

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements — v

Preface — vi

1 Introduction — 1

- 1.1 Introduction — 1
- 1.2 What is failed humor? — 3
- 1.3 Why study failed humor? — 5
- 1.4 Background — 6
 - 1.4.1 Language and interaction — 7
- 1.5 Discourse analysis and the study of (failed) humor — 16
- 1.6 Structure of the book — 19

2 Conceptualizing Failed Humor — 21

- 2.1 Approaches to failed humor — 21
 - 2.1.1 Superiority/hostility theories — 21
 - 2.1.2 Release theories — 23
 - 2.1.3 Incongruity — 24
- 2.2 Competence, performance, and failed humor — 26
 - 2.2.1 Failed humor and humor competence — 27
 - 2.2.2 Failed humor and humor performance — 29
- 2.3 Identification of failed humor — 33
- 2.4 Data set — 38
- 2.5 Summary — 41

3 Failed Humor as Miscommunication — 43

- 3.1 Introduction — 43
- 3.2 Defining miscommunication — 43
- 3.3 Sources of miscommunication — 44
- 3.4 Failed humor as misunderstanding — 49
 - 3.4.1 A framework for understanding failed humor — 49
- 3.5 Structure of miscommunication and repair — 56
- 3.6 Summary — 60

4	Triggers of Failed Humor — 61
4.1	Introduction — 61
4.2	Locutionary problems — 61
4.3	Linguistic rules — 66
4.3.1	Phonology — 66
4.3.2	Morphosyntax — 67
4.3.3	Semantics — 69
4.4	Ambiguity — 72
4.5	Pragmatic force — 76
4.6	Message form — 77
4.7	Framing/keying — 80
4.8	Summary — 83
5	Triggers of Failure Specific to Humor — 85
5.1	Introduction — 85
5.2	Joke incongruity — 85
5.3	Joke appreciation — 91
5.4	Joke (meta)messages — 97
5.5	(Appropriate) humor support — 102
5.6	Summary — 106
6	Managing Failed Humor in Interaction — 108
6.1	Introduction — 108
6.2	Speaker management of failure — 108
6.2.1	Preventing failure — 109
6.2.2	Managing failure — 113
6.3	Audience management of failure — 119
6.3.1	Responses to failure due to lack of understanding — 120
6.3.2	Responses to failure due to lack of appreciation — 125
6.3.3	Taking offense to humor — 131
6.4	Final remarks on negotiation of failed humor — 134
6.5	Summary — 139

- 7 Failed Humor and Society — 140**
 - 7.1 Introduction — **140**
 - 7.2 Failed humor and social action — **142**
 - 7.2.1 Humor for solidarity — **143**
 - 7.2.2 Humor, power, and subversion — **147**
 - 7.2.3 Failed humor and social norms — **156**
 - 7.3 Deliberately failed humor — **159**
 - 7.4 Summary — **162**

- 8 Conclusion — 164**
 - 8.1 Summary of findings — **164**
 - 8.2 Implications for the study of language and humor — **166**
 - 8.3 Future research — **168**

- Appendix A: Transcription Conventions — 169**

- References — 170**

- Index — 183**