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WORDPLAY IN ENGLISH COMIC CREOLIZED TEXT (ON THE EXAMPLE OF INTERNET MEMES)

Abstract: Due to the development of the Internet culture in the modern society and the growing popularity of virtual communication, the linguistic aspect of studying the features of such communication is becoming increasingly relevant.

The phenomenon of Internet memes, which is extremely popular among the Internet users, represents the notion of humor in modern online communication.

This article studies the phenomenon of Internet memes through its close relation to the phenomenon of the creolized text, as well as the concept of wordplay creating a comic effect. In this article we define the concepts of wordplay and creolized text, as well as their interaction and peculiarities of a creolized wordplay in an English comic text. Internet memes are considered in the context of creolized English text, their interconnection with creolized wordplay is established, with the aim of systematizing and including the concept of Internet memes into the existing scientific picture of the English-speaking comic creolized text linguistic notion.

Keywords: wordplay, creolized text, Internet memes, English comic text.

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ЯЗЫКОВАЯ ИГРА В АНГЛОЯЗЫЧНОМ КОМИЧЕСКОМ КРЕОЛИЗОВАННОМ ТЕКСТЕ (НА ПРИМЕРЕ ИНТЕРНЕТ-МЕМОВ)

Аннотация: С развитием интернет-культуры в современном обществе и растущей популярностью виртуального общения, все более актуальным для исследователей становится лингвистический аспект изучения особенностей коммуникации на просторах всемирной сети.

Особой популярностью среди пользователей сети Интернет пользуется такое явление, как интернет-мемы. С точки зрения лингвистики, интернет-мем – это креолизованный текст, фактура которого состоит из двух разнородных частей: вербальной и невербальной (принадлежащей к другим знаковым системам, нежели естественный язык).

Креолизованные интернет-мемы содействуют упрощению и ускорению передачи информации между людьми. В то же время интернет-мем можно рассматривать как новую форму существования анекдотов, комический эффект которых создается при помощи языковой игры.

В данной статье рассматриваются понятия языковой игры, креолизованного текста, а также специфика их взаимодействия и особенности креолизованной языковой игры в англоязычном тексте с комической направленностью. Интернет-мемы рассматриваются в контексте креолизованного англоязычного текста, устанавливается их взаимосвязь с креолизованной языковой игрой, с целью систематизировать и вписать концепт интернет-мемов в существующую научную картину представления лингвистов об англоязычном комическом креолизованном тексте.

Ключевые слова: языковая игра, креолизованный текст, интернет-мемы, англоязычный комический текст.

Just like a game itself is an integral kind of human life, wordplay is an inalienable part of our communication. Unlike other types of games, its content is encoded. For the first time, the term «wordplay» was mentioned by L. Wittgenstein, who defined it as a special way of manipulating the language, consisting of «language and those activities with which it is interwoven with» [4]. The aspect which distinguishes the wordplay is its comic orientation. For this reason, we accept the definition by I. Tsikusheva, which is more accurate in this sense: wordplay is the deliberate and purposeful manipulation of expressive speech resources, oriented to implementation of the comic effect [7]. The essence of wordplay is to generate additional occasional meanings appealing to language expressiveness and producing the comic effect. Lately, due to the development of information technology and the Internet, creolized wordplay has become more and more popular.

The creolized text is a text characterized by two constituents, verbal (speech) and non-verbal ones. The specific nature of the creolized text is reflected in the unity of both components of the text functioning as a single semantic unit, being impossible for one of them to be interpreted without the other. The popularity of creolized texts is associated with the growth of using visual information in modern communication. E. Anisimova identifies three main groups of texts depending on the image presence and the nature of its connection with the verbal part:

1. zero creolized texts – the image is not present and does not have an influence on the organization and meaning of the text;

2. partially creolized texts – the verbal part is relatively autonomous, independent of the image, autosemantic relations are formed between the verbal and visual components;

3. fully creolized texts – the verbal part cannot exist autonomously, synsemantic relations are established between the components [1].

Another classification is developed by B. Karlavaris, it is formed according to the type of relation between the image and the verbal part. The four types are:

1. dominant illustration, defining the text meaning;

2. equivalent illustration used in texts where a certain part of information is transmitted mainly by iconic means;

3. accompanying illustration used in the text as a supplement, an explanation of the verbal part;

4. decorative illustration, which serves to decorate the text, the aesthetic purposes of communication [8].

Combining the two classifications developed by E. Anisimova and B. Karlavaris, E. Aleksandrova concludes that the equivalent and dominant illustrations are the cases of full creolization, and the accompanying and decorative illustrations are the cases of partial creolization, whereas texts with zero creolization are the texts not accompanied by an illustration [5].

Here we come close to the concept of Internet memes. Internet memes, or simply memes, are an extremely popular phenomenon in the Internet culture. Originally the term «meme» itself was developed by the evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, who defined it as a kind of gene analog in genetics, a cultural replicator, a «unit of cultural heritage, an imitation unit» [6]. There is no academic definition for the Internet meme in linguistics yet, but we consider the one presented in Wikipedia rather accurate: an Internet meme is an activity, concept, catchphrase, or piece of media that spreads, often as mimicry or for humorous purposes, from person to person via the Internet. An Internet meme usually takes the form of an image, GIF or video. Thus, Internet memes are the information spread through the Internet from person to person and their main purpose is to create a comic effect. This is what unites wordplay and memes. Let us consider the classification of memes by J. Shurina. She takes the carriers of memes as the basis and distinguishes 4 types : 1) text meme: a word or a phrase; 2) picture meme; 3) videomeme; 4) creolized meme: a combination of visual and text constituents [3].

The fourth type (creolized meme) is the point of our interest. Let us apply E. Aleksandrova's classification of creolized wordplay to creolized memes.

1. Partial creolization.

- a) Decorative image – in this case the image does not have a significant impact on the meaning of the meme. The text could exist without it (Figure 1).

- b) Accompanying illustration – in this case the image complements the text, making it easier to understand. The information expressed verbally is also reproduced visually (Figure 2).

2. Full creolization.

- a) Equivalent illustration – in this case the full understanding of the text is impossible without the image. The visual and the verbal parts hold the equal amount of information (Figure 3).

- b) Dominant illustration – in this case the text can't exist without the image. The verbal part makes a reference to the visual part (Figure 4).

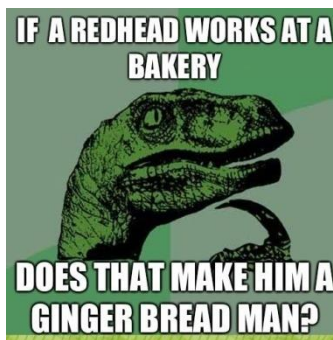


Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

Considering all that was mentioned above, we conclude that Internet memes can be seen as a type of creolized language game and are of interest to study.

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