

TEM MAS NÃO HÁ: SORRIR EM TIMOR

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Abstract:

The utterance “tem mas não há” (→ it exists, but one doesn’t have it), produced by a Timorese speaker, is the starting point for a reflection about humour strategies. The hypothesis hereby put forth draws on the concept related to “language play” by Wittgenstein. Just as with some other “language play”, humour can be also perceived as a human activity observant of rules, the learning/acquisition of which is possible via observation of situations that trigger a smile and laughter. Thus, the knowledge of the rules of the game depends on the awareness of multiple meanings attributed to words and, with these, to things, to reality and to the world. The knowledge of what makes one laugh is part of one’s cognitive competence necessary to participate in humour games. And that something which makes one smile seems to be all that one conceives as “being out of place”, that is disrupting the sets of beliefs – in a world governed by the sense of a shared thought.

By extending our reflection to other examples, we will defend the hypothesis that fruition in humour depends on the players’ cognitive activity, their competence in the task of “re-making” the senses of the vision of the world projected as a shared object.

Keywords: *Pragmatics; Language game; Humour; Cultural representation; Cognition.*