

REVISITING THE USE OF EXPRESSIVE COLLOQUIAL LANGUAGE FOR CREATING A COMIC EFFECT (ON THE BASIS OF SHORT HUMOROUS STORIES)

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ABSTRACT

The relevance of the problem in study is caused by the activation of the substandard layers of vocabulary, not only colloquial but also in the journalistic and literary speech, as well as the need to study these new phenomena in English. The aim of this work is to study the use of expressive colloquial language for creating a comic effect on the example of short humorous stories. Leading approach to the study of this problem is the analysis, carried out on the basis of descriptive, comparative methods, the method of literary text description, involving elements of linguistic and stylistic analysis. Methodological basis became the researches in stylistics, lexicology and translation studies. The paper revealed that non-standard elements of literary language have a certain linguistic and communicative status and value, primarily as conventional expressive means of stylistically substandard speech, reflecting to some extent functional and stylistic variation in the vocabulary of the national language. Article materials may be useful for further research in this field, for understanding colloquial and familiar, everyday speech, for reading modern fiction and periodical literature, for oral and written (literary) translation activity, etc.

Keywords: *non-standard vocabulary, expressive colloquial language, the comic, short humorous stories, linguistics.*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The study of substandard subsystems of the language is a rather difficult task, as among linguists there is no single point of view in determining the nature of the uncodified vocabulary, its structure and functions, its role in the life of social groups and the whole society .

Despite the great interest of scientists to substandard and components of these phenomena, still remains the problem of choice and definitions of terms serving the signs of non-literary language formations. Traditionally, such vocabulary include "low" colloquialisms (colloquial vocabulary), a common slang, special slang (jargon and argot), and vulgarisms. Literary (standard) vocabulary is contrasted with non-literary (non-standard), which, no doubt, narrows the sphere of use the latter one. However, within the layer of nonstandard vocabulary, different levels depending on various stylistic and social functioning and purpose are singled out. Often the boundaries are strongly vague. However, it is clear that social and professional determined vocabulary "due to its attachment to the socio-conditioned variation of the national language has "narrower" usage than "low" colloquialisms and slangisms" (Belyaeva, Khomyakov, 2010).

1.2. Status of a Problem

Modern colloquial language is a sociolinguistic phenomenon, widely used in everyday speech in informal speech, in the mass media and in fiction. The study and description of this phenomenon is complicated by the problem of determining its lexical structure, which is associated primarily with different approaches to the concept of colloquial language.

Colloquial language sometimes is considered only in narrow sense as the speech of uneducated or poorly educated people, i.e. as erroneous words or forms of words (Khimik, 2000). In the broadest sense the colloquial language is not only non-literary words or forms of words, but also expressive, stylistically substandard words, means of creating "poetics of low" (Filin, 1979).

Colloquial language penetrating in the spoken language should be considered in the broadest sense, separating it from conversational speech with the help of concepts of language and communicative standard .

1.3. Thematic Justification

The relevance of the study of non-standard language, namely expressive colloquial language, was due to the fact that the development of the English lexical system is distinguished by special complexity, it is connected not only with quantitative changes, reflecting the nominative and communicative needs of society, but also with qualitative transformations that makes stylistic differentiation of language, interinfluence of various layers of vocabulary and semantic development of vocabulary.

1.4. Objectives of the Research

The aim of this work is to study the use of expressive colloquial language for creating a comic effect on the example of short humorous stories.

2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Methods of the Research

The main method is contrastive-comparative sociolexicological method including delimitation of two temporary planes: synchronic and diachronic. There are the following research methods:

- a) analysis as per functional-stylistic and socio-stratificational marks in the most authoritative reference source for determining the communicative status and socio-speech variation of non-standard elements ;
- b) analysis as per lexical entry for the opening the nomination peculiarities and semantic matter of non-standard elements in comparison with the paradigmatics of standard vocabulary;
- c) a comparative analysis of the form (structural construction) of non-standard and standard elements to determine the characteristics of colloquial word formation;
- d) linguostylistic analysis to identify syntagmatics of non-standard vocabulary in different contexts;

This system of techniques of contrastive-comparative sociolexicological method allows to consider an object of study as an unstable, multi-faceted and complex phenomenon in different aspects.

2.2. Factual Material of the Research

For the study of specific features of the colloquial language and stylistically substandard vocabulary, we selected short humorous stories of O. Henry, M. Twain and S. Leacock.

2.3. Basis of the Research

Socio-stylistic essence of the English colloquial language is of theoretical and practical interest as a private matter of the interconnection of national language with the social dialects, of normalized

conversational speech with its antipode - non-standard (colloquial) speech in different communicative areas taking into account the emotional and expressive means.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Study of the Stylistic System of Language

Regulation on the existence of two main units of stylistic system of language: the functional and expressive style shall be taken as a basis in this work. The term "functional style" is understood as "a set of linguistic resources used in a particular environment of communication and with a specific purpose. However, this is a certain laws of selection and grouping of linguistic means, potentially assigned to any sphere of human activity" (Belyaeva, Khomyakov, 2010).

The expressive style is singled out on the basis of certain emotional and situational criteria and is defined as the traditional totality of the linguistic means for expressive communication level - neutral style, substandard style (Semenyuk, 1972). There are other terms. Thus, in the concept of R.G.Piotrowski (Piotrowski, 1962) we can see high styles, covering solemnly poetic and scientific use; middle styles, including literary and narrative, literary and conversational styles; low styles - low colloquial. J. Kenyon indicates two levels - standard and substandard - and two functional variants - formal and informal (Kenyon, 1958); U. Hannerz refers to the high and low, or the formal and informal styles (Hannerz, 1970); V.N.Yartseva writes that "the problems of style are closely linked to the dismemberment of bookish- written and oral-colloquial types of speech" (Yartseva, 1969); G.V. Stepanov distinguishes strata proper differentiation of language: the highest strata – the lowest strata, cultural level – uncultured level (Stepanov, 1976).

3.2. Study of the Vocabulary of the Language

On the basis of the standard-variative principle, the vocabulary of the language differentiates into three complex lexical levels, opposed to each other in view of the existence of sociolinguistic rules: 1) literary standard - the prevalence of the first level norm; 2) expressive colloquial language- parity varying standards of both levels; 3) social and professional colloquial language - the prevalence of the second level norm.

Each lexical level on the basis of the variable-stratificational principle distinguishes three lexical layers, forming the basis of verbal repertoire of corresponding communication register (situational-variative principle): 1) in the literary standard: (a) literary-bookish, including, in particular, the terminology (b) neutral, (c) literary-colloquial; 2) in the expressive colloquial language: (a) low colloquialisms, (b) common slangisms, (c) vulgarisms; 3) in the socio-professional language: (a) professional jargon, (b) corporate jargon, (c) argotic expressions (or kent expressions).

In this paper, we are mainly interested in the components of the substandard vocabulary of language, and elements opposed to them in normative-functional and conceptual plans of lexical subsystem of literary standard.

Low colloquialisms, common slangisms and vulgarisms do not have the social and professional labelling, which distinguishes them from the professional and corporate jargon and argotic expressions (kent expressions). Between themselves in expressive colloquial language, they differ in depth of ethical and stylistic substandard - the largest at vulgarisms, the lowest at low colloquialisms and transitional qualities in common slangisms.

3.3. The study of Colloquial Language

In Western linguistics, term "colloquial language" refers to a conglomeration of deviations from the "standard" language: slangisms, trendy phrases, nicknames, etc. Stylistic colouring of colloquial language makes it a mean of expression in works of fiction and in common literary language (Belyaeva, Khomyakov, 2010).

By the English lexical colloquial language is meant a complex lexical-semantic category - a specific fragment of the national structure of the language, i.e., an organized in a certain manner and having the general structure, a hierarchical entity representing the totality of socially determined lexical systems (jargon, argot) and stylistically substandard vocabulary layers ("low" colloquialisms, slangisms, vulgarisms), which are characterized by significant differences and divergences in the basic functions and sociolexicological, pragmatic, functional-semantic and stylistic aspects.

Colloquial language includes four subnotions: (1) extraliterary, (2) locally-territorial, (3) ethnical and (4) lexical colloquial language.

Extraliterary colloquial language is non-existential language form, presented by phonetic and grammatical deviations from the literary norm of the first level, typical for interdialect of illiterate or semi-literate people.

Local-territorial colloquial language includes autonomous existential forms of the national language version presented by regional and geographical dialects, and the semi-autonomous existential forms - local semi-dialects and urban parlances.

By ethnic colloquial language is meant autonomous socialized ethnic dialects and semi-autonomous unsocialized semi-dialects and parlances.

Lexical colloquial language as a set of non-autonomous existential linguistic forms is a historically constituted hierarchically structured lexical subsystem of the national language, including stylistically substandard and socially marked lexical elements.

Lexical colloquial language is subdivided into expressive and socio-professional colloquial language.

Expressive colloquial language is a component of a functional system of literary language with the norm of the second level, which includes supradialectal stylistically substandard vocabulary with the expression of ease or derogation, the well-known and commonly used in the fields of everyday speech communication and indicating everyday occurrences, features and processes. Expressive colloquial language is a mean of conventional spoken varieties of speech with emotional and evaluative meaning. Expressive colloquial language combines low colloquialisms, common slangisms and vulgarisms.

3.4. The Study of Methods of Creating Comic Effect

As is well known, colloquial language is widely used in the literary language in expressive or playfully coloured contexts, when live performance of different life events and situations. Colloquial language freely and consciously is introduced by writers in fiction and thus acquires the properties of the aesthetic category, which is typical for writers.

Our observations on the use of non-standard vocabulary as aesthetically important category in the literature give reason to speak, at least, of three main methods of creating the comic with the help of elements of lexical expressive colloquial language. At the first method, the author deliberately includes in speech characteristics of the character (characters) expressive element forming a "stylistic crash"

(Lotman, 1992), thereby, creating a sudden comic effect (satirical, ironic, humorous). Thus, stylistic crash in its classical concentration can be found in O. Henry's story "Babes in the Jungle:"

"Hello, Billy," – says Silver; "I'm glad to see you. Yes, it seemed to me that the West was accumulating a little too much wisdom. I've been saving New York for dessert. I know it's a low-down trick to take things from these people. They only know this and that and pass to and fro and think ever and anon. I'd hate for my mother to know I was skinning these weak-minded ones. She raised me better"

Here at rapid change of backgrounds - when the literary standard, performing the function of the general background in a literary text is suddenly changed in the colloquial language with its stylistically marked background - there is a stylistic crash .

The second method of creation of the comic is author's commenting of stylistically substandard words; no stylistic crashes, the comic effect entirely depends on what the reader finds out of the speech characteristics of the characters in the author's story, or in the following remarks of the characters, commenting on some early statement with non-standard vocabulary: comic effect here as it is delayed on purpose. For example,

But I like to find myself among people that can talk, not among a pack of numbskulls. What I like is good general conversation, about things worth talking about. But among a crowd of idiots like that what can you expect? You'd think that even society people would be interested, or pretend to be, in real things ("Every Man and his Friends. Mr. Crunch's Portrait Gallery", S.Leacock)

Here the reader's attention as it is paid on an especially substandard stylistic element. Commenting varies depending on the purpose and the author's style.

Finally, the third method of creating the comic is "subjective-comic." Subjective-comic is the most evident in verbal duels of characters. "While such duel lasts, there is a comic tension different from the comic effect by the length in time" (Belyaeva, Khomyakov, 2010). Particularly in M.Twain's story "The Capitoline Venus:"

"Oh, John, friend of my boyhood, I am the unhappiest of men "

"You're a simpleton "!

"I have nothing left to love but my poor statue of America – and see, even she has no sympathy for me in her cold marble countenance – so beautiful and so heartless "!

"You're a dummy "!

"Oh, John "!

"Oh, fudge! Didn't you say you had six months to raise the money in "?

"Don't deride my agony, John. If I had six centuries what good would it do? How could it help a poor wretch without name, capital, or friends "?

"Idiot! Coward! Baby! Six months to raise the money in – and five will do "!

"Are you insane?" ("The Capitoline Venus", M.Twain)

Elements of expressive colloquial language are commonly used in characters' dialogues when informal, easy and generally familiar communicating. Emotionally expressive non-standard vocabulary, the role of which involves ethical and stylistic substandard, adds typical features of a live conversation to dialogues.

4.DISCUSSIONS

The methodological basis of the research involves the works of Russian and foreign scientists on the comic problem (M. M. Bakhtin, H. Bergson, Yu. B. Borev, A.Z. Vulis, B. Dzemidok, L.V. Karasev, D. S. Likhachev, V.M. Pivoev, V.Ya. Propp, M. T.Ryumina, etc.), modern works devoted to the analysis of the comic in the language (V.N. Vakurov, Yu. N. Varzonin, E. A. Garanina, T. A. Gridina, A. Yu. Goloborodko, A. A. Golubkov, T. I. Damm, A. I. Efimov, M. R. Zheltukhina, E. A.Zemskaya, V.M. Kapatsinskaya, A. V. Karasik, N. V. Konovaltseva, G. S. Pokrass, S. I. Pokhodnya, G. G. Pocheptsov, V. Z. Sannikov, O. I. Solovieva, E. V. Tyumentseva, L.V. Shevchuk, etc.), the studies of famous national and foreign linguists, devoted to the study of non-standard language (L.I. Barannikova, E. M. Beregovskaya, E. G. Borisova-Lukashanets, I. R. Galperin, E. A.Zemskaya, V.G. Kostomarov, L.P. Krysin, B.A. Larin, M. M. Makovsky, T.G. Nikitina, O. A.Semenyuk, V.A. Khomyakov, A.D. Schweitzer, E. Partridge, L. Soudek, P. Trudgill, S. B. Flexner, etc.).

5 .CONCLUSION

The point to be emphasized is that the non-standard elements of literary language have a certain linguistic and communicative status and value, primarily as conventional expressive means of stylistically reduced speech, reflecting to some extent functional and stylistic variation in the vocabulary of the national language. However, they have all the features of colloquiality, reflecting the psychology of the medium native speaker and situations of everyday life, have spontaneous type of expression, and are characterized by emotivity, imagery, familiarity .

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