

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18454/RULB.2020.23.3.10>**ОТ ЭПИТАФИИ К АНЕКДОТУ: ПРАГМАЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИЙ АСПЕКТ**

Научная статья

Голосова Н.В.^{1*}, Ревякина Н.П.²¹ Институт Филологии, журналистики и МКК Южного Федерального Университета, Ростов-на-Дону, Россия;² Донской государственный Технический университет, Ростов-на-Дону, Россия

* Корреспондирующий автор (nelli113[at]yandex.ru)

Аннотация

В данной статье речь идет об особенностях анекдота и эпитафии в русском и английском языках. Описываются основные этапы их развития, принципы функционирования, рассматриваются их общие черты, а также их отличия. Выделяются фольклорные черты, а также ситуации, когда анекдот перерастает в эпитафию. Проводится сравнение данных терминов в русской и англоязычной лингвокультурах, а также в рамках прагмалингвистики рассматривается внутренняя и внешняя сторона речевого акта, выделяются такие понятия, как текст, отправитель текста, получатель текста.

Ключевые слова: анекдот, эпитафия, культура, прагмалингвистика, особенности, память.

FROM THE EPITAPH TO THE JOKE: THE PRAGMALINGUISTIC ASPECT

Research article

Golossova N.V.^{1*}, Revyakina N.P.²¹ Postgraduate student, Institute of Philology, journalism and intercultural communication of the Southern Federal University, Rostov-on-Don, Russia;² Don State Technical University, Rostov-on-Don, Russia

* Corresponding author (nelli113[at]yandex.ru)

Abstract

This article deals with the peculiarities of the joke and epitaph in the Russian and English languages. The main stages of their development, principles of functioning are described, their common features are considered, as well as their differences. Folklore features are highlighted, as well as situations when a joke turns into an epitaph. These terms are compared in Russian and English linguistic cultures, but also within the framework of pragmalinguistics the internal and the external side of the speech act is considered, includes such concepts as text, sender text, recipient text.

Keywords: joke, epitaph, culture, pragma linguistics, peculiarities, memory.

Human life is multifaceted. You can speak about it from different points of view. Augustus, the great Roman Emperor, on the last day of his life, having a premonition of death, assessed his life with the words: «Acta est fabula» («the Performance is over»). One of the French kings before his death managed to express himself in the spirit of black humor: «Finita la Commedia» («the Comedy is over»).

Black humor is the ability to laugh at the most tragic in the world, in the final case – at death [8, P. 45]. «Sarah, little sister. You will laugh very, very much, but our beloved mother has died», says one Jewish black joke.

Joke and epitaph have become an integral part of human life. They make it possible to see in it something more than a chain of random events, help to discover certain features of human existence, trends, national traditions, psychological types.

Let's outline the main stages of joke and epitaph development. It is interesting that the joke ("a short oral joke story with an unexpected, witty end" [2, P. 189] before becoming a short funny story, told as if by the way in a friendly company, lived in the culture for several centuries. For the first time, jokes were described by the Byzantine historian Procopius of Caesarea in the "Secret history" (VI century) cases from the private life of the Emperor Justinian and his courtiers. It was even a theological parable. This parable was told to the congregation by a preacher to explain the abstract provisions of a particular doctrine. Then it turned into a reliable instructive story from the lives of famous historical figures. Joke has not lost the ability to express certain philosophical views through the mouths of its characters.

The epitaph (from the Greek "epitaphios" – tombstone; a tombstone inscription, usually referring to the deceased or from the deceased to passers-by) originated in Ancient Greece about 3000 years ago. Initially, tombstone inscriptions served to immortalize the fact of burial. In the VII-VI centuries BC, the epitaph changed from a monument to a scroll. Its theme was philosophical reflections on the world. Having got from Ancient Greece to Ancient Rome, the epitaph received further distribution and development. It is also becoming popular in Russia. Immersed in everyday life, in the field of funeral rites and customs, the epitaph is a peculiar phenomenon of culture.

Let's consider the common features of an epitaph and joke. Joke claims to be true. It may be strange, unusual, but the combination of two opposites in it (improbability and certainty, the psychological possibility of the event) just creates the basis for its similarity to the epitaph [5, P. 37]. Joke, as well as an epitaph, can consist of just one line: "Kolobok hanged himself", "Pinocchio drowned". They can also have the form of the expanded text. Joke, like an epitaph, reveals the realities of life, exposes vices, and calls for a change in life for the better. Joke and epitaph have a specific feature. They should be relevant, and their main meaning is, first of all, in the accuracy of the hit. Let's also highlight another similarity between joke and epitaph – these genres are not self-sufficient, but are tied to the context.

Joke, like an epitaph, is not necessary in itself. They only become really clear in the context (a comic or tragic case). Joke and epitaph exist only being connected to something. Joke is acutely aware of its place in the conversation, it is associated with its direction and trends, the epitaph appears as a post-fact of a person's life [3, P. 232]. A joke told at random becomes

unnecessary. The epitaph is a consequence of a person's passing from life and the need to realize the memory of him. In joke and epitaph, a strictly defined emotional and psychological coloring is set from the first words.

Joke and epitaph have some folklore features. First of all, this is the fact of anonymity of their creation. Secondly, the people and feelings in the epitaph and joke have a certain folklore generality. Third, the use of direct speech in them also indicates a connection with folklore.

Let's consider the differences between the joke and the epitaph. The rhetoric of joke is "the curious rhetoric of an occasional, situational, dialogized word" [1, P. 8]. The dialogue of characters, as a rule, is a plot-forming one. At the same time, the text of the joke itself depends on the dialogical situation, since it is essentially focused on a direct response. Dialogic epitaph — an extremely rare case, due only to the desire of the addressee to give the epitaph more emotional color and bring the situation closer to the realities of life. The joke does not belong to an individual, it is impossible to tell it to yourself, while the epitaph — in principle, is dedicated to an individual and even has an individual – personal appeal.

The joke is connected to the texts related to the areas of both spoken and written creativity in order to expose, reveal a phenomenon, a feature of morals, a feature of a real person or a whole type in an acute form. This is the dominant aesthetic function of the joke. The epitaph functions are only in written form. Its main purpose is to perpetuate the memory of the deceased.

The specific construction of the joke, its dynamism distinguishes it in many ways from the epitaph, which is characterized by a measured, calm rhythm of the narrative, brevity, formality, and tradition [7, P. 89].

Despite all the above differences, there are situations when a joke directly, whimsically develops into an epitaph, giving it comic features. This makes the epitaph unique. There is a kind of concatenation of fundamentally different world views. The main thing is not in the comic, but in the collision of different structural elements, in the "impact energy" [4, P. 31]. A reliable, convincing, effective combination of the unconnected explains the nature of the epitaph-joke (highlighted by us).

The examples of this kind of epitaph can serve as the results of a competition conducted among British citizens – a survey of the most amusing epitaphs on the graves of their celebrities. The first place was taken by the Irish writer and comedian Spike Milligan, whose tombstone contains a concise inscription: "I told you I was sick." The second place was given to the residents of the Foggy Albion to the great politician Winston Churchill, whose monument over the grave says: "I am ready to meet the Creator. But whether He had time to prepare for the meeting with me is still a question." In the third place was the legendary singer Frank Sinatra with the optimistic epitaph "all the best is ahead".

In cemeteries it was possible to meet such fun lettering: "Ladies! I'm sorry I can't get up when you're standing." Or: "I would be very happy to give you my seat for free." According to the survey, the British prefer to treat even the darkest moments of life and their own death with a smile.

In the Russian cultural tradition, such epitaphs are practically excluded. We proceed from the postulate: "one does not speak ill of the deceased." In any case, it is almost impossible to find such inscriptions in the Russian cemetery. There are rare examples of such epitaphs in the literature. However, they are mostly satirical, sarcastic in nature. On the Internet, we find funny epitaphs dedicated, as a rule, not to specific people, but to images, professions, and fairy-tale characters. Here, for example, is one of these epitaphs of the Serpent — Gorynych: "He was born to fly, had a fiery heart, spoke three languages, and valued female beauty."

From the point of view of pragmatics, a joke is analyzed as a speech act. From the point of view of the inner side of the speech act, its illocutionary stage is of interest, aimed at implementing the intentions of the sender of the text to ridicule everyday goals that deviate from their generally accepted assessment [6, P. 23]. From the point of view of external components of the speech act, the sender of the text and the recipient of the text, the text and the communication situation are considered [10, P. 182]. The sender and recipient of the text are average participants in speech communication with generally accepted approaches to evaluating existential events. The text and the situation are evidence of deviations from conventional approaches. Any deviations from the generally accepted are evaluated negatively and are subject to ridicule.

Thus, the pragmatics of joke manifests itself as a "linguistic-therapeutic tool at various levels of culture" [9, P 45]. The history of joke and epitaph development, their common and even distinctive features, allowed them at a certain stage of the development of social thought to connect in specific situations and create a completely new, unexpected subgenre that helps to soften the blow from the loss of a loved one.

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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