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BRITISH IRONY VS RUSSIAN AND BELARUSIAN ONES

Introduction. A big number of conflicts in the modern world indicate that people have ceased to understand one another in almost all spheres of life: riots in the European Union, Asia and Africa, America, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan — the list of countries is unfortunately very long. There are many reasons for that, and one of them is an incorrect interpretation of perceived information. That's why it is so important to continue research in all branches of science concerning human relations.

Main part. The subject of our scientific interest is the phenomenon of irony and the peculiarities of its implementation in the British linguistic picture of the world.

The research is carried out on the basis of a linguoculturological approach.

Irony is used in all languages. But it's a mistake to investigate it as a kind of abstract phenomenon. For this reason there is not universal definition of irony. In this article irony is understood as a value judgment with a hidden negative modality. Using the technique of irony, the speaker does tend to make his interlocutor laugh. On the contrary, there is a negative note in the statement, addressed to the listener or to himself. And so the common features of irony in different linguistic cultures seem to be over. Let's compare peculiarities of irony in Russian, Belarusian and British cultures.

The peculiarity of English irony — is its more hidden meaning than in Russian and Belarusian cultures [1]. The principle of politeness unexpectedly plays an important role here. Politeness and common sense are in the first place for the British who use irony quite often. In case of a conflict this technique being correctly used helps to come to an understanding. For this reason English irony can be called diplomatic. Wise nature of this strategy allows to maintain a harmonious social environment: sarcasm and barb are pushed to the background. For example, in Jerome K. Jerome's novel *“Three Men in a Boat”*, friends use rude expressions at first glance, but they are harmless:

George's head ... said: “Give us a hand here, can't you, you cuckoo; standing there like a stuffed mummy, when you see we are both being suffocated, you dummy!” [2, c. 91].

An unexpected feature of British conservatism and self-confidence is self-criticism: residents of foggy Albion are able to laugh at themselves, that indicates their sense of inner freedom and adequate self-esteem. It is not polite to emphasize your own importance. Hence the desire of well-bred gentlemen to downplay their real merits and sometimes treat them with irony. Using such tactics the speaker still consciously or subconsciously expects the listener to refute his self-critical statements. And, thus, the principle of cultural behavior — politeness — will be on the first place.

The above mentioned principle cannot be called the leading one in the Russian and Belarusian linguistic cultures. Moreover, the latter cannot even be considered as one whole, at least within the framework of the expression of the phenomenon of irony. The character of Russian irony is associated with the names of A. Raikin, M. Zadorny, F. Ranevskaya, M. Zhvanetsky, etc. In general, Russian irony can be called brave, sharp (not malicious), straightforward and wise. The Russian man is simple-minded, even when he is ironic, and sometimes there is sadness in his words: «Итак, главное событие Нового Года — это ...Новый Год! Он все-таки наступил, несмотря ни на что многие тревожились, что его перенесут, переименуют, заменят на другой праздник, но это слава Богу не произошло, и политики проявили благоразумность, порадовали нас 1992 годом» [3]. The irony of F. Ranevskaya is called wise and eccentric: «Я как старая пальма на вокзале — никому не нужна, а выбросить жалко» [4].

And finally, the irony of the Belarusians. It is very different from Russian and British styles. The Belarusians are humble, gentle, tolerant, quite painlessly able to adapt to new circumstances, although they are ironic, in fact, on all life topics. However, the Belarusian irony cannot be called acute, even if the topic is quite exciting: «я хадзіў на суразмоўе ў гандлёвы цэнтр. І такое адчуванне, што я прасіўся да іх не дворнікам, а дырэктарам» [5, с. 4]. The Belarusians tend to express criticism through praise. The Belarusian irony is somewhat straightforward, it is good-natured and it is rather comic, which brings it closer to the Ukrainian linguistic culture.

Conclusion. As a rule, they distinguish three degrees of irony: explicit, hidden and secret. All of them are present in the British, Russian and Belarusian language pictures of the world. However, irony within each of these linguistic cultures differs in its own set of characteristic features, ignorance of which in the context of intercultural communication can lead to misunderstanding or even conflict.

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