.

It is clear that phonological cadence plays an essential role in the phrase "double entendre intended" which is transcribed as /dʌbəl intendər intendid/. It is monitored that there is a well division of cadence within the speech. Such a division alludes to the satirical status. In other words, the weak-sighted mole cannot do anything on his own. However, Mole defends



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himself within the predicative complement "a chicken" inferring his cowardice. When Surly catches Mole, he intelligently expects that Mole takes his orders from Raccoon.

Mole, sarcastically, insults himself when he says that he is "a sealed vault". The use of the v-ed adjective emphasizes his tiny closed size in comparison to the other animals although he is one of the most skillful rodents. On the auditory imagery of screaming, Mole confesses that Raccoon intends to destroy the plan. Suddenly, Surly begins to acknowledge matters; he realizes that Raccoon wants to destroy all the animals. In a linguistic structure of dependent and independent clauses, Surly can, successfully, dethrone Raccoon from the presidency of the animals. Again, Surly implements his intelligence of informing the animals about Raccoon's bad intentions through the time conjunction "when" in "But when I tell the team, I'll get double." In other words, the only way of Surly's reaching his hope is to use tactics especially with dependent and independent clause. The use of time and conditional clauses contributes to his dominance of the animals.

Nonetheless, suddenly, Raccoon appears with his rats, catching Surly. In a cunning laughter, Raccoon insults and satirizes Surly through a thread of interrogations. Linguistically, the first interrogation denotes the high ability of Raccoon's elliptical "that" complementizer. In other words, Raccoon persuades himself that Surly is a criminal which is adjacent by the simile. The second interrogation expresses the selfish attitude in which the first person singular "I" is explored. The use of "Oh" indicates Raccoon's absolute confidence of himself ; it is followed by the auditory imagery of the intransitive verb "listen" which needs a lot of efforts from the animal to listen carefully. All these disappointments and accusations orientated for Surly are attained through the negative mood of the imperative structure of "don't kid yourself". Such a structure identifies Raccoon's sarcastic tone towards Surly.

**Extract (2):**

**Surly: Raccoon! That guy, he's a bigger thief than I am!  
But those blockheads can't see it. They're blind as Mole. I'm**

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**the brains of this outfit. I'm the guy with the... The brains. Did I already say that? Raccoon's nothing but a lying old sack of fur!**

This scene expresses a high sarcastic tone of Surly against Raccoon. In a moment of frankness, Andie declares that Raccoon wants to fool Surly and deceit him. However, Surly is not surprised on hearing such words because he knows Raccoon and his bad mischievous deeds already. The major problem for Surly is that animals cannot believe him; thereupon, he begins to insult and satirizes both Raccoon and the animals. This satirical tendency is accomplished through some syntactic devices. Firstly, the use of the comparative form of the adjectival phrase "big" indicates the sarcastic tone. In addition, the use of the comparative clause portrays the comparison and the hyperbolic attitude between Surly and Raccoon. That is to say, the comparative adjective is attributed to the NP "thief" i.e. the NP "a bigger thief" expresses the scope of Raccoon's and his defame.

Surly is sad and disappointed through the paradoxical conjunction "but" which is followed by a sarcastic structure when all animals are described as "blockheads" indicating their naivety and stupidity. In addition, Surly admits such reality by the negative structure of the modal "can't" which infers their disabilities. Consequently, Surly resumes his satirical tone through the copulative structure of "They are blind as Mole" which contains the simile. The third person singular plural denotes the animals. However, they are predicatively described as "blind" to conform to the preceding negative structure of the modal verb "can't". Furthermore, his disappointment is completely accomplished when he resembles them in their stupidity to Mole who has weak-sighted rodent.

**Extract (3):**

**Raccoon:** Have you forgotten my motto? "Animals are controlled by the amount of food they have."

This scene takes place when Raccoon informs Mole about the way through which animals should be treated. Regarding such a structure, Raccoon wants to remind Mole of his famous motto. In other words, the

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passive structure of "Animals are controlled by the amount of food" is the motto of dictatorship. Furthermore, there is an allusion of Napoleon's characters in Orwell's "*Animal Farm*". To clarify, Raccoon's character and his behaviors in *The Nut Job*, to somehow, resembles Napoleon, the pig in *Animal Farm*. In *Animal Farm*, Napoleon takes over the animals as he is the greatest leader; however, he is a liar and does many things violating the commandments upon which they agree. In *The Nut Job*, Raccoon has the same manner; in other words, he deceives all the animals and wants to convince them that he is a loyal animal; however, Surly wants to destroy and deceive them all the time.

Furthermore, the phonological structure of both names identify similarity; that is to say, Napoleon is pronounced in a way in which the second syllable of /nəpəʊljən/ takes the primary stress of the three syllables; however, the word raccoon /ræku:n/ is prominently pronounced with the primary stress on the second syllable. Although they are different in their syllabic numeration, they agree to each other with the voiced alveolar nasal /n/ as it locates as the coda of both words.

**Extract (4):**

**SURLY:** When you're an animal, life's a balancing act. Each day is a quest to find food to survive. It's a tough nut to crack.

This is the opening scene of the animation movie in which Surly is peaking to himself about life. He describes life as a challenge in which animals should fight to find food. In the last sentence, he admits that light is metaphorically embodied in its hardships as it is resembled to a nut. Such analogy contributes to the ironic and the selfish viewpoint of Surly; however, at the end of story, Surly changes completely as shown below:

**GRAYSON:** I'm gonna keep finding food for this park. But from now on, we do it together. Deal? This park will always honor your deals, Surly.

**SURLY:** Yeah, they say life's there for the taking, but the truth is, life's really there for the sharing. Huh. Once you realize that,

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you might discover there's a little hero in all of us. After all, we're all a little nuts.

This structure emphasizes the notion of conceptual surprise; in other words, there is a total transformation from a certain viewpoint to another. At first, Surly is a selfish squirrel loving himself only, refusing to provide his hand with any kind of help to any other animal. Even if his loyal friend “Buddy”, he always scorns him. Many times, he refuse to hug Buddy although he loves Surly more than himself. The use of the contradictory conjunction “but” identifies what Berger asserts “incongruity” in which paradoxical attitudes are apparent owing to certain situations. Furthermore, the use of probability indicates that Surly begins to realize matters around him via the mono-transitive verb “discover” which evokes exploration and adventure. The dummy axillary “there” encourages all animals to be heroes in themselves. In other words, Surly admits and realizes his own identity when he uses the first person plural and emphasized by the quantifier “all”. The use of “little nuts” indicates tiny and easily-caught preys; however, his admittance of adventure and transformation ascertains incongruity.

**Extract (5):**

**SURLY: It was Mole. I saw him try to drown the twins. He confessed to everything.**

**Animals:** Mole?

**SURLY:** It was all Raccoon's idea.

**Animals:** So, you're blaming Raccoon because he kicked you out of the park.

**SURLY:** No, I'm not.

**Animals:** Raccoon has never harmed us before.

**SURLY:** But he sure has!

This scene describes meeting of Surly with the animals when he catches Mole drowning the tunnel in a trial from Raccoon to damage their plan of stealing the nuts. Ironically, all the animals misunderstand Raccoon. They think that he is good and honest. Nevertheless, he is selfish and thirsty for power and control. They believe him when he tells them that Surly is

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deceiving them. In a parallel structure, humans also misunderstand King who deceives them. Surly wants to persuade them of Raccoon's reality. At first, Surly uses the past tense to nominate Mole as the criminal and the responsible for drowning the tunnel. In addition, he witnesses the action from the very beginning through the structure of the non-finite form of "try to drown the Twins".

They get surprised. When Surly tells them it has been Raccoon's idea, they foolishly regard his situation as a compensation of his psychological inferiority. They justify such accusations as a reaction of Surly's dismissal and banishment. More foolishly, the animals use the mono-transitive verb "blame" in its progressive tense to render any apology for Raccoon; they do not prefer to use the mono-transitive verb "accuse". Consequently, the use of the conjunction of reason "because" justifies the cause of Surly's reproach. Furthermore, the mono-transitive verb "kick" identifies Surly's feeling of humility through a kinesthetic imagery. They resume to defend Raccoon in the use of the absolute negation through "never". The first person plural "us" is allocated in its accusative case to admit the loyalty and fidelity. This meeting leads Surly to be disappointed when all animals refuse to believe him. They ironically lead themselves to the entrapment.

**Extract (6):**

**SURLY: This is my punishment, Buddy.**

**Raccoon: All those in favor of banishment, raise your paws!**

**- Banishment? Banishment?**

**Animals: Bandages? Yes, please.**

One of the most striking features of humorous techniques is wordplay; in other words, the former extract revolves around the trial of Surly in which he is liable either to be banished or to be punished. Some animals advocate the Surly's dismissal away from the animals. In other words, he is to be exiled. However, some other animals advocate the idea of bandages. That is to say, they want him to be hurt from Raccoon since the NP "bandages" means a lot of bleeding and wounds. The word "banishment"

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identifies harmfulness and homelessness since it is adjacent to the command of Raccoon “raise your paws”. The word “paws” located as the direct object of the mono-transitive verb “raise”. The word “paws” expresses sharpness and brutality which equals the form of dismissal and banishment. However, some other animals want to harm Surly through the poly-syllabic word “bandage”. In spite of all these, Surly tells Buddy that he is homeless; in addition, such a homeless animal is the most brutal degree of punishment. To clarify the three words are equal in their syllables since everyone is composed of three syllables. However, their meanings are diverse in accordance with their contexts.

**Extract (7):**

**RACCOON:** Well, what do we have here? A hero or a thief?

**SURLY:** You think you can starve the park to stay in control? Mole told me everything.

This scene describes the status of Surly, when being caught by Raccoon and his Rats, on a trial of stopping flooding the tunnel. Raccoon catches him. Suddenly, Raccoon begins to heap lots of accusations to Surly. Furthermore, Raccoon begins to ask him some questions. Ironically, Surly begins to realize matters around him through the uncertainty verb “think” which is followed by embedded clauses. In a sequence of the most ironical scenes, the gang wants to explode the end of the tunnel to get into the bank. In a trial of readiness for the explosion, they begin to descend their numeration from ten to one. In the same time, Surly asks Raccoon some ironic questions included by the uncertainty verb “think” as demonstrated hereby:

**RACCOON: How many leaders do you think this park can have? Three, two... One!**

One of the most essential notations in the story is that the verb “think” is repeated seventeen times in its imperfective form; however, it is mentioned only once in its perfective form. In three positions, the uncertainty

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verb is allocated to identify irony between Raccoon and Surly as shown below:

- 1) You think they'll believe a criminal like you?
- 2) You think you can starve the park to stay in control?
- 3) How many leaders do you think this park can have?

It is explicit that the three structures are included in the interrogative form; however, in the three former structures, the uncertainty verb is followed by embedded clauses. In (1), the interrogative form indicates Raccoon's ironical attitude towards Surly through the embedded clause which contains the modal "Will". Raccoon sets his plan to fool Surly in case he wants to tell them any news of what he has seen. In other words, he discards the any futuristic plans of Surly. More clearly, the use of the NP "a criminal" evokes a lot of fury inside Surly which is complemented by the trans-active simile "like you". In (2), Surly knows Raccoon's intentions of dominating the park. The uncertainty verb "think" is followed by an embedded clause containing the modal "can" indicating ability and capacity which is followed by the infinitive phrase "to stay" to express Raccoon's probable dominations.

However, in (3), Raccoon wants to learn Surly an absolute truth through asking him about the numbers of leaders in the park. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> structure, Raccoon discards any category of modality; however, he uses the dummy auxiliary "do" to admit facts. Although Raccoon knows the answer, he wants Surly to say his name; however, Surly knows Raccoon's treason of the animals before his eyes on seeing Mole flood the tunnel.

There are some diverse imageries within "*The Nut Job*": olfactory, tactile, kinesthetic, and visual. Olfactory imagery is motivated and triggered by the presence of the verb "smell" in more than one position as shown below:

**Grayson:** I'm smelling for any sign of that rascal, Surly Squirrel.

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According to the former structure, Grayson indicates his smells sensation through tracing Surly when Andie asks him about his sudden stopping. He tells her that he smells something like a squirrel or a rat. Grayson emphasizes the tactile imagery through the mono-transitive verb "touch" which is mentioned four times along the story as demonstrated below:

**Grayson:** You can admire the tail, but no touching.

**Grayson:** Okay, stop touching the tail. Stop touching. Stop touching the tail!

It is explicit that the mono-transitive verb "touch" is repeated four times in its gerundive form; all of which are indicted by Grayson who considers himself the hero and the savior.

**Extract (8):**

**MOLE:** By the authority granted by Raccoon and the park community... Oh! This is too high... Surly Squirrel is hereby banished to the city, never to return to our beloved Liberty Park.

Repetition is a linguistic technique which is sometimes called parallelism (Jackobson, 1960). In *The Nut Job*, the NP "park" is repeated 46 times; the NP "food" is repeated 33 times. In addition, the NP "city" is repeated 5 times along the story. The NP "park" is collocated with some prepositions among which the preposition "for" occurs the most in the PP "for the park" which is stated 10 times. However, the most ironical combination is the name given to the park, introduced below:

**MOLE:** By the authority granted by Raccoon and the park community... Oh! This is too high... Surly Squirrel is hereby banished to the city, never to return to our beloved **Liberty Park**.

In a trial of banishing Surly out of their home, Mole is proud of the name given to the park where they cluster around. Ironically, the NP "park" is preceded by the NP "liberty" inferring freedom and salvation; however, the



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truth is contradictory to that matter; in other words, they all take orders from Raccoon. In other words, the ironical tendency of choosing the name implies the stupidity and naivety of all the animals . However, the most prominent repeated word is the negative quantifier "no". In addition, there are partial and total parallelisms as detected hereby:

- No, no, no, no, this is me.
- No, no, we do things
- No, no, no, Buddy, Buddy, Buddy, speak to me, pal, come on.
- No, no, no, I'm serious. There's a loose brick over here.
- No, no, no. Not you, honey.
- No, no. Look, sweetie...

It is clear that the negative quantifier is repeated lots of times within the story. The VP "find food" is repeated five times as detected hereby:

- Each day is a quest to find food to survive.
- Find food for us. For the park.
- We know you'll find food. Take me with you!
- This is an important mission to find food. Right?
- Hey, did you find food? No. No food.

There are five morphological forms of the VP "find food". Two structures are pertinent to the infinitive form; nevertheless, the other forms are finite; in the sense that, they are inflected in the imperative mood, imperfective form, and in the interrogative structure. The VP "smell a rat" is mentioned twice both of which are stated in different contexts as shown below:

**Grayson:** I smell a rat. What are you doing here, Surly?

**Fingers:** I smell a rat, boss! Rats did this? Find the rat.

Regarding the former structure, it is clear that the VP "smell a rat" is mentioned either according to Grayson or Fingers. In other words, animals resemble humans. Grayson, the squirrel, is interested in tracing strange smells as he has strong sensations; he smells the rat when he goes with

Andie to bring the nuts from the cart. However, Finger, the human and a member of the gang, smells the same odor when they dig in the tunnel to steal the bank and they discover that there is a rat responsible for sabotaging the dug tunnel.

Another form of ironic techniques used in the story is the paradoxical essence of animal and human's names; in other words, Berger (2014) identifies it as catalogue. These NPs are Raccoon, Surly, Buddy, Grayson, Precious, Fingers, Knuckles, and King. Raccoon is proper noun which refers to a certain animal. Raccoon rhymes with Napoleon, the hero of *The Animal Farm* who is thirsty for power and authority. On repeating 'less food means more control', Raccoon reminds audience of Napoleon. Buddy is an adjective that means friendly and kind. So, Surly introduces him as my buddy who is named 'Buddy'. On the contrary, Surly is an adjective which means bad-tempered and unfriendly. Grayson means a gray-haired person. Andie is name from Greek origin which means strong, manly and courageous person. It may mean a warrior.

**Precious** is the name of the dog that helps Surly; she is good and sincere. Moreover, human names are catalogue: the man named King is the leader of the gang; however, others are Fingers, who is good at digging, and Lucky, a gangster who is unlucky as police arrested him. Knuckles is the name of the person who is introduced as an experienced with weapons and guns. Knuckles and Precious get upset on hearing the whistle. Lana is a female name that means shining, light, and a girl primed for everlasting adoration. Moreover, the name is widely associated with Hollywood starlet Lana Turner. To sum up, the following table demonstrates the frequency of humorous techniques in *The Nut Job*:

**Table 2 The Frequency of Linguistic Devices in *The Nut Job***

No.	Humorous Technique	Frequencies
1.	Pun/wordplay	10
2.	Insult	15
3.	Repetition	Word nut: 52   the park : 10
4.	Incongruity	3

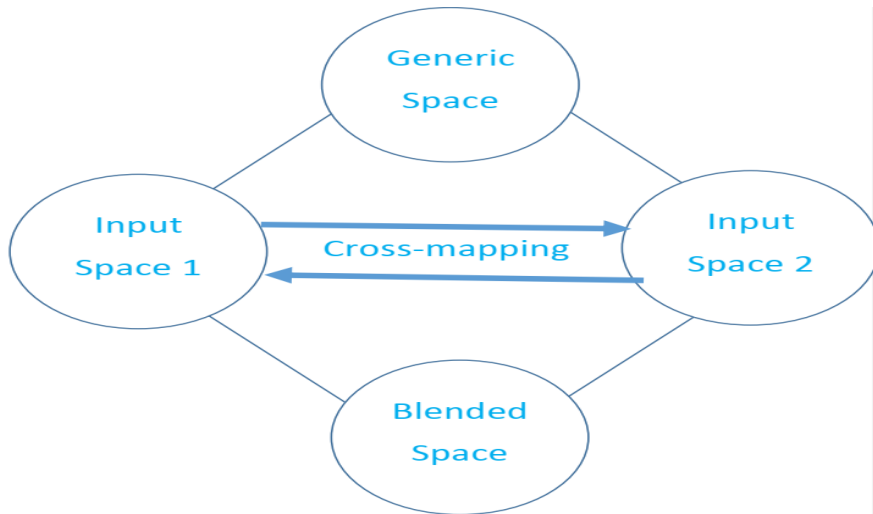
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5.	<b>Exaggeration</b>	<b>3</b>
6.	<b>Scream</b>	<b>40</b>
7.	<b>Catalogue</b>	<b>5</b>
8.	<b>Sarcasm</b>	<b>2</b>
9.	<b>Disappointment</b>	<b>6</b>
10.	<b>Superiority</b>	<b>4</b>
11.	<b>Inferiority</b>	<b>4</b>
12.	<b>Allusion</b>	<b>4</b>
13.	<b>Misunderstanding</b>	<b>3</b>

### **13. Conceptual Integration Network in "The Nut Job"**

Conceptual blending plays a fundamental role in meaning construction in everyday life and arts. The essence of this cognitive operation is to construct a partial match between two inputs, to project selectively from those inputs into a novel blended mental space, which, in turn, dynamically develops emergent structure. The two inputs share structure. They are linked to each other by a cross-space mapping. A generic space is constituted by the structure common to the inputs and the blended space. CIT (conceptual integration theory) is a crucial capacity needed for thought and language.

For a conceptual blending to work, at least two input spaces must be present. These input spaces allow the creation of generic space that space which captures the similarity between the two input spaces such as agents, goals, and place. In addition, the cross-mapping between the two input spaces creates new relation.



**Figure 1 Conceptual Integration Network in "The Nut Job"**

**In "The Nut Job"**, there are two input spaces: a human gang and an animal gang. The **generic space** which is common to both input spaces is their planning to heist. The **input space 1** which contains a **human gang** and everyone has a task to perform. In other words, everyone has a role. There are relations that connect them and they have the same goal namely to rob money. The **input space 2** contains an **animal gang** that plan to rob nut for the park. They have one goal and relations to each other. The two inputs are in one place that is the **nut shop**. Both of them plan to heist. Animals rob nuts and humans rob money and replace it to nuts. Money means nothing for animals whereas nuts mean nothing for humans. So, there is a clash between the two inputs. The goals are different. In the **blended space**, there are similarities and differences. Human input contains one selfish leader, **King**, who plans to take money for himself and deprive the rest. In the animal's input, there is a selfish one, **Raccoon**, who plans to control other animals through controlling their food. Both of them dig tunnels. Both of their plans are destroyed because of the leaders' greediness. Policemen arrested humans. Nuts sink in the river and Raccoon drowned.

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They make parallels. Accordingly, there are plot and subplot. Animals and humans have common features. All of them misbehave to tell lies, to be selfish and greedy, and to be fond of power and controlling other counterparts. Thereupon, all of them lose. The type of the **conceptual network** is a **mirror** one in which there are common organizing **frame** and **theme** which are shared by all spaces in the network. An organizing frame for a mental space is a frame that specifies that nature of relevant activity, events, and participants. This means that input spaces mirror each other since they have some basic organizing frame. Therefore, all of them (humans and animals) are monitored to plan to heist. Both of them make gangs. Characters, in both gangs, plan to control and deceive others.

The plot may seem loose; its elements are not related nor connected. Conceptual integration theory focuses on meaning making. Furthermore, it helps getting meaning: the two inputs include similarities and differences. There are **two parallel** plots, namely, two heists occur at the same time, with the same development and have the same end. They carried out the heists. **Raccoon** drowns; nevertheless, **Surly** survives in the input 2. However, in input 1, the police arrest all gangsters who are jailed. Surly has changed to be better than before: he believes that life is for sharing and inside every one of them a hero.

The movie creator **employs** many different humor devices such as allusion, parody, repetition, slapstick, speed, sarcasm, pun or wordplay, laughter, screaming, and irony. Humor is triggered by combing and repeating them in the movie. Moreover, the audience finds pleasure in his ability to identify wordplay and allusions. Though the film is humorous, it has messages and political subtleties to convey: hunger for power and authority is there in humans and animals as well. Life is a **hard nut** to **crack** if it is for **taking**. When creatures believe that life is for sharing, they will find a little hero inside every one of them. The writer's creativity lies in his binding humor and message in a great way. This can be understood by applying conceptual integration or blending theory. Humans form an **input (1)** and animals are another **input (2)**. They meet at the nut shop (**generic space**) to

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plan to heists. At the end, all of them go to the river (**blended space**). Surly becomes different as he has got conceptual change; however, human do not reveal any change.

## 14. Conclusion

The study concludes that two aims of the study are confirmed. In terms of the first aim, it is associated with the syntactic role of the uncertainty verb “think” in clarifying positions of irony. It portrays comparison and analogy between Raccoon and Surly. In "*The Nut Job*", the uncertainty verb “think” is to be followed by a an embedded clause in three positions to describe foolishness and deception of Raccoon. They are, also, used to make satire of Raccoon’s comments over Surly’s reaction on his knowledge of Mole’s treason. In the climax of incidents, there is a remarkable style of using three frequented scenes to deform the Surly’s importance among the animals through bringing out some ironical and connotative imageries.

As for the second question, there are similarities and differences between humans and animals. Human is led by a selfish leader, King, planning to steal money for himself and deprive the rest. Likely, input, animals are led by a selfish animal, Raccoon, planning to control other animals through controlling their food. Both of them dig tunnels. Both of their plans are destroyed because of the leaders’ greediness. However, the policemen arrest the gang. Nuts sink in the river and Raccoon drowned. To sum up, animals and humans have common features. All of them misbehave to tell lies, to be selfish and greedy, and to be fond of power and control other counterparts. Thereupon, all of them lose.

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### **تحليل لغوي تركيبى على السخرية اللفظية في فيلم "سرقة البندق" من خال أساليب الفكاهة لبرجر (2014)**

يتناول هذا البحث إظهار بعض الفنيات و الحيل الفكاهية في نموذج برجر (2014) من خال تحليل نحوي في فيلم الكارتون "سرقة البندق". يتناول هذا الفيلم بعض الموضوعات مثل الصداقة، و الوحدة، و الغرور، و الخداع، والسعي وراء السلطة. تم اختيار هذا العمل نظرا لأنه يجمع الفكاهة في مضمونه بمعنى أن هذا العمل يحتوي على كثير من المواقف و التعبيرات الساخرة. تم إجراء تحليل نوعي وكمي استنادا إلى نموذج "اليتش" و "شورت" (2002) من حيث تصنيف التالعات النحوية المستخدمة عن طريق بعض الشخصيات الكارتونية سواء كانت الحيوانات أو البشر بشكل متكرر الستطالع الأدوات النحوية الغالب استخدامها. تستند هذه الإجراءات في جمع البيانات الى

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مرحلتين: الأولى و هي اختيار المحتوى، و الثانية و هي إبراز السخرية من خلال تحليل مواطنها عن طريق استخدام أفعال الشك والريبة ومنها " يعتقد" الذي دار فيه الحوار الهام بين شخصية الراكون و شخصية سيرلي بالإضافة إلى غيرها من التعبيرات والتراكيب اللغوية المستخدمة لخلق صورة من الضحك و الفكاهة (برجر، 2014). يتم هذا عن طريق السخرية و الهجاء و التناقض و التكرار و التلميح لرسم صورة سلبية لبعض الحيوانات و كذا البشر. بالنسبة للتحليل النحوي، يقوم البحث الحالي بتحليل المتعلقات النحوية الخاصة بالسم و أحيانا بالصفة والفعل "يعتقد" الذي يحمل صيغه الشك والاستهزاء. استنتج البحث أن الفكاهة قد تحققت عن طريق السخرية و الهجاء و التناقض و التكرار من خلال أساليب نحوية خاصة بالفعل "يعتقد" و بالاسم.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التالعات النحوية، السخرية، شبه الجملة، برجر، أفعال، الجملة.