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## HUMOR AS A PART OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

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**Abstract.** The article deals with the description and analysis of humor, irony, sarcasm in our life. Different points of view on humor are presented. Theories of the origin of humor (relief, incongruity, superiority) are described. It's proved that humor is a part of interpersonal communication and it is irreplaceable characteristic and the quality people always seek in other ones. Some features of humor and the categories of irony (verbal, situational and dramatic) are demonstrated. The advantages of using humor by teachers in the classroom are stated. Some episodes from the lives of students in which they use humor, irony and sarcasm are presented. It's stressed that people were born with the gift of laughter that lifts their spirits, makes them feel happy. The article states that a sense of humor is a good characteristic that helps people to live happily, to stay younger, to endure problems and to influence other people positively.

**Keywords:** sense of humor, irony, sarcasm, laugh, interaction, educational process.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays humor, irony and sarcasm are being spread into modern culture, acquiring factors of the influence on the development and self-development of a personality and becoming a powerful tool of the impact on the society in general. It also causes the relevance of scientific research on this perspective.

The aim of the article is to analyze and to explain the features of the use of humor, irony and sarcasm in people's life. In order to achieve this aim we will analyze scientists' various points of view on humor, some theories of its origin, we'll investigate the concept of irony and sarcasm, we will demonstrate some advantages of using humor by teachers in the classroom and we will find out and analyze the examples of using humor, irony, sarcasm in the life of students.

### 2. DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Humor was always the object of many researches in different fields of sciences: psychology, sociology, linguistics etc. It's the main part of human relations. Humor was learnt by many scientists. Nowadays there are some theories of humor.

The tradition of describing events in a humorous way appeared in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. Many scientists tried to give the exact definition of humor but everything was in vain. Humor has no

boundaries. Some researches were done in linguistics, pedagogy, sociology and psychology to present some certain boundaries of humor [1; 2; 3; 12].

Different points of view on humor lead to the appearance of different definitions of it. Attardo states that it's impossible to give the exact definition of humor that will be absolutely right [4; 3].

Humor is thought to be a very important part in people's relations in the society [5, p. 1]. Word humor can be seen in the written and oral forms such as joke, pun, tease. It's the powerful instrument for presenting thoughts and behavior to certain situation or subject, creating connection between groups of people and making these groups different.

Humor has some roles:

- 1) communication;
- 2) cognitive development;
- 3) the indicator of enjoyment or entertainment;
- 4) lowering the level of stress and anxiety;
- 5) popularization of one's own image [6, p. 17–18].

The most attention is paid to the social aspect of humor. In this aspect the main thing is the inducement to laugh. It can be used to raise someone's mood or express one's sympathy. Ross determines humor as "something, that makes people laugh or smile" [5, p. 1]. Palmer gives the wider explanation of humor – it is everything that is funny, it's the process in which laughing appears [7, p. 3].

Not every humorous event can be funny for everybody. It depends on different factors: culture, age, sex. Humor differs from laughing. They can't be learnt as the whole. Though humor causes laughing but laughing doesn't always depend on humor and in some situations it can be as the release of psychological tension [5, p. 1]. Not every humorous situation makes people laugh. As it has been mentioned earlier, laughing depends on the situation in which there is a certain group of people. Social aspect of humor is supported by persuasion that people usually laugh in the company and certain jokes are evaluated only in groups. The substitute of laughing of other people to create group effect is used at TV shows.

"Off-screen laughing is used at TV and radio comedies because it's important to feel how other people react to humor" [5]. People start laughing when there is some push to do it. Laugh is not only the index of humor but it's the useful instrument to determine humor [5, p. 1–2]. Laughing is an indication of "belonging to the group". So, humor depends on many factors: content, age, belonging to the group.

There are three theories of the origin of humor:

- 1) relief theory;
- 2) incongruity theory;
- 3) superiority theory [8, p. 101].

Incongruity theory is one of the first linguistic theories of humor that appeared in 18<sup>th</sup> century. Two famous representatives of this theory are Kant and Shopenhauer. Shopenhauer stated that the reason of humor was sudden perceiving of differences between the concept and real objects, seen in the light of concept, and humor is the expression of its differences [4, p. 48]. This theory doesn't have sociological or psychological but general view on humor. It's used in humorous discourse.

Superiority theory demonstrates the person's confidence in his advantage over his opponent. This theory reflects the negative side of humor. It's thought that people laugh at other people's problems.

Relief theory was set by Freud. He was sure that humor released tension or mental energy and relieved the person from superstition. Humor is the result of releasing the negative energy. Speakers often use relief theory at the beginning of their speech just to reduce the tension.

Semantic theory was set by Raskin in 1985. Humor includes semantic and pragmatic method where there is semantic opposition between texts. Speaker can see if "the sentence belongs to the set of grammar constructions" and that's why he can say if the text is funny [9, p. 196].

General theory of verbal humor was set by Attardo and Raskin in 1991. "General theory of verbal humor broadened semantic theory to take all linguistic levels including the interest to social questions which aren't in semantic theory" [9, p. 109].

Humor is a part of interpersonal communication. That's why we often notice humorous moments in conversation to entertain the partner. Humor is used in ads, films, literature which also use the model of humor interaction [10, p. 3]. Irony also has its place in the discourse of humor. It often helps to relieve the situation and reduce the negative effect using mimics and gestures. Ironic dialogue interaction is often met in everyday life to make situation less dramatic, sad or tragic.

The simplest definition of irony was given by Paul Simpson in his article about ironic discourse. "Irony has general definition: to say something contrary to what is on your mind" [13, p. 34]. Irony is a set of words which are used to transfer the meaning of something that is opposite to its own literal meaning.

Irony can be divided into 3 categories: verbal, situational and dramatic. Verbal irony is a statement in which the meaning that a speaker employs is sharply different from the meaning that is ostensibly expressed. Situational irony is disparity of intention and result when the result of an action is contrary to the desired or expected effect. Dramatic irony occurs when there is miscommunication in a book, play or film and the audience is smarter than the characters.

Sarcasm is one of the kinds of irony. It's literary device that is meant to mock with ironic remarks with a purpose to amuse and hurt someone simultaneously. The only difference between irony and sarcasm is that irony has wider usage than sarcasm. Irony is used in humorous situations and in serious ones where sarcasm is inappropriate.

People of all ages and backgrounds engage in humor, but the way they use it can vary greatly. It depends on the situation. They can use humor, irony or sarcasm. Teachers sometimes ask their students about their attitude to humor. They say that humor is irreplaceable characteristic and the quality people always seek in other ones. On the one hand it helps people to discover each other. On the other hand humor helps people to go forward and relax despite different disturbing and unpleasant moments of life. Teachers also say that using humor in the classroom is always good and a good joke can really make a difference. It's an excellent way of breaking the ice with students, getting the class relaxed and generally fostering a friendly atmosphere to work in. The proper use of humor in a speech brings teachers closer to the audience, makes the speech easier to deliver and leaves a lasting impression.

The results of scientific research (A. Pourghaz, H. Jenaabadi, Z. Ghaeninejad) indicated that extraversion was significantly and positively related to the teachers' performance and sense of humor and neuroticism was significantly and negatively correlated with the teachers' performance and sense of humor. Moreover, a significant and positive relationship was found between a sense of humor and the teachers' performance improvement [11].

Last semester one group of students was given a task to write short stories from their life. Those stories were interesting and full of humor, irony and sarcasm. Here are some episodes in which you'll see all these things.

- a) "She's a silly red-haired ... teacher!" The word "teacher" has the other meaning in a student's head (sarcasm);
- b) "Oh, look! Peter, John, how happy I am to see you! I am walking on air!" This is not enjoyment but disappointment. (situational irony);
- c) sometimes students use "black humor". If they have unlucky days with many problems or difficulties at university or at home they sometimes say: "Better to die than to suffer this";
- d) students who live in a hostel want to wake their roommate up almost at dinner time they say: "Hey you, over there! It's time to get up, you couch potato!" (ironic situation);
- e) "A lovely day for a picnic indeed" the weather is rainy, unfortunately, and one groupmate blames the other one for ruining the day suggesting it's not a good idea to set out and so on (sarcasm);
- f) "Good of you to arrive on time!" This is the first time for the person who is always late to come on time for the important event (sarcasm);

- g) "What a brilliant beginning of the day!" it's said by a student who oversleeps the alarm, stumbles over the bag and falls over it, pours over a cup of coffee on the new clothes etc. (irony);
- h) "Congratulation!" is written below a bad mark for the composition (sarcasm);
- i) "Where will you put me? I must be put somewhere, dear boy" – a girl asks his friend to find the place where she can have a sleep (humor);
- j) "You swallowed many sausages but you had to chew them first" one person said to his friend who complained about his stomachache after dinner (humor).

Having analyzed students' works, it's necessary to say that their life is full of humorous moments. They react in different ways in different situations. But almost all of them have a sense of humor and this is a good characteristic.

We were born with the gift of laughter. It lifts our spirits and makes us feel happy. Laughter is a contagious emotion. It can bring people together. It can help us feel more alive and empowered. When we laugh, we transcend the physical aspects of our life and our troubles. One component of a happy life is having a humorous disposition – a capacity to see the contradictions and absurdities of our lives, be willing to laugh at our mistakes or moments of embarrassment and not take ourselves too seriously. When we laugh, we lighten up; we feel more positive and optimistic, more hopeful and engaged. We are friendlier, more resourceful, and more alive. Humorous stories shared with friends are a great way to bond with others, benefit our health and have a great time. Laughing together benefits both the giver and the receiver. Creating a situation that makes others laugh and smile lifts everyone's spirits. Smiling makes us more attractive. We share humorous stories or jokes we have found, clip and share our favourite funny comic strips, share funny experiences from our life or plan to see a comedy. Also, finding ways to do opposite of what people normally expect keeps life from getting drab and dreary. Life has enough seriousness. We have to learn from the little ones, seek out humor and laugh more. We will live more happily, manage adversity and have material to create joyous connections, get over seriousness and connect with life.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

So, one of the qualities that is important for human is a sense of humor. This quality is very beneficial because it helps people to look at the reality of life from optimistic way. As you know people confront with a lot of daily problems. Some of them they cannot solve easily and on time. A person who has a sense of humor does not become nervous because of these problems. They look at the problems from different angle and they wish that they will find the solution immediately. So endurance is very important for people. Those ones who have a sense of humor endure problems easily and do not suffer because of their nervousness.

A good sense of humor helps people keep themselves younger. It means that people who have a sense of humor are looking like younger than their peer. And also it is proved that the spirits of these people stay younger. They wish and act like youngsters. So it is very important for living happily in this world. Indeed, most of happy people have a great sense of humor. To sum up, a good sense of humor plays a very important role in our life. For living happily and enduring problems this characteristic is irreplaceable. And happy people influence others and tend to share positive attitude. Thus, people who have a good sense of humor influence their community optimistically, too.

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У статті здійснено аналіз гумору, іронії і сарказму у міжособистісній взаємодії. Описано теорії походження гумору. Доведено, що гумор є складовою частиною міжособистісного спілкування, незамінною характеристикою та якістю, яку люди завжди шукають у інших людей. Представлено деякі особливості гумору і категорії іронії. Визначено переваги використання гумору викладачами у педагогічному процесі. Подано фрагменти з життя студентів, у яких вони використовують гумор, іронію та сарказм. Наголошено, що люди наділені з народження даром сміху, який піднімає дух і надає відчуття щастя. Автор констатує, що почуття гумору є незмінною властивістю, яка допомагає людям жити щасливо, залишатися молодими, долати проблеми і позитивно впливати на інших людей. Доведено, що вдале використання гумористичного мистецтва є надзвичайно ефективним у навчальній роботі зі студентами.

**Ключові слова:** почуття гумору, іронія, сарказм, сміх, взаємодія, педагогічний процес.