

THE FEATURES OF THE LANGUAGE OF REPRESENTATION OF HUMOUR IN THE TEXTS OF AMERICAN AND RUSSIAN STAND-UP COMEDIANS

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ABSTRACT

Based on the definition of the research object and the subject of sociolinguistics, which is considered an independent scientific discipline, in this article we assume to study the features of the language representation and perception of humour in performances of stand-up comedians from American and Russian linguocultures. We will also consider the similarities and differences of the topics of the texts of American and Russian comedians. In consideration of the genre of special interest is the attitude of the audience (in fact - the society) to the obscene and non-obscene language ("black humor"; "jokes below the belt", etc.) used by stand-up comedians in their performances in the United States and Russia.

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The relevance of this study is related to the overall underexplored genre "stand-up" from linguistics point of view and originality of their language. Research methodology – set of methods of textual, contextual, linguistic and linguostylistic analysis of the content of the texts of public performances of the comedians in the United States and Russia. Material for the study consists of texts of performances of stand-up comedians. The results of our research will help to identify the specifics of the language means of representation of humour in the texts of stand-up comedians.

Key words: text, research, speech, language, translation, humour, linguistics, linguoculture, sociolinguistics.

INTRODUCTION

Experts in the field of sociolinguistics studies consistently point out that the humour and its means of expression are one of the most reliable markers and descriptors found in humour. Its explicative linguistic forms and patterns that reflect the most stable social relations and interactions in the linguistic culture. The reflection or discussion around which can instigate a mass of laughter the audience's reaction, under the influence of skillful words and professional comedian. This increasingly confirms not only the classic American, but also Russian stand-up Comedy that is in the process of formation and development.

A particular challenge in research of sociolinguistics of American humour represents their homogeneity and sociocultural heterogeneity of the American society. Multiple-level system and fragmentation of its social structure has a definite influence on some stylistic and thematic endemicity of American humour due to natural geographic and socio-cultural isolation of the American cultural place from the same of rest of the world [1].

Relevance of work is determined by the poor knowledge of the genre in the context of sociolinguistics, its language, and distinctness.

The purpose of this study is the selection, recording, description and interpretation of sociolinguistic features of the language of American and Russian stand-up comedians.

The objectives of this study are linked to the achievement of the formulated purpose and can be defined as the following:

- to research the humorous elements in American and Russian linguistic culture;
- to analyze the texts of stand-up comedians – representatives of this genre in the United States and Russia on a number of examples;
- to identify the sociolinguistic specificity and uniqueness of the means of representation of the humour inherent in the stand-up comedians in the United States and Russia.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

In order to study the sociolinguistic characteristics and the originality of the language means of representation of humour, we have analyzed the scientific articles and monographs on the sociolinguistics of language of humour in the United States and Russia, as well as the texts of public performances of the stand-up comedians in the United States and Russia.

While working on the research we used the methods of textual, contextual, linguistic and linguostylistic analysis of the content of the texts of public speeches of comedians.

The similarities and differences in the topics of public performances of American and Russian stand-up comedians

As the most popular form and topics chosen for public performances by American and Russian stand-up professionals mainly depend on relevant life issues incorporated in the features of the socio-cultural context of the existence of American and modern Russian society in a certain way to be embodied in sociolinguistics and national linguistic culture of the States and Russia. Current problems associated with the peculiarities of personal and social life, the government policies, economic changes remain the main topics preferred by stand-up comedians [4].

Such researchers of humour in linguistics V. I. Karasik, V. P. Popkov, M. A. Kulinich, V. P. Shestakov, D. Carbaugh, H. Cleveland, H. Commager, S. Storti and others point out that humour arises from a choice or combination of factors that allow society to look unexpected and different at familiar things in a new comic way [9]. It occurs at the level of attitude of the audience to language that stand-up comedian used, i.e., at the level of the sociolinguistics of humour. Comic language becomes the means of inspiring of the audience humorous emotional response, the feeling of the comic and a sense of understanding of jokes, witty remark. The understanding of humour is the most vulnerable to cultural and linguistic-cultural differences in the different national communities. That is why the differences in the forms and topics of the performances of stand-up comedians in the United States and Russia greatly depend on the existing sociolinguistic and linguistic-cultural differences of social environment in these quite different countries. These diversities include:

1. Differences in perception of personality and individuality as the sociocultural dimension of Russian identity is much more social at the micro - and macro-level, while the American identity is much more autonomous.
2. According to many scientific studies, the main objects of derision in the American and Russian humour are such negative social qualities and features as human depravity and

commitment to the small and big bad deeds and actions, as well as narrow-minded and just human stupidity [3].

3. In traditional American humorous culture there are not rare examples bringing the initially ridiculous situation to the point of absurdity which looks, however, most often unintentionally, like a very bad combination of circumstances in the end it stalemates the characters of such stories in hopeless situation of crowded comic, grotesque, and sometimes acute social and political satire [7]. Russian humour can have similar features, although they are not so pronounced.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sociolinguistics texts of performers of this genre is subordinated to the common goal that is to go on stage, to attract and keep the attention of the public with the help of one-liners, jokes, witty and paradoxical monologues [11]. Means of attracting the attention of the audience can be as extralinguistic (that studies the complex of ethnic, historical, social, geographical and other factors as inextricably linked with the development and functioning of language) and linguistics, for example, the so-called "nonsense language" when the monologue is a series of absurdities that follow one another without any connection. This language is found in many forms of national humour, however, in American humour its frequency is out of this world, for example:

- *"Can you work it, doc?" asks the Mayor.*

- *"I'm one of the Sole Sanhedrims and Ostensible Hooplas of the Inner Pulpit," says I. "The lame talk and the blind rubber whenever I make a pass at 'em" [5].*

The frequency implies a multiplicity of communicative situations, and in that case, when the humour of nonsense is starting to encroach in some forbidden fields, for example - in the field of human fears, expectation of something terrible, it thereby becomes a "black humour" or even "infernal humour", and the number of such jokes in American linguistic culture is a good few:

- *"Mr. Mayor," says I, after laying my ear to his right shoulder-blade and listening, "you've got a bad attack of super-inflammation of the right clavicle of the harpsichord!"*

- *"Good Lord!" says he, with a groan. "Can't you rub something on it, or set it or anything?" [5].*

Such fragments in the performances of American stand-up comedians lead to a complex emotional reaction of the audience, the consequence of which is teetering "on the edge" nervous tension, periodically discharging a shared nervous laugh, emerging the principle of

"when we laugh, we are not so scary!" American professionals know this and therefore actively "induced fear" in their performances.

Another common technique is simulated intercultural conflict in different variations:

- *"Be my wife, Meg!"*

- *"You had driven mad with his exchange and the stock price! We have already got married yesterday at eight o'clock in the evening!"* [6].

The influence on the text linguistics of the performances of American stand-up comedians has the language of contemporary mass culture, forms and models of which adapted in the most typical of the culture types of mass performances, including stand-up Comedy.

With the emergence of the comic novels of William Porter (O. Henry) in the speech figures of American comedians began increasingly to use such stylistic devices as buffoonery, hints and innuendo, often ambiguous and just deceitful, grotesque hypertrophy is the most typical and the most fun of the vices and weaknesses, the absurd and alogism, alternating each other [2].

"I'm tired of that I say what I have to admire in this country. Did you not sick of what you say who should be your heroes? They say who you should be. I will choose their heroes. Dr. Phil said I should express their emotions. So I'm doing it" (G. Carlin "It is bad for ya") [8]. The comedian suddenly switches to the point, protesting against the imposition on him of something *what* he should *think* and *what* he can *do*. In the text is used the corresponding stylistic device—parallelism "... say who should be your heroes? They say who you should be."; rhetorical questions "...Did you not sick of what you say who should be your heroes?", the comedian uses all these elements in order to motivate and "warm" the audience to equal his own worldview with the "average" American's one in order to demonstrate to the audience that he is the same as they are [12].

The language of the texts of the Russian stand-up representatives based on the notions of spontaneity inherent in this genre, authorship of the artist (the artist says of himself). In addition, Russian stand-up Comedy borrowed from the classic American stand-up language representation of speech used as a means of forming and affixing the image of a comedian for creating his personality and strengthen this individuality in the perception of their viewers.

"Tell me who your friend is and I'll tell you how he is not lucky" - in fact, it is quite common invert the model (*"tell me who your friends are and I will tell you who you are yourself"* as an option) with many interpretations (*"your friend"* – why?; *"he was unlucky"* - but with whom? or what? etc.). American society will not understand this phrase completely and will not laugh requiring all details.

"We, guys, invented 3 things that are freebee. What do we have? I in my life should plant a tree, raise a son and build a house. The tree grows by itself, a woman gives birth to the son and migrants build a house." - wicked social satire, play upon the meaning of the famous sayings in the natural circumstances and conditions of the existing social reality [10].

"Why a living wage of Russians estimate those who have high cost of living?" - also a wicked social satire, a play upon clichés. Noteworthy standard at first glance syntax, but combining the double-meaning notions, that gives the phrase an ambiguity.

CONCLUSION

Extrapolation of research of features of cognitive and linguocultural representation of humour in the linguistic material of texts of Russian and American stand-up comedians indicates the existence of differences in the sociolinguistics.

The paradox worldview, often as a component of content basis of humour and comic, encounters in the actualization of the linguistic level and then broadcast by means of the language differences recorded within these processes and related to the steps of perception of humour and understanding of the meaning of the comic. The linguistic material of the texts of the performances of American and Russian comedians clearly reflects the presence of cultural-national specificity of the humour coded in the comic contents through various linguistic resources. Moreover, in this respect the language side of humour remains a result, part of the general process of semiosis occurring in a particular linguistic culture and it forms a linguistic matrix within which humour takes its place.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the research can be used in theoretical and practical courses of stylistics of the English language and text interpretation, General linguistics. The theoretical thesis and the results can be used in conducting similar researches on the material of other languages and can also be useful in teaching English as a foreign language.

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