



THE STUDY OF ENGLISH-LANGUAGE HUMOROUS DISCOURSE IN THE LINGUO-DIDACTIC ASPECT

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Annotation. The article discusses the use of English-language humorous discourse in teaching English to university students and also discusses the possibilities of teaching the basics of rhetoric, discursive analysis, and linguo-cognitive analysis on this material.

Key words: humorous discourse, linguo-cognitive analysis, foreign language communicative competence, cultural competence, discursive analysis.

Many works of domestic and foreign researchers in various fields of scientific knowledge are devoted to the study of humor. Humor was studied from the point of view of cultural studies, philosophy, psychology, linguistics, and aesthetics (V. Raskin, S. Attardo, G. Ritchie, M. A. Kulinich, A. Bergon, Z. Freud, M. Minsky, M. A. Panina, V. V. Eliseeva, E. Ya. Shmeleva, A.D. Shmelev) [1]. However, the potential of humorous discourse for teaching English and for the formation of foreign language communicative competence remains poorly understood. The purpose of this article is to substantiate the possibility and expediency of using English-language humorous texts such as "jokes" in teaching English to university students at seminars on linguistics, and linguoculturology, which determines the relevance of this article. Considerable attention is paid to determining the possible advantages of using texts of this type in teaching spoken English to students of linguistic and non-linguistic universities.

Understanding humorous discourse as a process of interaction of a linguistic personality in its speech-thinking and cognitive activity with the surrounding reality [2], humor seems to be a promising material in the process of teaching a foreign language, because it allows solving a number of linguistic and didactic learning tasks. In accordance with the culturally-oriented approach to the study of foreign languages, it can be concluded that humorous discourse has significant linguistic and linguistic-cultural potential. In any text, and in a humorous text in particular, "the result of discursive thinking is reflected" [3, p. 29], i.e. it can be concluded that the text is the product and embodiment of the dynamic process of English-language humorous communication as one of the types language interaction. The close connection of discourse and text, i.e. the optimally chosen structure reflecting the speech-thinking process, testifies to the versatility of the phenomenon of the text and the possibility of studying it from different sides. The novelty of the work consists in the study of the experience of using humorous discourse on the example of texts like "joke", which captures the dynamic discursive activity of participants in speech communication in the process of learning a foreign language.

"Humorous discourse is deeply immersed in the cultural language space", it reflects the changes taking place in the linguistic and cultural community and the linguistic reality that generates this text, it "rediscovers the picture of the world within a separate communication environment" [2, p. 79]. Humor in general and the texts of "joke" in particular react quickly to the changes taking place in society, to the appearance of new public figures and characters in

the linguoculture, which immediately appear in humorous texts (as in the case of D. Trump, who immediately became a vivid character of political humor).

“Megyn Kelly reportedly wants to be the next Oprah. I'm sure becoming black will be way easier for her than learning how to empathize” [7].

“At a Whitehouse party for past presidents. Michelle Obama caught Barron Trump making faces at Sasha. Michelle walked over to reprimand the child and said, ‘Barron, when I was a little girl, I was told if that I made ugly faces, it would freeze and I would stay like that’. Barron looked up and replied, «Well, Ms. Obama, you can't say you weren't warned»” [8].

By studying such “jokes” texts, students get acquainted with the current characters of the linguistic and cultural space (Donald Trump, Michelle Obama, Barron Trump, Magnus Kelly, Sasha Obama, Oprah Winfrey), get the opportunity to learn the attitude and opinions existing in society towards them, get acquainted with authoritative personalities of the English-speaking linguistic culture (Oprah Winfrey). The linguistic and cultural analysis of such texts may subsequently include tasks such as preparing a biographical message about a political or secular character or writing an essay about American political leaders of the last decade.

Humorous texts can serve as material for gaining experience in the use of the language being studied, identifying socioculturally marked linguistic units and studying the similarities and differences of the socio-cultural fields of different languages, i.e. what Y. N. Karaulov called a “precedent phenomenon”. The researcher referred to the precedent phenomena well-known to all representatives of the national-cultural community, relevant in cognitive (cognitive and emotional) terms, as well as phenomena, the appeal to which is constantly renewed in the speech of representatives of a particular national-linguistic-cultural community. All native speakers are aware of the existence of a precedent phenomenon and have a certain nationally deterministic invariant of meaning and associations that is mandatory for all, which does not require further interpretation and commentary for native speakers.

“April is always a difficult month for Americans. Even if your ship comes in, the IRS is right there to help you unload it” [7].

In the process of reading the text, students get acquainted with an important precedent phenomenon of American life, the “IRS”, or Internal Revenue Service (the Russian equivalent is the Federal Service for Taxes and Duties), which within the text turns out to be directly related to a certain calendar month. April is no longer just the name of the spring month, but an important date in the American calendar that has certain associations and does not require further comment for native speakers. However, for English language learners, for people who are just forming cultural competence, the text turns out to be a storehouse of information: “IRS” is an analog of the tax service in the USA, and the month of April is the time when every citizen receiving income is obliged to file a tax return, regardless of their location. Working with “joke” texts may include tasks aimed at developing the skills of interpretation and translation when special attention will be required by abbreviations peculiar to linguoculture (IRS, DMV, UN, OSCE, RSVP, GP, ENT and others) toponyms, anthroponyms, non-equivalent lexical units, and precedent phenomena.

In the classroom, students are offered the following tasks: 1. Find additional background information of a historical, cultural, and country-specific nature necessary for a complete and adequate understanding of the text. Decipher the abbreviations. 2. Compose and describe (based on the humorous material studied in the lesson) a collective image of a modern

political (or public) figure. 3. Make a message / write an abstract about modern political figures of the country of the language being studied.

The proposed tasks will be aimed at an adequate understanding of all the meanings and associations of native speakers, which will increase the cultural competence of students. Reading and analyzing humorous texts of “joke” will contribute to the expansion of vocabulary, the acquisition of lexical and grammatical knowledge and skills that allow speech activity in a foreign language.

It is important to remember that the main task of humorous texts is the need to make the reader laugh, to make him smile. It seems appropriate to work with texts precisely from the point of view of researching methods for creating the effect of the ridiculous, because this affects all levels of language: phonological, lexico-grammatical, and conceptual. The task in such work may be to identify those lexical and grammatical units that maintain the integrity, coherence of the text and create the effect of the ridiculous, which will contribute to the formation of the language competence of students. A large number of “joke” texts are based on wordplay based on the use of homonymous words and expressions, metaphors, on the ambiguity of English words, the use of parallel grammatical constructions, unusual filling of grammatical constructions, and clichéd phrases. The task for students will be to find the language material (lexical, grammatical, phonetic, etc.) that made such a play of words and meanings possible.

“My wife and I had a very quiet evening, she had laryngitis!” [Ibidem].

“How’s your pain in the neck? – He’s playing golf” [Ibidem].

It is also important to note that the texts have different volumes: from one sentence to a long story. This gives the teacher more freedom to choose the text depending on the student’s language proficiency level. Thus, longer humorous texts provide extensive material for the study of grammatical phenomena and constructions characteristic of this type of discourse: specific forms of verbs, modal verbs, degrees of comparison of adjectives, evaluative constructions, ellipsis, incomplete sentences, and other grammatical difficulties. Shorter texts can be selected depending on the topic of the lesson, as the most vivid language examples illustrate the rules of English grammar.

In the process of working with the text, students can perform tasks to determine the structural and semantic types of the text “jokes” and identify their features: anecdotes-narratives, anecdotes-aphorisms, anecdotes-rhetorical questions, anecdotes-riddles, anecdotes-parodies of various types of texts [13]. In the classroom and extracurricular classes, students perform a variety of tasks:

1. Which text parodies the joke? What lexical elements and grammatical structures help in determining the structural and semantic type of a text?

Let them tell you a fairy story adapted for the times we live in. Once upon a time there was a mommy bear, a daddy bear, and a baby bear from the previous marriage [7]. This text is a parody of the text of a fairy tale, and traditional lexical and structural units help in determining the typology of the text (let them tell you a fairy story, once upon a time, a mommy bear, a daddy bear, and a baby bear). There are also jokes-parodies of rules, instructions, prescriptions, jokes-parodies of letters, jokes-parodies of signs and designations, and jokes-parodies of nursery rhymes[2].

2. Highlight among the narrative texts the actual nomological anecdotes-narratives and quasi-dialogical (nomological) anecdotes. Explain why quasi-dialogical anecdotes can be attributed to narrative texts.

Finally, I took her for my wife. The trouble was my wife didn't want her [8].

Or: Man: Where have you been all my life? Woman: Well, for the first half of it, I was not even born [Ibidem].

In the second example, the narrator acts in different roles, putting on different "language masks". Therefore, we come to the conclusion that this is an imaginary dialogue between fictional characters who have a collective image [2]. Structural and semantic analysis will help students develop their own discursive competence, and completing work with structural and semantic types of anecdote texts will allow performing a creative task for students to create their own texts of anecdotes (anecdote-parody or anecdote-narrative).

The study of English-language humorous discourse can contribute to mastering the basics of rhetoric, conducting discourse, introduce discursive strategies and tactics. The analysis of specific texts from the point of view of rhetorical loading will contribute to the improvement of the educational process and increase the readiness of students from the point of view of discursive competence, allowing them to work out tactics for constructing discourse. Completing tasks to determine tactics and strategies for constructing "joke" texts will contribute to the formation of discursive competence among students. A humorous text is the product of a dynamic process that can be investigated in order to trace the patterns of compliance with the goals of communicative communication. The texts of "joke" can serve as material for the study of discursive strategies and tactics, among which the most important are the strategy of targeting the addressee and the strategy of denunciation, laughter as a "mediator" of criticism.

It is necessary to emphasize such an important feature of humorous discourse as laughter. Reading, analyzing, exploring the humorous texts of "joke", students, provided they understand it adequately, will immediately smile, therefore, their mood will improve. And this, as you know, always has a positive effect on the result of cognition. Moreover, a consistent analysis of the "joke" text units will take place not only at the rational level but also at the emotional level, because in "cognition everything is inextricably linked with emotions". K. Izard defined the positive emotions that the student will receive in the process of such an analysis as "fundamental/basic emotions" that form the main motivational basis of human existence. The text of the joke turns out to be largely focused on the peculiarities of perception and expectation/ anticipation, which is characterized by certain emotional expectations of a person who is pre-tuned to the game, as a kind of modality of the existence of a humorous text [2]. More Z. Freud wrote about the subtle connection of the comic with mental processes. Emotions such as interest-excitement, pleasure-joy, and surprise will be directly related to the process of analyzing the "joke" text, which can reduce the manifestation of other fundamental emotions such as fear and shyness. At the same time, from the practice of teaching a foreign language, it is necessary to note the existence of a certain psychological barrier and the fear of the unknown among students, the fear of making a mistake in learning a new one. Given the positive emotions and pleasure that reduce the overall tension, the choice of funny and funny texts for work in student classrooms proved to be appropriate and appropriate. During the acquaintance with a text of a humorous nature, due to positive emotions, students' overall

psychological stress decreases, performing tasks on the text, they get carried away with playing with language material, which has a beneficial effect on the learning outcome.

Thus, the humorous texts of "jokes" have the great linguistic and didactic potential for the practice of teaching English and the formation of linguistic and cultural competence among university students. This correlates with the trend of "co-learning languages and cultures in the process of preparing a person for life in a multicultural world", and students have the opportunity to get acquainted with "generalized cultural experience" and with a mentality that "objectifies itself in language". The use of humorous texts in the practice of teaching English makes it possible to combine language teaching with teaching lingo-cognitive analysis, and discursive analysis, to acquaint students with the realities of lingo-culture, the peculiarities of speech and social behavior in the country of the language being studied using interesting and unusual material. This will give them the opportunity to master a whole range of knowledge, skills, and abilities in a foreign language and thereby prepare students for intercultural dialogue and interethnic communication.

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