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Stylistic Peculiarities of Shakespearean Comedies

One of the most important categories of aesthetic understanding of a literary work is a category of comic. Different scientists give different definitions of the term. A German philosopher Georg Hegel gave the following definition: «Generally the category of comic rests on the contradictory contrasts between its goals and content, on the one hand, and the random nature of subjectivity and external circumstances on the other hand» [1]. It is necessary to emphasize the origin of the word «comic». It comes from the Greek language and has the meaning «comic, funny». Aristotle in his work «Rhetoric» mentioned the verb «κωμάζω» which has a meaning «to make a merry procession (in honor of Dionysus, other gods or without religious purpose), to walk in a cheerful and noisy crowd around the city with music, singing, dancing» [2]. The meaning of this term gives a reason to believe that the category of comic has a significant role in literature reducing the emotional and psychological tension.

The category of comic can be found in various genres such as drama, tragedy and so on. Researchers from different scientific fields are still interested in the category of comic as a part of such a genre as comedy.

According to the dictionary of literary terms, a comedy itself is a type of drama based on the ridicule of social and human imperfection [3]. The researchers distinguish between «comedies-provisions» when the preference is given to events; «comedies-mores» with a vivid image of social mores; satirical comedies [3]. Among the many writers and playwrights who wrote comedies, William Shakespeare occupies a special place.

The comedies of William Shakespeare are an exceptional phenomenon in the history of this genre. In fact, it stands apart from the main path of development of the world comedy tradition. The world comedy has been defined as a satirical one. It exposes to shame and ridicule violations of social norms, deviations from the ideal. Satirical comedy occurs when social contradictions are particularly obvious. Shakespearean comedies are deeply controversial. His works were written during the rapid rise of English humanism. It was the most optimistic period in the history of the English Renaissance, a time of great changes and hopes, when the foundations of feudalism began to collapse, when the Renaissance freedom of the individual was affirmed.

Shakespearean plays which are usually classified as a comedy are:

- “The Merchant of Venice”;
- “Twelfth Night”;
- “All's Well That Ends Well”;
- “The Winter's Tale”;
- “A Midsummer Night's Dream”;
- “Measure for Measure”;
- “Much Ado About Nothing” and some other works.

It is said that Shakespearean comedies are quite identifiable. They share some certain characteristics. For example, the plots of Shakespeare comedies have more twists and turns than his tragedies and histories. Although the plots are convoluted, they do follow similar patterns. For example, the climax of the play always occurs in the third act. Evidently, Shakespearean comedies are full of clever wordplay, metaphors, and insults.

One of the greatest Shakespearean comedies is «The Merchant of Venice» which was considered to be a romantic comedy but now is most remembered for its dramatic scenes. Besides it is notable for some speeches of the main characters where the playwright used specific literary devices. For instance in Portia's famous speech about mercy, given when she was disguised as a male lawyer, she used a metaphor, comparing mercy to a gentle rain that is undeserved but blesses and nurtures what it falls

upon. Most of all William Shakespeare used dramatic irony when he wanted to underline some facts which the readers know but the characters of the comedy do not.

«All that glisters is not gold,
Often have you heard that told;
Many a man his life hath sold
But my outside to behold:
Gilded tombs do worms infold» [4]

In this quote the playwright uses alliteration, repeating the consonant «g» to emphasize the contrast between glisters and gold and thus the contrast between outer show (glisters) and real worth (gold). The passage also has rhyme which helps us to highlight the important thematic point that money isn't everything.

The comedy has also educational value and can be used during the process of teaching English. Some student's books have such a component as a book for reading. One of the most famous teaching complexes in Russia «Spotlight» includes this comedy and provides an adapted version of it. This material can be used as a part of home reading when students are supposed to be ready to do tasks and exercises after the text. It can help a teacher to find out the depth of understanding the context. One of the interesting ways to include this comedy into the educational process is the performance on the stage where all the students can be involved.

Thus, we can talk about the universality of Shakespeare's comedies for both literary critics and foreign language teachers.

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Lexicological Features of Youth Slang in English and German Linguacultures

At the present stage of the development of language, it is necessary to note the increased interest in the study of special forms of language. Besides, it is becoming more and more important to research the use of youth slang. Slang is "a type of language consisting of words and phrases that are regarded as very informal, are more common in speech than writing, and are typically restricted to a particular context or group of people" [2].

There are some lexicological features of youth slang in English and German linguacultures:

1) the use of affixation as a productive way of morphological word formation: the difference is that for English youth slang, suffixation is typical (e.g. twinkie – attractive person), while German youth slang peculiar to prefixation (e.g. rumhängen – miss);

2) the borrowing of graphics and sounds of words from the literary language; however, in youth slang words undergo semantic changes, the most common of which in this sociolect are amelioration (e.g. viehisch – excellent, cool; evil – delicious), metaphorical transfer (e.g. drooly – attractive, appetizing, an adjective formed on behalf of the noun "drool");

3) the borrowing of units from other languages: in German youth slang, the source is English (e.g. Oldies – parents; empty – extremely unattractive; der Bestseller – a young man who is popular with women), in English youth slang – the language of American youth (e.g. zod – unpleasant man; scuzzy – dirty, greasy; geek – unattractive person; tacky – in poor taste);

4) the use of the method of shortening words in English youth slang, which is not a characteristic feature of the slang of the German youth (e.g. rents or rentals from parents);

5) the conversion is popular in German youth slang, unlike English (e.g. sahn – excellent, cool; faulen – bored; fetzt – amazing, great) [1].

Youth slang is a system with a certain structure and is characterized by internal laws. The functioning of youth slang is far from arbitrary and is regulated by the norm. It has no written codification and lives in the minds of its bearers. Youth slang arouses the interest of linguists; at the same time, there are opponents who advocate a ban on slang in the youth speech. However, the knowledge of how to use youth slang contributes to the dialogue of cultures and intercultural communication.

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English Idioms and Proverbs: Linguistic Aspect

English idioms and proverbs play a key role in any language. They have existed in both written and spoken English since the time the language originated. Idioms and proverbs make speech sound more native. The world of phraseology of the modern English language is large and diverse, and every aspect of its research requires a lot of attention. English phraseology is characterized by a wealth of functional-style and emotional-expressive synonyms.

We would like to analyze English idioms and proverbs in detail. Idioms and proverbs help to supply information aspect of language with the sensual and intuitive description of our world and life.

The term "idiom" was first introduced by the English linguist L. Smith. He wrote that the word "idiom" is used in the English language to refer to the French term "idiotisme" and to the grammatical structure of combination characteristics of the English language, although very often the meaning of these combinations cannot be explained from a grammatical and logical point of view as idiomatic expressions also have a cultural value. Analyzing set-phrases, it is possible to trace the history of the country, get acquainted with its customs and traditions, and understand the mentality of native speakers.

A proverb is a short sentence that people often use giving advice on people's proper behaviour in different situations. It is also defined as a short, simple and popular saying or a phrase which effectively embodies a commonplace truth based on practical experience or common sense. The language means of a proverb imply an allegorical message. They are popular in speech due to their usage in spoken language as well as in folk literature.

There are some differences between idioms and proverbs. Proverbs are used like expressions which illustrate a specific point. They are different from idioms because idioms can't always be understood literally, i.e. a meaning of the whole saying is not always a combination of those of its constituent parts. For example, "to be fed up with" means "to be tired and annoyed with something that has been happening for too long"; "to rub someone the wrong way" – "to irritate or annoy someone"; "to do something by the skin of your teeth" – "to complete something, but not well". Proverbs are short sayings that give advice about how people should behave or express a belief that is commonly thought to be true. For example, «Don't cry over spilled milk" (Don't get upset about something that has already happened and cannot be undone); "People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones" (Don't criticize other people for their faults if you have faults too – and everyone does); "A stitch in time saves nine" (Fixing a problem right away will take less time than fixing it later on).

In conclusion, idioms – as well as proverbs – often have a special meaning that is different from the meaning of the individual words put together, but expressed in a different way than in idioms. The literal meaning of an idiom often doesn't make sense, and idioms can be impossible to understand unless you learn about their meaning. The literal meaning of a proverb is clear, but the suspected meanings of these expressions are not the same as their literal meanings.

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Development of English Article

A definite article appeared in the English language in the pre-written period of its development. The definite article originated from the demonstrative pronoun 'se'. Consequently, a new demonstrative pronoun 'thes' appeared in the language.

These two pronouns were opposed to each other by their meanings: 'se' (that, more distant) and 'thes' (this, a closer one). However, for a long time 'se' was used as a universal demonstrative pronoun and was more commonly used in the Old English period than the pronoun 'thes'. This served as a basis for the development of the definite article. A valuable evidence of the article formation can be found in the poem "Beowulf". In some episodes of the poem certain nouns are used with the determinative 'se' in accordance with language rules of the Old English language. The fact proved that the lexical meaning of the demonstrative pronoun is generalized and weakened, and the demonstrative pronoun gradually turns into a service indicator of the noun. Later, the use of the article becomes a grammatical norm. Until this time, the article had existed as a specific usage of the demonstrative pronoun. The same phenomenon can be observed in other Germanic languages.

The IX-century prose allows us to consider the definite article a tendency in the English language grammar structure development. By this time the function of 'se' was to mean nouns that call objects of a certain kind. However, in poetry use of the article was not obligatory. But the poetry of this time is canonical, conservative, it is not indicative of the article use. Sometime later, the optional use of the article in poetry was perceived as a stylistic sign of the style archaization.

Since the end of the IX century, the definite article existed as a special homonym of the demonstrative pronoun. It differs from the demonstrative 'one' by its grammatical nature and use [4]. They were also distinguished by the fact that the article was not stressed in the sentence structure.

The generic function of the definite article originated in the Old English period. So, in this case it is used to mean a particular, specific case. The formation of this function continued in the Middle English period. At that time, we could observe the obligatory use of the article in poetry.

By the end of the XV century, due to phonetic and morphological changes in the language system there were only two forms of the definite article in English: 'the' before a noun in its singular form and 'tha' ('tho') in the plural. As a result of vowel reduction in an unstressed position, the article changed its graphical form into 'the' and since then, it was the only form of the definite article [5].

The indefinite article appeared later than the definite one. Although we may find it in the prose of the X – XI centuries, its formation fully completed in the middle period of language development. The indefinite article originated from the Old English numeral 'an' (one) and the indefinite pronoun 'some'. The combination of these two meanings in one word is a phenomenon peculiar to many Indo-European languages. Naming the source of the indefinite article, we should speak not just about the numeral an, but about the numerically indefinite pronoun an. In the X – XI centuries, 'an' was used before nouns to introduce a new subject or a person not mentioned before. Later, its meaning it was used before nouns to mean the indefinite correlation with the subject or to classify the subject to a particular class or category. So, these are the two main semantic function of 'an'. During the XIII century, two phonetic variants of the indefinite article were distinguished in the English language: 'an' (before words beginning with a vowel and h) and 'a' (before words beginning with a consonant) [2].

In the first half of the XIII century the indefinite article became a separate element of the English-language grammar structure. However, its use was restricted up to the end of the XVII century when the rules for its use were fixed in grammars [1].

So, it would be interesting to point out some similarities in the development of definite and indefinite articles:

1. Both articles are developed by generalization, subsequent weakening and grammatization of the lexical meaning of their source word.

2. Initially, both articles exist as an articular use of their source word.

3. At first, articles appear with specific nouns.

4. Both articles develop as notional words devoid of lexical meaning – they just note the character of its use in speech.

5. In the formation of both articles, there are two key points: the formation of the main semantic function of the article and the formation of the grammatical norm of its use in which the principle of article obligatory use is implemented [3].

Thus, today the main purpose of the definite article is to mark the grammatical meaning of the particular in the noun used in speech while the main function of the indefinite one is to mark the grammatical meaning of the general in the noun.

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The Concept of Love in English-Speaking, German-Speaking and Russian-Speaking Linguacultures

Language is the most valuable source of formation and manifestation of the mentality of the people; through it, the culture is preserved and transmitted to other generations. The concept is one of the basic notions of linguoculturology, which is implemented in the verbal sign and in the language as a whole [1]. In other words, through the analysis of key concepts it is possible to know the linguistic picture of the world. One of these emotional concepts is love, as a basic feeling that manifests itself in any culture.

The subject of the study is English, German and Russian proverbs, sayings and quotations of famous classics containing the concept of love. In the Russian language, love is denoted by the word *любовь*, in German – *Liebe*. All three words are from PIE root *leubh- [2].

After analyzing proverbs, sayings and quotations from the point of view of the attitude of English, Russian and German linguacultures to this concept, we notice that basically the concept of love coincides in the minds of different ethnic groups, although there are some differences. For example, a similarity of perception was observed in the following sayings:

1.1 *Любовь слепа* [3]; *Love is blind* [4]; *Liebe macht blind* [5].

They are very similar in the meaning of "love blinds". For the first time in world literature, this idea is found in an ancient Greek philosopher Platon's work "Laws": "Love blinds, because the lover becomes blind to the object of his love" [6]. It can be said that this phrase was borrowed from Greek into all three languages.

1.2 *Любовь сильнее смерти* [3]; *Love is as strong as death* [4]; *Liebe ist stärker als der Tod* [5].

In all three linguacultures love is compared with death. Previously, this phrase is found in the book "Solomon's Song of Songs." "Fortis est ut mors dilectio." – Love is as strong as death [7]. It can also be assumed that this expression was borrowed and slightly changed in cultures.

1.3 *Милые бранятся – только тешатся* [3]; *Lovers' tiffs are harmless* [4]; *Zwist unter Liebesleuten hat nicht viel zu bedeuten* [5].

The idea of "quarrels only increase love" is also presented in three languages. A similar expression first occurs in the Comedy Terence "The Lady of Andros" and is as follows: "amantium irae amoris integratio est", which means "lovers' quarrels are the renewal of love" [7].

Striking examples of differences in relation to the concept of love can be seen in the following quotes:

2. «Любовь, отравя наших дней, Беги с толпой обманчивых мечтаний...» (A.S. Pushkin); «Являясь для больного душою сильным ядом, для здорового любовь – как огонь железу, которое хочет быть сталью...» (M. Gorkiy).

"My love is as a fever longing still, For that which longer nurseth the disease..." (W. Shakespeare).

"Was aus Liebe getan wird, geschieht immer jenseits von Gut und Böse." (F. Nietzsche).

Love has negative connotation in Russian linguaculture and is comparable with poison. In English, love also has a negative connotation, but softened: the feeling of love is compared to the disease. In the German language, the negative connotation of love is due to the fact that for the sake of love, people do not only good, but bad things.

So, after reading a large number of poems devoted to the beautiful and mysterious feeling of love, selecting proverbs and sayings, we can conclude that the theme of love is always relevant and excites people regardless of their nations. However, despite the large number of very similar associations with

love in English, Russian and German linguacultures due to borrowing ideas from other languages, there are some differences.

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Varieties of English: Phonetic Aspects

British English and American English prove to be the two main national variants of the English language. They are usually subdivided into two large groups of national variants. The national variants may have considerable differences on different linguistic levels but numerous common features prove that they still belong to the system of one and the same language [1]. We will take into consideration the phonetic level and determine certain pronunciation features of some British English dialects.

The first accent is defined in the Concise Oxford English Dictionary as “the standard accent of English as spoken in the south of England”. It is Received Pronunciation (RP). This is the pronunciation type of people from high society. Nowadays this accent is a conservative model for correct pronunciation and transcription in most English dictionaries.

Some linguists call RP the BBC English. Although the BBC English developed on the base of RP it is more flexible. It is a common pronunciation for professional BBC newsreaders and announcers.

The Welsh English accent is spread throughout Wales. It has been heavily influenced by the Welsh language. There some common phonetic features of this dialect:

- 1) this is a sing-song sounding accent because of the huge glide from high pitch to low pitch;
- 2) the sound [æ] is pronounced like a short open [a]: trap [trap] and man [man];
- 3) the central open short vowel [ʌ] becomes a mid central [ə]: butter [ˈbʊtə];
- 4) the diphthongs [eɪ], [oʊ], [eə], [uə] are monophthongised: cake [ke:k]; soap [so:p]; pear [pe] tour [tuə].

The Scots language has a huge impact on the formation of the Scottish English accent. There are some phonetic features according to which we can distinguish the Scottish English speaker:

- 1) the phoneme [r] is a postalveolar phoneme in RP, while it is more common alveolar tap or the alveolar trill in the Scottish accent;
- 2) the consonant [w] is more aspirated and often pronounced as [hw];
- 3) in many cases there is no distinction between long and short vowels. So, words “beat” and “bit” are pronounced the same;
- 4) Scottish English has no [ʊ] phoneme. Words “pull” and “pool” are pronounced like [pu:l];
- 5) in most varieties, [æ] is replaced with [ɑ:]; “bath”, “trap”, and “palm” have the same vowel – [ɑ:].

The Cockney English is the accent or dialect of English traditionally spoken by working-class Londoners and is considered to be non-prestigious. It also has some phonetic peculiarities:

- 1) sounds [θ] and [ð] are often replaced with [f] or [v];
- 2) the sound [h] is pronounced before vowels like in ‘egg’ ([heg]) and is omitted at the beginning of words, for example, ‘ham’ ([æm]);
- 3) the diphthong [oi] is pronounced instead of RP [ai] (find [foind]), while [ei] is replaced with [ai] (face [fais]).

The Irish English accent is known for its melodious intonation. Among other phonetic peculiarities, the following ones seem the most significant:

- 1) Irish English [r] is pronounced clearly in all positions;
- 2) interdental [θ] and [ð] are replaced with alveolar [t] and [d]: that [dæt], thirty [tʰɜ:ti];
- 3) the combination [dj] turns into [dʒ]: duty [dʒu:ti];
- 4) the diphthong [ai] is pronounced as [ɔi]: like [lɔik], Irish [ɔiɾɪʃ] [2].

Here are just some of the national pronunciation variants of the British-based group. These accents thereby have many other spoken realizations in different regions. The pronunciation features vary among speakers. The difference is closely connected with regional, economic, political and

cultural aspects. The aim of the work was to observe phonetic features of some of them as it is important to understand people from different regions. Besides, judging from this point of view, we may say for sure where this or that person comes from.

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