

FEATURES OF ENGLISH IRONIC DISCOURSE

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Abstract: The article deals with irony as a category of discourse and the functions of irony in English linguaculture. The hyperstrategy of English irony is highlighted - optimization of interpersonal relations, the question of including irony in the number of politeness strategies is raised.

Keywords: irony, ironic discourse, functions of irony, English communicative culture, politeness strategies.

Irony is a multifaceted and multifaceted phenomenon. It is the subject of study of philosophers, literary scholars, linguists. The term "irony" today denotes a variety of phenomena that are united by the idea of the discrepancy between the expected and the real state of affairs. Irony is the subject of the works of such researchers as O.P. Ermakova, V.M. Pivoev, L. Alba-Juez, S. Attardo and others.

Irony is considered as a philosophical and aesthetic category and as a category of the comic. In this study, we are interested in irony as a category of discourse, as a product of joint efforts of the speaker and the addressee. The key factor in the creation and understanding of irony is the personality of the speaker and the listener.

There is an opinion that the nature of irony directly depends on the personality of the author, his level of education, social status, political beliefs, aesthetic views.

We will add: when producing an ironic statement, it is equally important to take into account the character, level of development, mood of the recipient, the type of relationship between the interlocutors, the degree of their closeness. The target audience, or the addressee of irony, must be prepared to accept and process the ironic statement. In order for ironic communication to take place, adequate linguistic means and ironic mechanisms must be chosen.

Modern researchers offer a significant number of new terms related to the concept of "irony" and denoting phenomena closely related to it. Thus, there are the terms "ironic personality", "ironic mode", which is a way of linguistic division of reality, "ironic vision of life".

There are the terms "positive", "negative" and "neutral" irony, according to the attitude of the speaker to the addressee and/or object of irony.

English humor and irony are specific phenomena that have not yet been fully studied. Humor is based on paradoxes, and the main paradox is that the country that gave the world the best humorists is considered one of the most narrow-minded in the field of wit. Nevertheless, as observations show, in the process of interpersonal communication, the English often resort to irony, which is designed to smooth out sharp moments, defuse the situation, and make communication more diverse and effective.

The material for our study was ironic statements collected on the basis of BBC programs from the series "Interviews with the Stars". This material clearly illustrates the use of irony, since there is a signal of its use - the reaction of the interlocutor or audience.

In some cases, the laughter of the audience is the only proof for us that the spoken phrase has an ironic subtext. This indicates that the mechanisms of English humor are very specific and are often understandable only to native speakers, and sometimes only to some of them. One of the features of the material listened to is that it is a polylogue involving three subjects: the addresser (the host of the program), the direct addressee (the guest), and the indirect addressee (the audience). There are several ways to actualize the indirect addressee in the speech of the participants: identification of the direct and indirect addressees; self-identification of the addresser with the indirect addressee; using the direct addressee as an

intermediary. The role of the indirect addressee in this case is very important, since the host and the guest appeal to the audience, and its reaction serves as an indicator of the achievement of the communication goals.

In English ironic discourse, the function of optimizing interpersonal relations, in our opinion, is the main one. It can be designated as a hyperstrategy, for the provision of which various tactics are used, such as: a protective function; ridicule or teasing of the addressee; relieving emotional tension; self-expression of the individual.

Irony serves as a defense mechanism against something alarming, unfamiliar, frightening, as well as against the fear of becoming an object of ridicule.

Indeed, the protective function of English humour, irony and self-irony is one of the main ones. A humorous, mocking attitude to life situations has become for the English a way of confronting difficulties, a means of resolving conflict situations and saving face.

Irony in a difficult situation helps to hide true feelings, such as fear and despair, prevent criticism, and avoid aggravation of relations between interlocutors. That is why humor is one of the top priorities for the English.

In situations where they are deprived of the opportunity to be ironic and practice humorous statements, the English feel defenseless and vulnerable. K. Fox writes that the English at a funeral ceremony are like turtles deprived of their shells. Unable to resort to saving humor, they feel incredibly vulnerable, as if they have lost a vital organ. If irony, ridicule and humorous understatement are prohibited, then communication is very difficult: “Observing the English at funerals feels like watching turtles deprived of their shells. Denied the use of humor we feel horribly vulnerable, as though some vital social organ has been removed — which in effect has. At funerals we are left helpless. No irony! No mockery! No humorous understatement! How the hell are we supposed to communicate?”).

Indeed, the protective function of humor creates more comfortable conditions for communication. Self-irony has a special place in English linguoculture. Let us give several examples to the above.

The famous American actress Gwyneth Paltrow, anticipating possible negative comments about her films, criticizes them herself, thus “taking bread” from the journalist.

“I did a couple of good ones and a bunch of bad ones”. (BBC Worldwide — Gwyneth Paltrow interview — Parkinson 17.03.2008).

This is an example of preventing criticism from the interlocutor. By using ironic litotes (“just a couple of good jobs”) and ironic hyperbole (“a whole bunch of bad ones”), the actress is being disingenuous – in fact, she has many more acclaimed roles than unsuccessful ones.

Conclusion. Irony is a way to demonstrate corporate behavior in a dialogue, one of the types of speech games that unites communicants and serves to achieve maximum mutual understanding. Irony is closely related to politeness. The principle of irony is a superstructure over the principle of politeness. It seems possible to consider irony as one of the strategies of politeness. To the distinguished strategies of politeness: express yourself indirectly, be evasive, provide a choice, apologize, be laconic, etc. (for more details, see [4; 12]) we propose to add the strategy "be ironic", which, as our research shows, is effectively used in the English linguistic culture.

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