CLEF 2026 JOKER Track
Humor Detection, Search, and Translation

Liana Ermakova   **Anne-Gwenn Bosser**
Tristan Miller   **Jaap Kamps**

CLEF, September 21-24, 2026, Jena, Germany

Introduction
○●○

CLEF 2026 JOKER
○○○

Envoi!
○○○

JOKER Track Motivation

- Official Motivation:
  - State-of-the-art AI, NLP, and IR models are not able to deal with humour or other non-literal meaning aspects of texts
  - Wordplay, which can refer to the surface structure or orthography of a word or its pronunciation, is a challenge for AI
  - Word surface aspects are not captured in the deep semantic embedding in AI models
  - These also cannot be captured by current pre-training models based on next-word prediction objectives
- Motivation of students in the track:
  - *Serious research* on *funny topics*?
  - I can work on humor and jokes AND my thesis at the same time?

JOKER 2026 Tasks

- JOKER Track continues the new setup of 2025
  - Continue Humor-aware IR, and Humor-aware MT
  - Collaborate with other CLEF tracks on over-generation/hallucination...
- CLEF 2026 JOKER Track
  - *Humor Detection, Search, and Translation*
- The following 3+1 tasks:
  1. **Humor-aware Information Retrieval**: *retrieve short humorous texts for a query.*
  2. **Wordplay Translation**: *translate puns from English to French.*
  3. **Onomastic Wordplay Translation**: *translate humourous names from English to French.*
  4. **JOKER 2022-2025 revisited**: *Previous tasks by popular requests.*

Task 1: Humor-aware IR

- *Task 1: Retrieve short humorous texts for a query*
  - Retrieving short humorous texts from a document collection
- Use case: to search for a joke on a specific topic
  - Large corpus with queries for jokes on a general topic
  - Several relevant jokes on this topic
  - Many distractor docs: on topic but no joke
- New data
  - New manually created jokes
  - New positive generated examples
  - New negative examples
- Evaluation: traditional IR metrics (MAP, NDCG, ...)
- *Main JOKER IR Task, continues from 2024-2025*

Task 2: Wordplay Translation

- *Task 2: Translate Puns from English to French and preserve*:
    - wordplay form
    - wordplay meaning
- Large corpus of English puns with (multiple) French tranlations

```
{
    "id_en":"en_1",
    "en":"I used to be a banker but I lost interest",
    "fr":"J'ai été banquier mais j'en ai perdu tout l'intérêt
        ."
}
```

- Eval: Ground truth new professional translations (unseen by LLMs)
- *Main JOKER NLP Task, continues from 2022-2025*

Task 3: Onomastic Wordplay Translation

- *Task 3: Translate Humourous Names*
- Onomastic wordplay is challenging for AI models but common in fictional text (Pokemons, Asterix, Harry Potter,...)
- Parallel corpus of wordplay in named entities in English and French
- Eval: Ground truth new professional translations (unseen by LLMs)
- *Extensive train data available from JOKER 2025 Pilot year!*

CLEF 2026 JOKER Track

- *Task 1: Humor-aware Information Retrieval* retrieve short humorous texts for a query
  - *Main IR Task*
  - *Topical relevance models luke-warm, neural ranking degrades...*
  - *But humor-aware IR models improve!*
- *Task 2: Wordplay Translation* translate puns from English to French
  - *Main NLP Task*
  - *Standard MT models fail: literal translation is no pun*
  - *But humor-aware MT models improve!*
- *Task 3: Onomastic Wordplay Translation* translate humourous names
  - *Neologisms – esp. humorous ones – very challenging to translate...*
  - *Unique corpus of named entities with translations and descriptions*
- *JOKER 2022-2025 revisited*: Previous tasks by popular requests (pun detection EN/FR/ES, pun location EN/FR/ES).

Join us at CLEF 2026 in Jena!

CLEF 2026   Dates   Calls ⌄   Labs ⌄   Conference ⌄

CLEF 2026 › Labs › **JOKER**

JOKER

Humour poses a unique challenge for artificial intelligence, as it often relies on non-literal language, cultural references, and linguistic creativity. The JOKER Lab, now in its fourth year, aims to advance computational humour research through shared tasks on curated, multilingual datasets, with applications in education, computer-mediated communication and translation, and conversational AI. In this 2026 edition of JOKER lab, we will continue three main tasks from the last year: (1) humour-aware information retrieval, which involves searching a document collection for humorous texts relevant to user queries in either English or Portuguese; (2) pun translation, focussed on humour-preserving translation of paronomastic jokes from English into French; and (3) onomastic wordplay translation, a task addressing the translation of name-based wordplay from English into French. We observed significant changes in the approaches of the participants in 2025.

Organizers

- Liana Ermakova (HCTI, Université de Bretagne Occidentale)
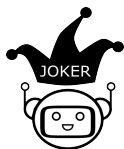
Thank you !
Please join our track !

Website : https://joker-project.com[1]
E-mail : contact@joker-project.com
Twitter : https://twitter.com/joker__research
Google group : https://groups.google.com/g/joker-project