

REFERENCES

1. Angelelli, Claudia, (2000). Interpretation as a Communicative Event.
2. Brown Penelope and Stephen Levinson (1987). Politeness, e-book.
3. Crystal, David. English as a global language, e-book.
4. Gentile, A., Ozolins, U. and Vasilakakos, (1996) Liason interpreting, M.e-book.
5. Hofstede, G. (2001). Culture's consequences- comparing values, behaviors, institutions,. E-book.
6. Ponomarenko, E., Malyuga, E. (2012.) Business English and Functional Linguistics: Teaching Practical English in Perfect Harmony with Theory. *ICERI 2012: 5th international Conference on Education, Research and Innovation. Conference Proceedings*. Edited by L. Gomez Chova, A. Lopez Martinez, I. Candel Torres; IATED, 4524-4529.
7. Samovar, L., Porter, R. (1998) Communication between cultures, E-book.
8. Taft, R. (1981) The role and Personality of the mediator
9. Trompenoars, F. (1997) Riding the waves of culture.

УДК 811

А.Ю. Хачумян

Российский университет дружбы народов

ИРОНИЯ КАК СРЕДСТВО УСТАНОВЛЕНИЯ МЕЖНАЦИОНАЛЬНЫХ ДЕЛОВЫХ КОНТАКТОВ (НА ПРИМЕРЕ АМЕРИКАНЦЕВ И БРИТАНЦЕВ)

В статье анализируются ирония и юмор, а также их восприятие в зависимости от культуры и национальности. Автор рассматривает иронию как средство для

налаживания межкультурных взаимосвязей, раскрывает особенности и перспективы использования данного средства.

Ключевые слова: ирония, юмор, деловое общение, межкультурные коммуникации.

A.Yu. Khachumyan
Peoples Friendship University of Russia

**IRONY AS THE MEANS OF BUSINESS
INTERCULTURAL CONTACT ESTABLISHING
(ON THE EXAMPLE OF BRITISH AND
AMERICAN PEOPLE)**

The article deals with the irony and humor, as well as their perception depending on the culture and nationality. The author considers irony as a means for establishing cross-cultural relationships and reveals all the threats and prospects of its use.

Keywords: irony, humor, business communication, intercultural communication.

Introduction

Pronunciation and spelling of some words are not the only difference between the American and British languages. There are also lots of cultural and historical differences.

Since ancient times British people cultivated in themselves the sense of humor, which was considered as one of the signs of good manners. However, self-irony and the ability to laugh at others being quite natural for the representatives of British people could cause confusion and misunderstanding for other nationalities. They lose this slight connection and synergy of irony and consequently become the victims of the joke or pun.

Main part

Humor is a phenomenon, which is influenced by culture. It can be difficult to determine what aspects define a certain sense of humor. A nation's wit is linked to the historical development of

the country. How funny somebody finds a certain incident depends on many factors including age, personal experience, level of education and geographical location. Therefore, humor is something which is not always transferrable in another country. What somebody from one area finds hilarious may not be amusing at all to somebody from another location. Whether or not someone gets a joke is determined by their interpretation, filtered by the cultural context.

If both countries speak two different variants of one and the same language they are able not to share the same sense of humor. The British and the Americans speak English, but they just don't share the same values when it comes to laughing. Humor is just not transferrable from one country to another.

It is often argued that one of the most common differences between the British and American sense of humor is that Americans don't understand irony or they use it much rarer. Basically speaking, they don't use it in daily conversations as British people. When Americans use irony they tend to state that they were "only kidding". They feel the need to make a joke more obvious than Brits do, maybe this stems from a fear of offending people.

The American sense of humor is generally more slapstick than that in Britain. I think this arises from a cultural difference between the two. Their jokes are more obvious and forward, a bit like Americans themselves. British jokes, on the other hand, tend to be more subtle but with a dark or sarcastic undertone. There is usually a hidden meaning. This may stem from the fact that British culture is more reserved than American culture.

Business discourse refers to the so-called institutional type, which is understood as a "special clichéd kind of communication between people who may not know each other, but have to communicate in accordance with the norms of the society" (Karasik, 2004). Participants of business communication often act as representatives of certain Legal Entities and have clearly

identifiable social statuses. As a rule, they have their place in the hierarchy and the personal origin is levelled in their speech that is also determined by other typical features of business communication – the degree of officiality. Generally we are talking about official business communication that takes place during negotiations, presentations, meetings, business correspondence, and semi-official communication, which are characterized by a combination of status-role and personal relationships with predominance of the first one. The semi-official business communication is traditionally characterized by less regulated and ritual communication, by lower frequency of the usage of professional vocabulary and stereotyped expressions. Speech with humour and irony is often used in such communication (Khranchenko, 2010).

The above mentioned features of the business English discourse impose significant restrictions on the use of verbal arsenal directed on modifying the communicative situation and having a pragmatic impact on partner.

In recent years, the so-called "black rhetoric" has become very popular in business community. The essence of it is to manipulate directly by all rhetorical techniques and means. It is used to direct a business conversation into more desirable, constructive way, to bring opponent or audience to the desired conclusion or result, to eliminate contradictions and turn negative thinking and behavior of the interlocutors to a positive one, removing "traps" placed by other participants of business discourse. "Black rhetoric – is a miraculous art of words managing with use of entire kaleidoscope of language features and capabilities of a speaker" (Bredemaier, 2006). It should be noted that a definition "black" in this case has a conditional character since it does not necessarily involve the manipulation of the partner, and probably K. Bredemaier used it to emphasize a speaker's desire to somehow disguise – "black out" – premeditation of speech influence on a partner.

Indeed, a consistent use of a whole complex of means and

tools that are available in the field of language of this discourse type contributes to a successful achievement of the communicative purpose. However, as noted above, a conventional nature of communication in a framework of business English discourse, a high degree of standardization, correctness and balance lead to the fact that communicants have to operate within a limited range of verbal means aimed at influencing partner in solving various professional problems. Therefore, the successful development of business relations depends on the ability to plan a functional perspective of speech by combining a variety of rhetorical techniques and building them in an optimal sequence, paying special attention to the relation of different types of functional connections between the statements.

Linguistic justification for "black rhetoric" can be given from the standpoint of functional and pragmatic approaches and can explain the mechanisms of functioning of the rhetorical figure of irony in English business communication.

Irony as a feature of national mentality and attribute of postmodernism gets into a variety of English discourse, including business. Ignorance of the typical English manners of combining an external courtesy and veiled by various linguistic means ironical attitude can lead to serious problems in business, and, perhaps, to break existing relationships. Thus, the study of irony as a rhetorical figure of business communication plays an important role in improving the efficiency of the discourse.

Since irony in speech is a quite serious "weapon" it can have a destructive impact on communication. That is why it should be used very carefully as it is connected with a moral aspect of interpersonal communication. In rhetoric, there is a number of restrictions on irony that are aimed at making speech interaction more humane and related to ethical issues. So E.N. Zaretsky identifies the following conditions under which this figure of speech can have negative effects.

Ironic speech is absolutely inappropriate if an interlocutor has no sense of humor, as well as in cases when a communicant is in a dejected, depressed mental state or insufficiently familiar with a subject of irony. The very communicative situation may indicate an inappropriate use of irony. It is not allowed in rhetoric to use irony in cases that are connected with high emotionality, for example, a variety of activities and events that have a ritual character (wedding, funeral, and many others). It is prohibited to choose an object of irony in the presence of a third party, from which the first one depends on psychologically, emotionally or socially. It is strongly recommended not to speak ironically about person's drawbacks or about something that it is very important to him (Zaretskaya, 1998). Keep in mind that these restrictions are valid for both household and business communication. It is hard to imagine that verbalization of ironic attitude in business conversation toward subordinate in front of his direct superior or partner's image of the company, will lead to the harmonization and optimization of business cooperation. However, irony is actively used in different genres of both oral and written business English discourse that demonstrates the potential of its positive impact on communication.

The founder of "black rhetoric" K. Bredemaier highly appreciated the value of irony as a rhetorical figure of business communication, comparing it with the "Trojan horse of verbal acrobatics" (Bredemaier, 2006). Fine irony, which is used properly and adequately perceived by all communicants, can often cause joint laughter and is able to create and deepen relationships, to establish an emotional connection between the interlocutors. That is why sometimes it is useful to go beyond dry, strict business communication (Bredemaier, 2006). In addition, an ability to laugh demonstrates emancipation and speaker's confidence in his own abilities that also gives a certain weight in situations of business communication. Besides, humor and irony contribute to diversion from the topic and to stress relief.

Irony can be used in a speech of business people as a sign of friendship, emotional mood to cooperation and readiness for joint problem solving.

While explaining scientific and economic concept of "transfer cost" speaker uses original and unscientific analogy that gives the explanation some irony and facilitate the perception of specific professional term, which itself sounds really strange.

Thus, the use of irony in the business communication harmonizes communication and helps to create benevolent atmosphere and a positive attitude for a business interaction.

Another example of irony as a way of reality perception in oral business communication is presented by the statement made by Ben Bernanke – the Chairman of the Federal Reserve's Board of Directors, about the immense popularity and wide spreading of the ideas of well-known macroeconomist John Taylor:

With our appetites whetted by the Taylor rule, the [Taylor] principle, and the [Taylor] curve, we now look forward to the Taylor dictum, the Taylor hyperbola, and maybe even the Taylor conundrum (Loungani P. The Quest For Rules// Finance & Development. – March 2008. – Vol. 45. - № 1).

Ironic effect is achieved by a judicious combination of hyperbole and repetition. Obviously exaggerated expressions «are with our appetites whetted» and «we now look forward to», indicate not the rapid interest to Taylor's discoveries but the satiety of them. This is proved by four-time nominated name of the scientist in a small volume of utterance. Bernanke uses lexeme «dictum» and «hyperbola», to emphasize the fertility and diversity of Taylor's scientific potential. Discursive element «conundrum» completes a number of possible inventions, which goes into dissonance with the previous listings and most likely directly related to the description of scientist's personality. In response to the functional fluctuations pragma-semantic system activates internal processes of self-organization, resulting in an attraction of additional component of carelessness, friendly

"banter" from the external environment (consciousness communicants).

Conclusion

Analysis of the collected factual material indicates that the complexity of the internal mechanism of irony depends on preparedness of speech and initial conditions of the system of meanings. During spontaneous communion there are fewer elements of pragma-semantic system that participate in the creation of ironic pragmatic effect. The more speech is elaborated, the more varied linguistic resources are used to achieve the communicative aim and higher the degree of influence on pragmatic discourse participants. That is why it seems to be necessary to review features of irony functioning in written business communication.

Irony often may be used in business English discourse because of certain personal (psychological) characteristics and speech manners of the subject. In such cases the speaker does not take into account the appropriateness of a particular irony in the situation of communication, and a specific function of a statement is connected to the subconscious desire to win over the interlocutor and, perhaps, in order to hide from him some facts related to the joint business.

A rhetorical figure of irony is quite widely used in different genres of oral and written business English discourse. That can be explained by the penetration of the mental attitudes of post-modernism, the peculiarities of the British national mentality, the specifics of the English language and the individual characteristics of communicative style of an ironic subject.

The effectiveness of irony in business discourse depends on abilities and skills of communicants to recognize formed speaking / writing background of the text and to capture important elements of semantic system, that creates an ironic pragmatic effect. In an opposite case, a violation of an adequate information exchange between the system of discourse and

consciousness of communicants, as one of the subsystems of the environment, leads to a leveling of ironic statement. As a result, the recipient drops out of the pragmatic effect of rhetorical reception, what threatens the success of business communication. Thus, irony is an anthropic phenomenon, largely caused by personal data of communicants and the state of conceptual systems that are formed for each of the sides by vertical context.

Often an ironic statement violates established rigid rules of verbal behavior, since they are usually directed against the interlocutor and the organization he represents. It blocks an adequate exchange between discursive system and communicative situation as a subsystem of the environment and contributes to the deviation of the pragma-semantic field of business discourse from the equilibrium state.

It is able to have a significant positive impact on a process of oral verbal communication. Fluctuations caused by it plays a constructive role and lead to a creation of new, emergent functional properties of business discourse and as a result outputs pragma-semantic system to a new level of order. As a rhetorical reception irony has a significant pragmatic potential.

Depending on extra-linguistic conditions of a particular genre of business discourse irony can be used for the establishment of relationships with different degree of efficiency. It helps to make communication less official, to lighten the mood, to protect from communicators' criticism and attacks, as well as to discredit opponents and reduce their credibility in eyes of others, to express their negative attitude to the subject of the speech in a more or less hidden, veiled form. It allows staying within business etiquette and observing necessary rules of decency, which are important in this type of discourse. Finally, irony actively contributes to successful promotion of the system of meanings to more ordered form – to functional attractor, that is the main goal of all business communication.

ЛИТЕРАТУРА

1. Бреденмайер К. Черная риторика: Власть и магия слова. - М.: Альпина Бизнес Букс, 2008. – С. 27, 43, 74
2. Зарецкая Е. Н. Риторика. Теория и практика речевой коммуникации. – Москва: Дело, 1998. – 480 с.
3. Карасик В.И. Языковой круг. Личность, концепты, дискурс. Монография. – Волгоград: Перемена, 2002. – 477 с.
4. Храмченко Д.С. Ирония в английском деловом дискурсе: Автореф. ... канд. филол. н. – М., 2010. – 25 с.
5. The Quest For Rules (2000). Finance & Development. – Vol. 45. - № 1.

REFERNCES

1. Bredemaier, C. (2008). Chernaja ritorika: Vlast' i magija slova [Black rhetoric: the Power and magic of words]. Alpina Biznes Bux, 27, 43, 74.
2. Zaretskaya, E. (1998). Ritorika. Teorija i praktika rechevoj kommunikacii [Rhetoric: Theory and practice of speech communication] Moscow: Delo.
3. Karasik, V. (2002). Jazykovoj krug. Lichnost', koncepty, diskurs. Monografija [Language circle: personality, concepts, discours]. Volgograd: Peremena.
4. Khramchenko, D. (2010). Ironia v angliiskom delovom diskurse [Irony in English Business Discourse]. Avto-ref. ... kand. filol. n.
5. The Quest For Rules (2000). Finance & Development. – Vol. 45. - № 1.