

ABSTRACT

The objective of this thesis is to introduce the topic of humor in the context of romantic relationships from the perspective of both partners separately. It examines the forms, manifestations and functions of humor in the relationship and observes whether the production and perception of humor of the partners changes over time. The theoretical part analyzes the conceptual definition of humor in terms of its functions, aims, styles, focus and the participants in the communication process. Furthermore, the thesis discusses the topic of romantic relationships, presents theoretical models of their formation and stages, describes factors influencing relationship cohesion, and reflects on couple conflicts and the communication strategies that constitute them. The empirical part of the thesis presents qualitative research focusing on the phenomenology of humor in six heterosexual romantic relationships with 12 respondents. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and the subsequent analysis was developed using principles of grounded theory method. The research results show that humor between partners stands on two pillars - dynamic and static - which determine its potential and intention. The dynamic pillar refers to the specific communicative function of humor and the strategies of its use, varying according to the changing situational context (e.g., mood, desire, need, etc.). The static pillar involves characteristics that are rather unchanging over time (i.e., the individual's personality or their relational network). The results further suggest that partners perceive humor as an important element of their communication that has the potential to positively or negatively influence the cohesiveness of their relationship based on the intention with which it is produced and received. The outcome of the data analysis is a taxonomic model of humor in romantic relationships.

KEYWORDS

humor, laughter, romantic relationships, couples, coping strategies, interpersonal communication