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Linguistic analysis of humour in English

Лингвистический анализ юмора в английском языке

Abstract. This article focuses on humour in form of linguistic analysis, describing the act of making jokes as a metalinguistic interaction. Being regarded as parts of the communication act, jokes have numerous forms, from simple riddle jokes to post-irony jokes with a deep context. The present article takes as an example the children's speech and jokes from the internet to show some basic principles of making humour.

Аннотация. Данная статья рассматривает юмор в английском языке сквозь призму лингвистического анализа, описывая процесс создания шуток как процесс металингвистического взаимодействия. Юмор, как часть коммуникативного акта, имеет множество различных форм и вариаций, от простейших забавных загадок до шуток с глубоким контекстом и элементами пост-иронии в их основе. Целью статьи является рассмотрение и анализ примеров шуток, заимствованных из детской речи, а также сети Интернет, и выделение основных принципов создания юмора.

Humour is an important part of our life. We make jokes every day to tell something to people informally or to take the heat out of the situation. Humour helps us to live easily and feel ourselves better. However, how does the humour work? The study of humour by linguists has a long tradition. Some of them talked about the meaninglessness of determining the essence of humour. Others, while not denying the importance of such a definition, emphasized its difficulty and, perhaps, the impossibility. Nevertheless, making jokes has a linguistic basis that should be described.

There are different kinds of humour: musical, graphic, verbal, etc. Among the various types of humour, the main place is taken by a verbal language joke [1]. This type clarifies the functions of humour in the best way. A child starts to take vocabulary from his parents sometime after his birth. As the time passes, he becomes an independent speaker who can use the language by himself without any influence from the outside. Language becomes a "toy" for the child that he uses to entertain himself by making different fairy tales or jokes. The wordplays made by a child contrast with the "serious" language of adults. These wordplays reveal the ambiguity of the word and the possibility of using it not only for the usual transmission of information to the interlocutor, but also for entertainment. The child, when playing with the language, reveals more and more mechanisms for its use. All these mechanisms are used in creating various jokes and wordplays. In this situation, the child resembles a researcher in some way. Here is one example of the joke made by a child:

"What does the dog see in the **mirror**?"

"God."

This example shows us how the child uses the meaning of the word "Mirror". He broke down all of expectations by not using the word in its usual sense. He did not put the common meaning in this word but the actual ability of the object to reflect the image. According to this way of using the word, the dog became god. We can obviously see the linguistic basis in this joke. The process of making such a jokes gives a lot of fun due to its complexity.

Joke (micro-story with a funny content and an unexpected end) is one of manifestations of a sense of humour [2]. In most cases, the authors of jokes are unknown. The laughter caused by a joke is often based on an unexpected funny end. Various language and literary techniques are used to make a joke, including wordplay, polysemy, associative elements, etc. Jokes cover all areas of our life, from family relationships to global prob-

lems. Therefore, their understanding often requires additional knowledge: historical, cultural, geographical and, above all, national and linguistic features.

We often hear the term "English joke." In many joke books, English jokes make up whole sections along with political, sport, etc. This fact tells us about the specific nature of this kind of humour.

However, what are the peculiarities of English humour? Most researchers often call it "difficult to make and understand", thereby emphasizing its mystery and complexity of understanding by foreigners. In addition, it is believed that classical English humour is distinguished by "extreme equanimity, despite the improbability of the described circumstances" [3]. At the same time, British people understand this, and they often ridicule their own slowness and equanimity in their jokes and jokes. A classic example of this is the following joke:

"Two Englishmen, two Scotsmen, two Welshmen, and two Irishmen were stranded on a desert island. It was not long before the Scotsmen started a Caledonian Club and were playing the bagpipes, tossing the caber and eating haggis. The two Welshmen started an Eisteddfod and were soon competing against each other in a song and dance. The two Irishmen started a Ceilidh and downed a few pints of Guinness. The two Englishmen went to opposite ends of the island and would not speak to each other because they had never been properly introduced"

Often in their jokes, the English use the idiomatic constructions. It is possible to understand the meaning of such a jokes only with a profound knowledge of the language:

1. "A customer ordered some coffee in a cafe. The waitress arrived with the coffee and placed it on the table. After a few moments, the customer called for the waitress.

"Waitress," he said, "there is dirt in my coffee!".

"That's not surprising, sir", replied the waitress, "it was **ground** only half an hour ago."

2. "How do we call man without **left** hand and **left** leg?"

"**All right!**"

Joke as a genre of humorous communication is built on the absurd. Absurdity is a sign of a special situation, when something contradicts common sense, all life experience, logic, but it takes place in reality. In this article, absurdity has a three-fold projection:

1) Semantic absurdity, when objects are given with inferior qualities;

2) Pragmatic logical absurdity, when the next thesis is not derived from the previous thesis, but in this case, everything is pretending that the reasoning is conducted according to the rules of syllogisms;

3) Pragmatic appraisal absurdity, when the situation receives a strange estimate, which discredits the common values of society [4].

Here we can see the example of semantic absurdity:

A little boy runs down into the lounge and shouts “daddy”, “daddy”; can I have another glass of water?

His father replies, “What's wrong with you, son, that's your eleventh glass of water in a row?”

“I know, my bloody **bedroom is on fire**”

It is real to extinguish the fire by pouring water in glasses but it is pointless and it causes a smile. You can oppose a small and big absurdity: in one case, the usual stereotypes of behaviour or representations of reality are violated, but we can understand what could actually happen, otherwise we are faced with an absurdity that is fundamentally unacceptable in reality.

Examples of pragmatically conditioned humour include cases of strange logic, externally correct conclusions, which in fact cannot be considered normal:

“I want to know Latin”, said the man.

“Why Latin of all languages?” asked the language professor. “It's a **dead language.**”

“That's it,” answered the man, “I'm **an undertaker.**”

In this joke, the logic of a man who is the owner of a funeral service is ridiculous and therefore wants to learn "dead language". An example of pragmatic logical absurdity:

A teacher asked a little pupil: “If you had 27 apples and a man gave you 47 pears, what would you get as a result?”

“Diarrhoea,” replied the medically (but not mathematically) wise boy.

The humorous effect of this joke is that the student needed to count how many fruits he would receive, rather than imagine what would happen to him after he had eaten it all.

Pragmatically absurd jokes include riddles – questions with unpredictable answers:

1. Q: Why are the Japanese so smart?

A: No blondes.

2. Q: How does a blonde kill a fish?

A: She drowns it.

3. Q. What do you call a woman who knows where her husband is every night?

A. A widow.

The feature of such jokes is the unexpected answer. The listener does not know the "real" answer on the question, so his expectations are broken down with the funny end of the joke, which is given by speaker.

Pragmatic appraisal jokes require knowledge of certain norms of behaviour:

"I can't go on like this!" the woman bawled at her husband. "My mother sends us money, my sister buys our kids clothes, and my aunt brings us food. I'm so ashamed".

"You should be!" replied the never-do-well. "Your uncles don't give us a damn thing".

In the above text, the husband's logic is ridiculous: the wife says that she is ashamed, because both mother, sister, and aunt help her family materially, and that means that her husband must earn money. Moreover, the husband continues the formal line of reasoning about relatives, reproaching his wife for the fact that her uncles do not help her. In this text, one of the norms of English society is humorously showed: the husband must support the family.

Jokes can be made not only by making unreal situations. People can play with the language and change whatever part of it [5]. For example, there are many jokes made by changing the spelling of the words:

The son wrote the letter to his father: Dear Dad, \$chool i\$ great. I am making lot\$ of friend\$ and \$tudying very hard, with all my \$tuff. I \$imply cannot think of anything I need. \$o if you would like, you can ju\$t \$end me a card, a\$ I would love to hear from you.

Love, Your \$on

The Reply: Dear Son, I kNOW that astroNOMy, ecoNOMics and oceanNOgraphy are eNOough to keep even an hoNOr student busy. Do NOT forget that the pursuit of kNOWledge is a NOble task, and you can never study eNOough.

Love, Dad

In this example, the son and father make hints to each other by changing the spelling.

In modern English language, such a way of word formation like imitation or onomatopoeia is actively developing. For example: mew, smash, splash etc. This phenomenon is also reflected in one of the English jokes:

An Englishman wanted to imitate what the Russians say when somebody sneezes and concluded that if somebody sneezes in his presence he should say: “Boots are off” (like Russian “будь здоров»).

The conducted research has revealed some basic principles of creating humour by exploiting various linguistic aspects and particularities of the English language. Using a comic effect, absurdity and some ingenious wordplay one can easily develop a simple joke, thus, making any act of communication pass slightly more relieving and easier for both of the communicants.

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Языковые конструкции в основе социальной стигматизации нетипичной телесности **Language structure as a basic of social stigmatization in the field of disability embodiment**

Аннотация. Автором статьи рассматривается лингвистический подтекст, который выступает основным социальным конструктом, формирующим базисное отношение в социуме к людям с нетипичной телесностью. В статье также обосновываются языковые основы миропонимания с точки зрения социального конструкционизма и причины введения нового термина «нетипичная телесность» в разрезе социально-философского анализа проблематики инвалидизации населения.

Abstract. In this paper author puts forward the claim that language structure is the predetermined social construction which covers social attitudes to the disa-