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## FEATURES OF HUMOUR AS A LINGUOCULTURAL PHENOMENON

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With globalization, members of different cultures interact with each other more often today than ever before. The concept of humor is present in all human cultures, as it has been proven that the desire to use humor is universal for people all over the world. Despite the limited number of research works devoted to the study of cultural characteristics of humor, the existence of cross-cultural differences in the perception and use of humor cannot be denied. In recent years, culturally grounded characteristics of humor have attracted more and more interest among scholars who devote their work to the study of both broad and narrow aspects of this phenomenon. For example, researchers examine creativity and humor from a cultural perspective [1], pay special attention to the role of culture-specific social factors and their influence on humor perception and use [2], and there are also multifaceted studies of the cultural characteristics of humor that examine the messages hidden in humor, the relationship of humor to politics and history.

The theoretical basis of this topic is formed by the works of sociologists, culturologists and linguists devoted to the study of cultural characteristics of representatives of different cultures (Hofstede G., House R., Javidan M., Hanges P.,

## SECTION 19.

### PHILOLOGY AND JOURNALISM

Doofman P., Zhuhai V., Twark J., V.Y. Propp, etc.), works studying the cultural features of humor (Yin J, Mintz L.E., Lu J.G., Martin A.E., Usova A., Galinsky A.D., Kalliny M., Jiang T., Cao Y., etc.), as well as studies focusing on the study of humor as a multifaceted phenomenon (Martin R., Fry W.F., etc.).

Humor is a phenomenon, the nature of which, in general, at a certain level is understandable to every person, regardless of intellectual development, education and cultural background. However, despite this, even in our time, humor remains a phenomenon that has not been fully explored, some aspects of which still need additional attention and research. Humor, being a multidimensional phenomenon, has been studied interdisciplinarily for years, often focusing on the sociological aspect, but important research is also conducted within the framework of linguistics and such areas as psycholinguistics, linguocultural studies, cognitive linguistics, and others.

Antiquity made an invaluable contribution to the study of the most important aspects of humor, setting the tone for all future research in the field. The ethical problems arising from humor prompted the philosophers of ancient Greece to pay attention to this issue and to bring the comic into the circle of their research interests. It should be noted that the study of the comic at that time was through the prism of the importance of appropriate comic in oratory. Philosophers were formally divided into two camps that followed the two underlying tendencies of the time. Democritus, Aristophanes, and Lucian understood the comic as a kind of worldview that comes as an adjunct to a serious view of the world. In this context, the comic was seen as putting on display all the imperfections of the world and encouraging to make some changes. At the same time, the second tendency was represented by Plato, Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian, who believed that the funny displayed the ugly but was something harmless, part of recreation and entertainment. However, philosophers of both traditions recognized the importance of humor. Plato agreed that the serious cannot be known without the funny, and philosophers of the first tradition were convinced that humor allowed the world to be seen as a whole. Humor continues to be the object of study of many philosophers of the New Age, such as I. Kant, A. Schopenhauer, F. Bacon, G. W. F. Hegel, A. Bergson, R. Descartes and others.

Laughter is the result of successfully realized humor and needs separate attention. The philosopher Henri Bergson wrote *Laughter: An Essay on the Significance of the Comical*, in which he identified three factors of particular importance in explaining laughter as a phenomenon. The first thing the author focused on was the fact that laughter is peculiar only to man. The second important fact noted is that laughter, according to the author, requires a certain emotional detachment, and thirdly, laughter plays an important social role, as it unites people.



Constructive and destructive types of humor are distinguished. J. Nagy believed that constructive or, in other words, healthy humor, implies the need for flexible personal boundaries in a person and the ability to interact properly with others [3]. On the contrary, destructive or, in other words, destructive humor is associated with an inherent deviant level of aggression, reduced or absent ability to establish contact with people and absolutely not flexible personal boundaries. Destructive humor has several characteristics. The implication is that one will laugh at someone instead of laughing with someone. Based on contempt and insensitivity, such humor aims to destroy a person's self-confidence through humiliation. It should also be emphasized that when destructive humor is used, the person is not given the right to choose, making them the object of ridicule without asking. Such humor is often very sarcastic and in the end does not bring people together, but rather divides them into opposing groups.

In turn, constructive humor is based on caring and empathy. Its purpose is to engage people in fun, to make people laugh together, on equal terms. Such humor builds the confidence of all involved, including the person who is the object of the joke, because the person voluntarily agrees to be laughed at and is even willing to laugh at himself. As a result, constructive humor brings people closer together through ridiculing common human weaknesses. Consequently, it is important to understand that although humor can help sublimate conflict by means of a joke told at the right time, at the same time it is another joke or witticism that can become a source of resentment or conflict.

The phenomenon of humor is worth considering in conjunction with the functions it performs for society. There are no universally accepted functions of humor, a large number of scholars highlight their functions that are appropriate in the context of their research. Humor is considered a desirable positive personality trait [4], people who use humor in communication seem more attractive [5], more creative and capable. Moreover, humor is also gaining importance as an indicator of psychological health, related to self-awareness and good adjustment [6].

Humor is inherently a universal phenomenon, but as Martin and Ford [6] pointed out, its individual cultural characteristics cannot be ignored: "Humor is a universal human activity that most people encounter many times during the course of a typical day and in a wide variety of social contexts. At the same time, it is clear that there are important cultural influences on how humor is used and on the situations that are considered appropriate for laughter." Differences in humor style and contextual cues can often be observed, and the cultural specificity of a culture's thematic preferences for humor also deserves special attention.

The world is getting closer every day to becoming a global village as people from different cultural backgrounds interact with each other more and more.

## SECTION 19.

### PHILOLOGY AND JOURNALISM

Humor, being an important part of human life, often causes difficulties in communication when people with different cultural backgrounds interact with each other. Many researchers emphasize the complexity of the humorous aspect in intercultural communication [7]. The existence of universal humor, which means humor that is able to erase cultural boundaries and be understood by representatives of different cultures, would serve as an excellent solution to all cultural misunderstandings that arise with the use of humor in intercultural communication. Speaking about the existence of universal humor, we can, for example, mention social taboos and political satire, which are popular topics for humor. However, in this case too, additional culturally specific information will be needed to understand the joke. In addition, it is worth noting often culturally related humor techniques, such as exaggeration, understatement, sarcasm, and witty cynicism, whose popularity does cross cultural boundaries. But even the knowledge of these techniques does not guarantee the understanding of humor. At this stage of human development it is not possible to speak about the existence of universal humor, for this reason, great importance is attached to the cultural features of humor, the study of which allows to establish successful communication when communicating with representatives of different cultures [8].

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