

COMIC COMMUNICATION MECHANISM AS AN INTENTIONAL-MOTIVATED CONTAMINATION

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Abstract: a communicative mechanism described as a comic-motivated intentional contamination that means a change as a result of cross-breeding different words or expressions of similar sounding, construction, and meaning. This mechanism is realized through the transfer of communicative intention, i.e. resulting motives and goals of the communication.

Keywords: humor, comic communicative mechanism, functions of humor.

MECANISMOS DE COMUNICAÇÃO CÔMICA EM UMA CONTAMINAÇÃO INTENCIONAL

Resumo: um mecanismo comunicativo descrito como uma contaminação intencionalmente cômico-motivados que significa uma mudança como resultado de cruzamentos palavras ou expressões de sonoridade semelhante, construção e significado diferentes. Este mecanismo é realizado através da transferência de intenção comunicativa, ou seja, resultando em motivos e objetivos da comunicação.

Palavras-chave: humor, mecanismo de cômico-comunicação, funções do humor.

The category of comic communication is very old and appears in both oral and written communication. The sense of humor as the ability to understand and produce funny statements has been always highly valued by the society. Let us consider the communicative mechanism of comic interactions. Communication is characterized as a semantic aspect of social interaction. The main function of communication is to achieve social community retaining the identity of communicating parties. The intention of humor is realized in the communicative functions of language. The postulate of R. Jakobson states that every verbal behavior is directed at a particular target [1]. Functions of communication are distinguished by R. Jakobson according to the basic element of the communication system. They are: 1) appellative - used for calling; 2) impacting (voluntative) – a means to appeal, inspire action; 3) expressive – expression of the personality of a speaker; 4) establishing contacts (phatic) – creating and maintaining contacts; 5) assimilation (connotative) – storage and transmission of national identity. These language features are also inherent to humor.

Under the communicative mechanism of humor, we understand the intentional-motivated contamination (a change in the meaning as a result of mixing different words or expressions that are close in the sounding, structure, and meaning). This mechanism is implemented through the transfer of communicative intentions (the resultant of motives and purposes of communication) by:

- handling through its influence on the perception of the content via comic language form, as a means of changing the meaning in the process of perception on the basis of the presence in the language (speech) effective forms of influencing changing the meaning of the utterance in the process of understanding the comic, such as: making available to the absurd, a mixture of styles, allusion, irony, metaphors, ambiguity, paradox;

- the hierarchy of humorous linguistic communication means of the displacement of evaluation (depreciation and over-evaluation) that create conditions for the mobilization of communication resources and the communicative exit from the crisis through the change of targets of a personality;

- implementation, in the context of comic language forms and situations, personal characteristics of a speaker based on the interpretation of linguistic forms through the prism of situation or interpret the situation through the prism of language form;

- dynamization of the semantic system based on the comic leading up to the establishment and maintenance of contact with a minimum amount of expended funds at different levels of interaction (individual, interpersonal, social);

- transfer of implicit content of reality in a comic communicative modalities, the resulting semantic structure in the understanding of humor require to build some set of common (or background) knowledge, and these skills are not purely linguistic, as we perceive the senses regardless of the linguistic forms chosen for transmission.

As shown by the functional analysis of humor, the studied category is multifunctional, multilevel. The intentions of humor, which are implemented through communicative functions of language, contribute to the improvement of communicative interaction because one of the main mechanisms of humor is the mechanism of the displacement of estimates (depreciation and over-evaluation). Various mental changes are made in the process of optimization, communication switching, communication adaptation, communicative enhancement, communicative mobilization, direct exposure to "significant others", the exclusion of alternative influences, psychological support, etc. This manifests in deepening the understanding, the change in the nature of identification of observed phenomena (behavior), value orientation, interests, and lifting emotions.

Let us consider fundamental components of the communicative mechanism for comic communication. The treatment is realized through its influence on the perception of comic content through language form, as a means of changing the meaning in the process of perception on the basis of the presence in the language (speech) effective forms of influencing the change of meaning of the statements in the process of understanding the comic. Understanding is treated as a process of comprehension of meaning. Intentionality is one of the foundations of meaning. Man differs from animals by the ability to reflect, ability to comprehend and analyze

according to E. Husserl "own flow of experiences" with all different events [2]. A necessary condition for understanding the process of perception of the comic, says P. McGee, is a high level of cognitive mastery of the environment, coinciding with the ability of conceptual thinking [3].

Understanding the process of perception of comic information, D. Forabosco confirms the fact that this process is highly individual and variable. It depends not only on psychological peculiarities of a person, but also on a general cognitive model that prevails in the mind of a person living in the society. According to D. Forabosco, the basis of the process of perception of comic facts is the divergence from a cognitive model of reference [4]. The concept of "congruence" is introduced by this author using the definition of "not congruent". "The incentive is not congruent, when it differs from the cognitive model of reference" [4]. D. Forabosco understands 'not congruence' not as a characteristic feature of the stimulus itself, but as a result of the relations 'stimulus - subject'. The term "cognitive model of reference" is based on the view that each subject, in his/her cognitive history (in its history of the construction and organization of knowledge and cognitive techniques), creates models based on own experience that function on the basis of generalization and categorization. In order to identify a contradiction, it is necessary to make a comparison with the reference [4].

There are at least two points of view on the appearance of humorous reactions. A number of scientists believe that it requires the presence of contradictions. Another group of scientists (D. Suls and others) believe that the process of perception of comic information consists of two stages: the perception of discrepancy and its resolution. Describing the two-stage process, D. Suls emphasizes that in the first stage a recipient discovers that his expectation about the text is not confirmed by the end of a joke [5]. Thus, the recipient is facing the discrepancy, which is the culminating point. Then, according to D. Suls, there is a need to resolve the discrepancy, available in the comic utterance, by either using the joke's information, or by using the recipient's own knowledge. In order to resolve the

problem in the second stage, it is necessary to identify a cognitive rule that would make consistent the contradicting parts of a statement.

In general, we agree with D. Suls' two-stage process of resolving inconsistencies, but let us analyze the process of understanding jokes. This process is outside the realm of conscious control. If we ask a person who has just laughed (smiled), what it is about what cognitive model he/she used in the process of resolving inconsistencies in this joke, most likely he/she would not know what we were talking about, unless he is a philologist or a specially trained man. We can state that the second stage is the resolution of inconsistencies, and that resolution occurs in unconsciously, and at the consciousness level the result is actualized in a form of laughter or smile. In this regard I would like to recall one of the smart expressions of D. Forabosco that the process of perception of humor, the process of resolution of conflicts in a humorous phrase "makes sense" and there is "harmonizing the contradiction" [4]. The second stage of the process of perception of the comic, D. Forabosco well metaphorically, determines the stage as "cognitive skills" (cognitive master). Below the selected metaphor the author understands the ability of the hearer to use the criterion for the definition of congruence in the resolution process is not congruent situations.

The process of understanding humor through the analysis of the perceiver's reactions is done by R. Staley and P. Dierks. They selected two groups: Routinists (the Conservative) and Sensation Seekers. Routinists enjoy the contradictions only when they are resolved. Sensation Seekers enjoy the contradictions with their apparent meaninglessness. Routinists intend to maintain their existing expectations. Sensation Seekers are ready to test their expectations.

Analyzing the presented point of view, we would like to focus on the following details. If the process of perception of humor can be attributed to routine processes, it can be done only from the standpoint of possessing the full range of techniques of wit. Regarding the situational humor, which is exactly the type of humor with the greatest value for the process of interpersonal communication, there is a significant element of novelty from the point of view of a meaningful plan. In terms of forms of

expression, there are only twelve techniques of wit, so one should not reinvent the wheel here.

Regarding the metaphor of "Sensation Seekers", we notice that living in the situation of unresolved contradictions is not a destiny of many people. This skill is a characteristic of the creative genius. In support of this position, it is appropriate to recall the words of A. Camus: "The one, who discovers absurdity, develops the inner desire to write a textbook of happiness." This statement of A. Camus, from our point of view can serve as the apotheosis of existentialism. A. Camus received the Nobel Prize in literature. It is interesting to compare the perception of unresolved discrepancies from the position of physics. As noted once by Nobel laureate N. Bohr, "the idea is not quite paradoxical to be true." An emotional essence of the first quote and a cognitive reflection of the subsequent quote emphasize again the cognitive and affective bases of humor. Different people may have different kinds of response, cognitive and/or affective, to the process of understanding humor.

In order to avoid communication failures and to get mutual pleasure from the process of producing humor, for example, telling a joke, and from the process of the perception of humor it is necessary to organize the process of perception of a listener. Inclining a listener to a serious (*bona fide*) vs. a non-serious (*non bona fide*) method of communication. Changing the way of communication can be done in two ways: linguistic and extra-linguistic. The linguistic method can be carried out by a "metatextual" input (a term introduced by E. Shmeleva and A. Shmelev, 2002 [6]), prefacing the conversation with phrases like, "Have you heard a joke?", the extra-linguistic method based on facial expressions and gestures. Thus, participants are involved in a frivolous way of communication. For this type of communications, V. Raskin developed the Principle of Cooperation [7]. The Principle of V. Raskin is consonant to the maxims of G. Greis. The maxim of quantity: give the amount of information required to create a comic expression. The maxim of quality: to report only what is compatible with the world of humor. The maxim of relation: to report only what is appropriate for humor. The maxim of manner of expression: to tell skillfully, to be able to joke.

In accordance with the principle of cooperation, a listener does not imply that the speaker will speak complete truth. Rather, a listener expects that speech is intended to make him/her laugh and smile. Consequently, a listener is prepared to search for discrepancies between expectations, originally created by the speech, and further development of the comic saying. Thus, there is a contradiction between expectations, developed in the subject's consciousness according to his ideas about proper organization of the world, and an emerging violation of the initial expectations.

Communication brings together the foundation of existence and the foundation of human cognition as a collective being, whose nature is both social and existential. Sociality encounters existentiality in the process of communication. Existentiality contrasts the classic reflex analysis with the individual consciousness, through the analysis of existential structures of human experience, in its fullness, specificity, uniqueness, and variability.

Based on Husserl' method of intentional analysis of consciousness and on Husserl's idea of "living world" [1], we see our task in description of the analysis of the actual life of subjectivity in the comic forms through the description, structures, contents and mechanisms of individual consciousness, woven into various forms of the self-actualization in the world. In the humor are directly articulated human condition, emotions, and actions [8].

K.-O. Apel focuses the philosophical study on the analysis of language as the nature of human being [9]. In this context, Apel agrees with the quoted position of Hölderlin: "we exist from the start of a conversation." K.-O. Apel examines the role of language in the process of 'subject - subject relations'. This type of relationships is interpreted by Apel as an inter-subjective communication, "which in principle cannot be reduced to the linguistic transmission of information", but "simultaneously serves to reaching an agreement". Language in this context is not only a mechanism of objectification of information and an expressive means, but also the mediator of understanding. Moreover, K.O. Apel thinks of communication as "the language consensus" [9], in other words, "the coherent understanding of the meaning in unrestricted communication community". The language has a reflective-intentional

structure and mediates the relationship between a person and one's inner world, the outer world of things, and the social world, i.e. with other people. Language performs a function of the expression of subjective feelings and intentions, communicative function, which, according to Whitehead, is the claim of people for mutual recognition. For example, this provision can be illustrated with the old English proverb, "Don't marry a girl who is not laughing with you."

This mechanism is implemented in the communication process. Communication (from Latin *communicaco* – make common, communicate) is now characterized as a semantic aspect of the social interaction. Main functions of the communication process consist in achieving the social community while retaining the identities of communicating parties [10].

Intentions (from Latin *intentio* – 'aspiration') of the humor realize in the communicative functions of language, through a number of private functions that are a part of communicative functions. They are: appellative (from Latin *apello* – 'referring to someone') for calling; impacting (volitional) for appeal, to motivate certain actions; expressive to express the personality of a speaker; contact establishing (phatic) to create and maintain contacts; assimilating (connotative) for data storing and transmitting the national identity [11].

The humor, as the mechanism of intentional-motivated contamination (the change in meaning as a result of mixing different words or expressions that are close by their pronunciation, construction, and meaning), is realized through the transmission of communicative intentions (the resulting motives and purposes of communication) by:

- the impact on the perception of communication content through a language form, as a means of changing the meaning in the process of perception;
- the presence in the language (speech) effective forms of influencing the change of meaning of the statements in the process of perception, such as: making them absurd, the mixture of styles, allusion, irony, metaphors, ambiguity, paradoxes;

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- the dynamization of the semantic system leading to the creation and maintenance of contact with a minimum amount of expended funds at different levels of interaction (individual, microsocial, macrosocial);
- the hierarchy of communicative language funds bias (depreciation and high estimates), creating conditions for the mobilization of communication resources and communicative exit crisis through change and operational target of the personality;
- the implementation, in the context of language forms and situations, of interpretation of the language forms through the prism of a situation or interpretation of the situation through the prism of a language form.

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