

The Concept of Incongruity in Comic Discourse: Linguocognitive Aspect

Language is not only a means of communication and transmission of thoughts, but also a mechanism of verbalization of linguistic, cognitive, cultural and psycholinguistic processing of information stored in the human mind. It associates “as a fundamentally *social* phenomenon. <...> it also reflexively constructs our analyses as a form of social action, and situates our disciplines <...> within the modes of regulation and discursive regimes of our times” [5, p. 2]. Its importance is manifested in the interaction with elements of culture, which is conceptualized and stereotyped in the human mind as a result.

Humour is an important background for the existence of the modern world, as it records important for society violations of various nature and creates the foundations for the formation of two content plans, which is the basis for the emergence of a comic effect at the linguistic and cultural level. It is not only a means

of inducing positive emotions, but also a cognitive mechanism that uses the principles of formation of thinking and cognitive activity of a person of the target language culture. Its functional specificity consists in reducing or even overcoming the distance between knowledge about culture and language and their everyday life.

The comic is a form of cognitive evaluation of knowledge of the world through contrast and contradiction, the effect of expectation and the result of perception, through the influence of everyday reality and the relationship with reality, evaluation and attitude to the world, its subjects, objects and phenomena. The comic effect is formed through the interaction of psychological, linguistic and cultural factors. Psychological factors visualize the processes of perception and understanding of the comic and the positive reaction to it in the form of laughter and smiles. Linguistic factors affect the formation of the comic through the orthographic and punctuation means of designing the comic text, lexical units, lexical-grammatical or syntactic structures. It should be noticed that cultural factors form a comic effect through the use of national realias, dialects and the description of historical, socio-political phenomena or events, etc. in comic texts.

The cognitive mechanism of creating the comic is incongruity, because “it states that humour is created out of a conflict between what is expected and what actually occurs in the joke. This accounts for the most obvious feature of much humour: an ambiguity, or double meaning, which deliberately misleads the audience, followed by a punchline” [8, p. 7]. Incongruity is used to explain laughter caused by jokes, anecdotes, puns and objects for entertainment (comedy, satire, parody, mime, clowning, trick, caricature, farce, nonsense, etc.).

The *Oxford English Dictionary* assigns to “incongruity” the following meanings: 1) Disagreement in character or qualities; want of accordance or harmony; discrepancy; inconsistency. (2) Want of accordance with what is reasonable or fitting; unsuitableness, inappropriateness, absurdity. (3) Want of harmony of parts or elements; want of self-consistency [6]. Incongruities come from the gap between the punchline and the expectation. Incongruity is detected when a punchline deviates from one’s expectation formed from the content in a setup [4].

Incongruence occurs through the connection of two words contrasting in meaning (usually those containing antonyms that reveal the contradiction of what is being described), sentences or situations [2, p. 172] and is considered as: a) something unexpected (i.e., a surprise); b) a certain contrast between concepts or ideas that are not usually considered together (i.e. comparison); c) something different from what usually happens (that is, something atypical); d) something that deviates from the ideas of how things should be (i.e. violations) [9, p. 1]; alogism, violation, deviation from the norm, inconsistency, contradiction [1, p. 14]; a cognitive mechanism that records violations of norms and affects the formation of the comic and its elements at the linguistic and cultural levels.

In the scientific paradigm, three types of incongruity are distinguished, which is a basis for the emergence of comic texts. Ontological incongruence is formed on the basis of violation of stereotyping processes in human consciousness. Logical-conceptual incongruence is predicted through a violation of the logic of thought

processes, in particular reasoning and interpretation of illogical within the same plan of content. Valorative incongruence involves a violation of universal value norms and norms of society and the addressee's assessment of the situation.

The basic idea behind the incongruity theory is based on the fact that people generally live in an orderly world where they have come to expect certain patterns among things or their properties, events, etc. Humour or laughter occurs when people experience something that doesn't fit into these patterns or formed expectation <...>. This can be manifested through four categories of illogical distancing in a comic text: Distance of Fiction, Distance in Space, Distance in Time, Personal Distance [7]. Important parameters (*knowledge resources*) in the process of production and perception of verbal humour include: 1) *language* – choice and order of words, use and location of functional elements, etc.; 2) *narrative strategy* – genre of funny text; 3) *target* – comic mainly aimed at ridiculing social stereotypes; 4) *situation* – characters, their activities, objects, setting, etc.; 5) *script opposition*; 6) *logical mechanism* – a logical operation necessary to resolve a discrepancy [3, pp. 293–348].

We see the study of the cross-cultural specificity of comic discourse and the influence of incongruity on the comic effect as promising.

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