

THE MEANS OF CREATING HUMOR EFFECTS IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract: In this article the means of creating humor effects in political discourse will be observed and the important theories which belong to humor in political speeches are also covered. The function and the role of humor in political speeches are proven with the examples.

Key words: humor, pragmatics, political discourse, paralinguistic clues, irony.

The word —humor can be used in different ways: objectively when things, causing laughter are described; and subjectively when the notion of —being funny is involved. Though humor has been widely explored in academic literature, this sphere is still not clear enough and poses challenge for research, first and foremost in interpersonal pragmatics: —While a lot has been written about humor, it is still an under-researched area of investigation. Humor is one of the most interesting subjects to study, and more empirical studies in natural contexts are needed in order to further explore the various functions of this strategy. (4; 319).

Humor is difficult to define, especially as a scientific phenomenon: —...very difficult subject to talk about, and it is an even more difficult subject to be scientific about (2; 60), it is closely connected with the situation: —Humor is glued into social, cultural and even national contexts (3; 9), —based on the analyst's assessment of paralinguistic, prosodic and discoursal clues (4; 318).

Dictionaries give the following definition of humor: Humor – the quality of something that makes it funny; the way that a particular person or group finds certain things amusing; the ability to understand and enjoy amusing situations or laugh at things (LDCE 2001).

Though humor is associated with positive feelings – amusement and enjoyment, some scholars point out its —dark side: —...the —dark side of humor, that is, those instances of humor which are designed to put down or personally attack the addressee, and which may thus not result in the amusement of both interlocutors (4; 308). There exist speech stereotypes which presuppose mutual attacks in a humorous way —This rather challenging way of using humor by jocularly abusing each other is characteristic in particular group of speakers in this particular context and may not be appropriate in other contexts or among members of other groups (4; 319).

The functions of humor are variable. Researchers point out that it can perform a number of social functions, such as: denoting ethnic identity and cultural values, reinforcing social norms and reflecting people's beliefs (O'Quin and Aronoff, 1981;

Duncan, 1985; Holmes, Stubbe, and Marra 2003; Habib, 2008; Chiaro, 1992). In discourse humor is a way to demonstrate solidarity and create a friendly atmosphere, particularly among interlocutors who do not know each other very well (Zajdman, 1995). Humor can either minimize the distance between communicators or enlarge it: —Humor may make others feel as part of the group, but it may also function as a boundary marker – explicitly excluding outsiders (4; 319).

It is also a good way to put interlocutors at their ease and optimize communication: — Humor accomplishes many things: it relieves embarrassment; it signals aggression; it displays courage in adversity; it serves as a coping mechanism; it functions as an instrument of social influence (3; 17). Humor is a safe way to solve difficult situations as it allows discharging tension and turning the situation into a joke.

There are several theories, which consider humor from different points of view: humor, based on the mismatch of meanings; humor as consolation; humor as superiority. The latter has deep roots and dates back to ancient times, when rectors used humor as a weapon directed to submitting others. Researchers of humor (Chiaro, 1992; Crystal, 1995; Ross, 1998) point out that humor can be intentional as well as unintentional (like irony). There exist a number of scenarios, in the frames of which humorous communication can take place: the speaker strives to a comic effect and succeeds or not; the speaker does not intend to make a comic effect but it happens or does not happen. A vivid example of unintended humor is spoonerisms (a wordplay which happens by chance and produces a humorous effect without the author's desire): You have hissed all my mystery lectures. You have deliberately tasted two worms and you can leave Oxford by the town drain.

The list of used literature

1. Delia Chiaro, *The language of jokes: Analysing verbal play*, 1992
2. Frank Miller and artist David Mazzuchelli, *Batman Year One* 1988
3. Paul Simpson *On the Discourse of Satire: Towards a Stylistic Model of Satirical Humor*, 2003
4. Stephanie Schnurr, *Leadership Discourse at Work: Interactions of Humour, Gender and Workplace Culture*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010