

## ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSE OF STAND-UP PERFORMANCE

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**Abstract:** Language is an entirely social phenomenon, and it is possible to describe the data based on experience, i.e. the speech act. As a social phenomenon, language manifests itself in texts that can be recorded, described and analyzed. In this article we assume to study the discourse analysis of performance of a comedian, identifying the most frequent types of phrases and sentences, the determination of frequency classes of words. The relevance of our research is that a representative array of language data for a certain period allows to study the dynamics of processes of change in the lexical structure of the language, to analyze the lexico-grammatical features in genre of stand-up comedy. The corpus of genre stand-up comedy is overall underexplored. Certain elements of language and speech are characterized by some frequency, and hence probability, the acts of speech obviously can be analyzed and studied using computer-assisted methods and quantitative methods. Material for the study consists of discourse of stand-up comedian Anthony Jeselnik which was analyzed with computer-based text analysis tool (software "Nvivo"). Theoretical and practical results of arrays of representative language data will be useful for further linguistic research of discourse of Russian comedians.

**Keywords:** linguistics, discourse, corpus, language, humor, text

### 1 Introduction

In the last decade, discourse analysis can be attributed to a number of the most popular research methods in the social Sciences and Humanities (Discourse analysis of the text,2005). At the same time, despite the numerous publications concerning the theory of discourse and the concept of discourse analysis, it is difficult to find the results of empirical research with a detailed description of the methodology. Thus, it is not easy to determine the most effective (if one exists) approach to the study of verbal interaction at any level (M.U. Oleshkov,2006).

Discourse (Fr. discours, Lat. discursus – reasoning, argument) is one of the most complicated and difficult-to-define concepts of modern linguistics, semiotics and philosophy, which became widespread in English - and especially French-speaking cultures. The meaning of the word – speech, written or spoken conversation, reasoning (Discursive analysis,2007).

The most important feature is the dynamics of discourse context, which has been progressively unfolding through time. The content of the discourse thus concentrates around a certain reference concept, called theme or topic. The theme is what is referred to in general and in this sense, the topic of discourse

(e.g., relations with bosses and authority) differs from the topic of the speaker (the conflict with the mother), it's a different level of abstraction. In addition, the theme of the discourse deals more with the social world, the subject speaks about his inner life and problems (M.V. Kamenskij,2007). Discourse analysis is designed to show who controls themes and changes them (semantic macrostructure), who determines the form and style of speech. All that is said in this discourse refers to the subject of discourse, but not all the theme elements active in each moment of discourse (M.V. Kamenskij,2012). This work is an attempt to analyze the discourse of stand-up comedian it will be also used for further contrastive research of modern American and Russian comedians.

### 2 Methods

The analysis of this discourse is conducted by identifying recurring, dominant patterns of speech. In the studied discourse there are standard, stable in specific situations and situational components of communicative practices. Material for the study consists of discourse of stand-up comedian Anthony Jeselnik "Caligula: Fun Activity" which was analyzed with computer-based text analysis tool "Nvivo".

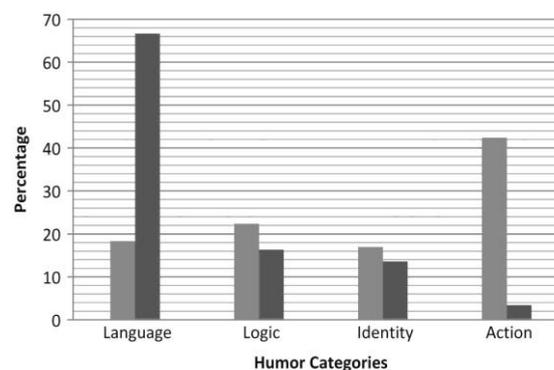


Figure 1. Percentage of humor categories in the stand-up performances.

### 3 Results

The discourse of American stand-up comedian Anthony Jeselnik mostly includes very short jokes, which often consist of a pair of phrases or sentences. He often makes the center of the ridicule and jeers of his family or friends and, thus, earning the gratitude of the audience. Stand-up comedy is a comic solo performance in front of a live audience, one of the genres of entertainment programs. This kind of programs is that on the stage speaker who communicates with the audience on current topics, sharp jokes and even mocks of the audience on the show. The repertoire of stand-up comedians, as a rule, involves routines, one-liners and improvisation with the audience.

For our paper we have chosen the short performance "Caligula: fun activity" which consists of 1372 symbols. There are 33 nouns, 60 verbs, 17 adjectives, 21 adverbs, 54 pronouns, 13 articles, 11 prepositions, 18 conjunctions, 1 numeral. We have chosen 10 most frequent words in the text.

Table 1. Word Frequency Query Results of the Discourse "Caligula: Fun Activity" by Nvivo Software:

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)
like	4	6	4,96
girlfriend	10	4	3,31
get	3	3	2,48
boyfriend	9	2	1,65
change	6	2	1,65
Cosmo	5	2	1,65
even	4	2	1,65

together	8	2	1,65
just	4	2	1,65
lunch	5	2	1,65

We can figure out from table 1 that three most frequent words are *like*, *girlfriend*, *get*.



Fig.2. Text search query (like)

The word *like* is used 6 times. It is clear from Text Search Query the context for the word *like*.

*"My ex-girlfriend had a lot of like really annoying habits"*. *Like* is used as an adjective to modify a noun "habits".

*"...she loved to read women's magazines like Cosmo or things like Cosmo"*. Here *like* serves as an adjective that describes the word "Cosmo".

*"...as if it was like a fun activity for us to do together..."*. We observe *like* as a preposition in this example that indicates that something is similar to a "fun activity".

*"Like I'll never forget the last time we played that game"*. Here *like* is an adverb that is used in speech as a meaningless filler or to signify the speaker's uncertainty about an expression just used.

*"She was like, 'Anthony, if you could have lunch with anyone in the world..."*. The word *like* serves as a conjunction that links together the clauses (Part of Speech,2008).

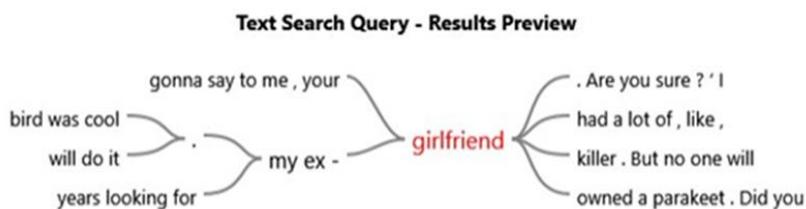


Fig. 3. Text search query (girlfriend)

The noun *girlfriend* we observe in the following context:

*"...looking for my ex-girlfriend's killer"*.

*"My ex-girlfriend owned a parakeet"*.

*"My ex-girlfriend had a lot of..."*.

*"That's what you're gonna say to me, your girlfriend..."*.

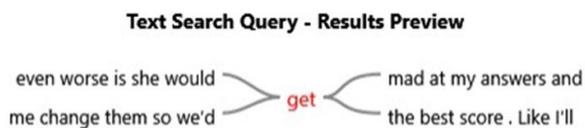


Fig.4. Text search query (get)

In these examples we can see that the verb *get* is used in different grammar tenses.

*"But even worse is she would get mad at my answers"*.

*"...so we'd get the best score..."*.

*"She's got a new boyfriend now"*.

Now we study the synonyms of 10 frequent used words.

Table 2. Word Frequency Query Results “Caligula” synonyms:

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)	Similar Words
like	4	6	4,96	like
girlfriend	10	4	3,31	girlfriend
get	3	3	2,48	get, let, make, makes
boyfriend	9	2	1,65	boyfriend
change	6	2	1,65	change
Cosmo	5	2	1,65	Cosmo
even	4	2	1,65	even
together	8	2	1,65	together
just	4	2	1,65	just
lunch	5	2	1,65	lunch

As we can see from the table only the verb *get* has synonyms. They are also the verbs *let*, *make*, *makes*. Let us study the context of these synonyms.

“...and make me change them...”.

“Let me change that”.

“...which makes me want to go over there...”.

The word *get* has a lot of meanings and can be synonym to different other verbs.

#### 4 Discussion

With the help of the computer program “Nvivo” we analysed the discourse of performance “Caligula: Fun Activity” of a famous American stand-up comedian Anthony Jeselnik. After having analyzed the discourses, we discovered that the comedian used mostly verbs (60) in his performance, the most frequent of them are *get*, *change* as we can see in Table 1. Nouns (33) are also frequent used: *girlfriend*, *boyfriend*, *lunch*. The proper noun *Cosmo* is used as well. Adverbs are *just*, *even* and *together*.

#### 5 Summary

Discourse analysis has the following characteristics that we can distinguish according to our research:

1. Material of discourse analysis can be of written texts and transcripts of oral discourses. Their bearers are the tools interactive-digital communication — the blogosphere, and Internet services (Thompson, 1968).
2. The focus of the study is the content of language communication, its social, rather than formal linguistic organization.
3. Discourse analysis allows to place and structure the communication variables — they are embedded in causal structures, not statistical correlations (Nesselhauf, 2005).
4. It brings together in one conceptual schema of actors at different levels — from the individual(s) to the collective.
5. The unit of discourse analysis can be substantial-semantic units, individuals, corporations, institutional concepts, brands and concepts that mediate their interaction (Natalia, 2016).
6. In the studied text and communication arrays are allocated shared (standard, stable in specific standard situations) and variable (situational) components of communicative practices (Natalia, 2015).
7. Separately identified sustainable linguistic manifestation of social phenomena — in the form of set expressions, social meanings, etc.
8. Unlike content analysis, where the main result is the statistical characteristics and frequency distribution describing textual units, discourse analysis focuses on the allocation of actors and linking their communicative units (Khakimzyanova, 2016).

#### 6 Conclusion

In our paper we studied the discourse of American stand-up comedian Anthony Jeselnik. The discourse transcript analyzed with the text analysis tool Nvivo proved high narrativity level of the discourse studied and that the most frequently words used by the comedian were the following: *like*, *girlfriend*, *get*, *boyfriend*, *change*, *Cosmo*, *even*, *together*, *just*, *lunch*. From these 10 words we separated the first three and studied the context of them. We also managed to determine to what part of speech the most three frequent words refer to according to the context. This present pilot study was aimed not only at gaining a deep insight into the vocabulary employed in the humorous discourse but also at further contrastive research with the vocabulary used by modern Russian comedians.

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