HUMOUR AS A POSITIVE MANIPULATION

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Abstract. The English language is widely used in international communication. It is beneficial for effective communication and comprehension of its humour peculiarities from the linguistic perspective and the cultural specificity. There is a growing need for adaptation to support effective communication with native speakers in various fields, such as education, business or cross-cultural interaction. **The purpose of the paper** is to explore and analyze the aspects underlying humorous communication in the English language, as well as the examination of the cultural and social domains that influence the formation and perception of humour in English-speaking linguistic culture. **Methodology of the study** is based on the method of literature analysis, the descriptive method, and the comparative method. Besides general research methods of analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, observation and abstraction are employed. **Results of the survey** show that the main functions of humour are creating a positive atmosphere in the team, improving the mood, finding a common language to overcome conflicts, and sometimes manipulating the recipient. Humour improves mutual understanding by creating an emotional connection between members of society. Linguistic means and various techniques to create a humorous effect in speech to emphasize the absurdity and comic nature of the situation are analyzed. The speech manipulation in humorous discourse is also considered. **Practical implications**. The findings on the linguistic-cultural phenomenon of humour can be applied in various fields, such as translation and cross-cultural communication, interpretation of humorous materials. **Value/originality**. The results obtained can serve

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as a foundation for further academic research on the specifics of humour in English linguistic culture, as well as expansion of theoretical knowledge on the topic of speech manipulation.

1. Introduction

Representatives of the English-speaking linguistic culture are famous for their unique sense of humour, though it is often considered difficult for the audience to understand. British humour has a specific style and semantic depth that requires a certain level of cultural literacy and an understanding of subtext. Understanding English culture, literature, history, and social conventions requires a deeper knowledge of English culture. To fully appreciate British humour, it is important to comprehend humorous allusions, cultural references, and historical events. Getting through its specific humour for those unfamiliar with the English-speaking linguistic culture could be a real challenge. Cultural differences and the uniqueness of humorous strategies may lead to misunderstandings and distortions of the jokes' meanings.

Historical events have shaped the comic traditions of the English language and its culture during its centuries-long evolution. Humour as a tool for social commentary gained prominence in Shakespearean comedy. British humour is distinguished by its irony and sarcasm, resulting in a play on stereotypes. Memes serve as a means to spread entertainment content among users online.

The English language is widely used in international communication. Understanding the peculiarities of its humour can be beneficial for effective communication and cultural comprehension. There is a growing need for adaptation to support effective communication with native speakers in various fields, such as education, business, or cross-cultural interaction. Sarcasm, puns, irony, and absurdity are standard features in English linguistic culture. The comprehension and further recognition of these tropes will strengthen the skills to make jokes, communicate with native English speakers more effectively, and strengthen cross-cultural connections. If appropriately used, English humour improves communication, amplifies relationships, and creates a friendly atmosphere. Therefore, this research on the linguistic features and comic techniques of humour formation in the English-speaking environment is relevant.

A modern polyparadigmatic approach to linguistic investigations presupposes the investigation of reality from different points of view and representations of several visions of the problem under investigation. For example, humour can be analyzed from the standpoint of stylistics, communicative and cognitive linguistics, psychology, theory of communication, manipulation strategies. Researchers study ethnic aspects of humour [45; 14], its linguistic theories [2], its role in the texts of different styles and genres [19; 22; 25; 30; 41; 44]. The manipulation strategies have in-depth research in the works of M. Horobets and S. Baranova [11], M. Hryshyn [12], H. Truba and S. Grechka [38], G. Orosz et. al. [23], E. Peter et al. [24], L. Shchyhlo and M. Korovai [33], O. Brovkina and S. Danylchenko [5]

The object of the study is the linguistic phenomenon of national English humour; its subject matter is the analysis of English literature and media for features of humour in English linguistic traditions that stem from English culture. The study includes works by English writers from various historical periods and news from British media. **The purpose** of the research is to explore and analyze the aspects underlying humorous communication in the English language and examine the cultural and social domains that influence the formation and perception of humour in English-speaking linguistic culture. Correspondingly, the following tasks were formulated:

1)   to distinguish the linguistic features and satirical techniques of humour formation;

2)   to identify the aspects of the influence of humour in English-speaking linguistic culture;

3)   to study the roles humour plays in the communicative process and to explore the specificity of British humour;

4)   to define the status of manipulation in the humorous texts;

5)   to analyze the linguistic techniques of humour, using textual examples from literature and media as a basis.

The following scientific methods of analysis were applied: the method of literature analysis, the descriptive method, and the comparative method. **The practical significance** lies in the fact that the findings on the linguistic-cultural phenomenon of humour can be applied in various fields, such as translation and cross-cultural communication, interpretation of humorous materials. The results obtained serve as a foundation for further academic

research on the specifics of humour in English linguistic culture, as well as an expansion of theoretical knowledge on the topic of speech manipulation.

2. The definition and the role of humour in communication

Humour touches all aspects of our lives and significantly impacts interpersonal communication. This is both a promotion of effective interaction and the basis for creating positive relationships within different social groups. Emphasizing humour in interpersonal and cross-cultural communication is an effective tool for conflict prevention. Humour is a multifunctional instrument, capable of uplifting moods and serving as psychological protection in various situations [43].

An appropriate choice of jokes reflects healthy self-esteem and adaptability to communicative situations. This approach is based on the construction of associative links; in other words, at least two phenomena or entities must be connected for a joke to be considered a joke. The main thing is that the statement must always continue with a form of contradiction that arises. It is essential to understand that all of this defines the form and structure of humour formation. The search for contradictions lies in the combination of one participant's knowledge base with that of another. The farther apart these knowledge bases are, the more absurd the contradictions become. Thus, it is the absurdity in humour that typically evokes laughter. So, the greater the distance between these knowledge bases, the more influential the humour becomes.

For instance, humour can be used when communicating with colleagues in stressful situations to lift the mood and chill out. Humour allows individuals to view situations from different perspectives, fostering unity. It becomes a support mechanism that helps create a sense of relaxation. Humour expresses a positive attitude toward the surrounding reality and conveys this attitude openly [4].

Humour in communication contributes to self-expression and establishing positive interactions with others. It creates a fun and entertaining atmosphere for the participants in the conversation, uplifting the mood within the group. The definition of "humour" acknowledges it as provided by an English dictionary: *"the ability to be amused by something seen, heard, or thought about, sometimes causing you to smile or laugh, or the quality in something that causes such amusement"* [6].

People often try to analyze why a listener understands a joke told by the narrator while the opponent may not. The answer lies in each individual's linguistic knowledge base. For example, one person may possess more in-depth knowledge in a particular area than in another, reaching more profound understanding of a concept. This process can be the other way around for another area of knowledge. As a result, the opponent might not understand the narrator's joke due to insufficient knowledge in a specific domain. Humour integrates intellect and emotions, making it a powerful tool. Research has shown that a child's sense of humour increases their intellectual abilities [1].

Humour is an essential element in both communication and health. It simplifies interactions with people and solves numerous problems, thus serving as an aid for social adaptation: if we laugh at something, it indicates we are like-minded. Also, humour can protect the psyche from discomfort during an argument by expressing confidence and fearlessness in the face of disputes that happen in communication. Therefore, it is a tool for managing situations threatening a person's well-being, demonstrating confidence and fearlessness. The likelihood that people can make it up again, even in the most challenging situations, is much higher when humour is present [19].

The quality of humour largely depends on a person's knowledge across various fields, including linguistics. Humour strengthens communication within a group, elevates mood, creates a more positive atmosphere, mitigates conflicts, and helps find common ground between opponents.

3. The notion of linguistic manipulation

Every member of modern society is in the state of constant information consumption through communication with others. A humorous text is a work the essence of which is specific information. It does not only convey a message, but it also has a certain purpose, namely, to influence a reader/listener and his/her opinion. The important characteristic of a modern humorous text, which distinguishes it from the text in general, is its multidimensionality, which should be understood as a combination of separate verbal, visual, auditory, audiovisual or other components in the single semantic space of the text. While reading such texts, the reader almost never separates his/her opinion from the author's one that is, he/she considers the author's attitude to the message to be his/her own.

Humorous texts deal with information, and it is the control over it that makes it possible to manipulate the mass consciousness. They can be based on false values, manipulative interpretations, double morality when the reality offered by the source differs from the real one.

The phenomenon of imposing one's own thoughts and views on others, encouraging them to take certain actions is called manipulation. Linguistic manipulation is one of the powerful types of manipulation, because language is the most important tool of influence on human consciousness. In modern science, there are several definitions of speech manipulation. One of them defines linguistic manipulation as a type of influence, which is carried out by using certain language resources with the aim of having an impact on the cognitive and behavioural activity of the addressee [33]. There are a lot of ways to manipulate the language, and different scientists distinguish different taxonomies, focusing on certain criteria [12].

Such means of psychological impact on the process of social interaction are informing, stereotyping, mythologizing, image creation, suggestion, contamination and imitation [11]. Informing is one of the most common means of manipulative influence. The main goal of this strategy is to provide messages that do not carry any objectively new information, but affect the "content field" of the addressees. That is, informing is used to supplement information about elements of reality that are already known, but not sufficient for the implementation of the tasks. Stereotyping consists in preventing the reader from analyzing the submitted message. The message is "disguised" as not requiring further thought.

Communication uses the capacity of an audience to be infected in order to move a large number of people to certain actions at the same time. A common mechanism of purposeful influence on the masses is called imitation. The imitative ability of the individual consists in the formation of certain models of human behaviour by demonstrating the behaviour of individuals who enjoy the trust and authority of people.

An attentive reader, when comparing different resources, can often notice a difference in the coverage of the same event. There are different methods of manipulating the reader's consciousness that force people to have a different attitude to the situation even before forming their own opinion about the event. Manipulativeness is characteristic of both Ukrainian and English humorous texts. In order to successfully translate

them, it is necessary to understand their linguistic means, in particular lexical and syntactic ones. Among them, by right, the most effective and effective is a metaphor.

Metaphor can affect any of the stages of decision-making, but it is especially important when forming many alternatives for solving a problem situation. At the grammatical level, language manipulation uses both the possibilities of morphological categories and forms. At the syntactic level, the use of impersonal constructions is especially popular, as they help to avoid mentioning the subject of the action. Linguistic manipulation is associated both with goals hidden from the addressee and with a special organization of the text. For the purpose of manipulation, language means can be used in combination with elements of other sign systems, because the perception of a word depends on how it is spoken and written.

Manipulation is only an instrument that can be used for different purposes. Humour is a positive manipulation that arouses necessary feelings and intentions of a person without his/her participation and conscious control. The main thing is the fact that such an influence is for the sake of mutual interests of both partners. The hidden impact here is not a deceit: all the interlocutors are happy, their mood changes for the best and they start laughing. For example, jokes are a protective tool and a worthy answer to unacceptable manipulations. They belong to innocent tricks practiced in everyday interaction. Other cases when humour is used for positive manipulation are entertainment, business communication and educational situations.

Thus, humour contains manipulation that arouses recipient's positive feelings and emotions.

4. The linguistic devices of humour

Humour is one of the signals for establishing human relationships. It is manifested in various forms. It is through humour that the contradictions of life are revealed. This process occurs when the description of an image and the author's thoughts do not correspond. In other words, humour is based on a deviation from the norm. It creates a comic effect, making people laugh. People see such things through media, internet resources, interpersonal interactions, and so on [40]. In addition to these manifestations in different domains, specific devices are used to create humorous effects.

A system of images and focus on an individual is created at the character level. That is the division of how individuals position themselves and who they are. Otherwise, it is simply a contradiction between the desired and the real. At the plot level, there is always a repetition of comic situations. These situations combine laughter at the objects or events and a severe underlying attitude toward them on the part of the person laughing. At the linguistic level, various puns, vulgarisms, and wordplay are crucial in creating ambiguity or comic contradictions.

One of the standard humorous devices is the pun. Its influence on language is particularly intriguing as it showcases creativity in language use, often in unexpected ways. Its primary feature is an ability to create ambiguity through wordplay, which was not previously associated with the word used. This idea is supported by the Cambridge Online Dictionary definition of a pun*: "a humorous use of a word or phrase that has several meanings or that sounds like another word"* [6].

Another linguistic device of humour is the metaphor. This linguistic technique creates an entirely unexpected and often humorous comparison by revealing unusual connections between ideas, allowing for the comparison of the true meanings of objects and evoking a smile. Understanding a metaphor requires a piece of conceptual information embedded within it [34]. After all, metaphors form new conceptual frameworks by combining two completely different concepts.

Comic details embedded in the humour do not contradict the integral meaning of objects. They help us to realize the world's imperfections and absurdities through more detailed, playful light, inducing smiles and surprises. These details cannot be hidden as they lie on the surface. Humour can make you laugh, but not all laughter is related to humour [29]. Humour is subject to reevaluation and reinterpretation of imperfections, evoking positive emotions and allowing us to accept these imperfections as elements that make life less dull.

Humour involves high ideals, meaning that it must be witty. Linguistic devices that create comedy add to it. In the past century, words with particular meanings or sounds added humour to texts. Archaisms and historical terms were among them. These had humorous connotations and contributed to creating comic effects.

The presence of specific linguistic units in a comic context is a catalyst for creating a humorous effect. However, different cultures tend to favor certain devices, primarily due to the capabilities of the national language and, of course, the specific characteristics of the nation's mentality [35]. These devices are divided into:

1. Phonetic: This includes puns based on polysemy, homonymy, and enantiosemy (the coexistence of two opposite meanings), as well as alliteration and assonance. For example, the use of a pun in *"Ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a grave man"* [31].

2. Lexical: Words with humorous or unusual sounds, often combining antonyms and synonyms. For instance, *"a fish out of water"* [6].

3. Grammatical: The intentional use of mistakes at various grammatical levels with the addition of informality to communication. For example, *"I will be takin' Sirius his bike back. Not that he needs it anymore"* [32].

Both historical influence and content play a significant role in the importance of humour. The humorous effect is also achieved through irony, satire, and sarcasm, which serve as supplementary elements of humour. Unlike humour, satire mocks not something personal or specific but general issues, like problems of humanity or society as a whole. Consequently, satire does not belong to positive manipulation, it is typical in politics as it has the power to critique government actions. Information is presented in a veiled, humorous form while addressing serious topics. This term is often used to justify or defend transgressive media [8].

It is crucial to understand that irony consists of two layers: what is said and what is meant. These two elements do not correlate with each other. This idea is described through the definition of the term "irony": *"incongruity between the actual result of a sequence of events and the normal or expected result"* [21].

The basis of irony is hidden mockery. However, it has no negative connotation yet. That is, the speaker uses words with meanings opposite to what was intended to convey. Irony can be directed, aimed at someone, or just self-irony, directed back at oneself. Sarcasm comes out of irony, represents its highest degree, and reveals negative shades, making the humour sharp and ruthless. Unlike irony, sarcasm is expressed openly.

Thus, linguistic humour devices allow us to change language characteristics at different linguistic levels to create a comic effect. Both

the historical process and the context contribute to the positive impact of humour on the audience. In English humour, lexical units and rhetorical devices play a central role in highlighting absurdity, comic elements, and the contradictions of a situation.

5. Cultural specifics of humour in the English linguistic culture

People start to study popular culture and art at a particular stage of their language-learning journey, and they realize their ability to appreciate these works entirely is frequently limited by their linguistic understanding alone. In other words, they face a cultural barrier that seems challenging to overcome. This issue is particularly relevant in today's globalized world, where overcoming cultural barriers is essential for collaboration between different cultures and nationalities. Communicative competence is not innate but must be consciously acquired and developed [18].

Humour is an essential component of cross-cultural communication. It is also present in English linguistic culture and carries specific characteristics. The humour of English linguistic culture has witty features. This is an area where many conversationalists excel and where quick response time is crucial. The ability to mock a situation and understand it on a linguistic level draws general attention and creates a dynamic atmosphere in communication. Thus, the cultural, emotional, and linguistic interplay within language significantly influences the perception of humour [7].

Another critical component of English humour is wordplay. The English language is particularly suited for this with its polysemy and homophony. In many classic works, wordplay is used and homophones are incorporated to create a comic effect. Puns generate humour by provoking laughter and encouraging the audience to think and keep up with the author's train of thought while vividly characterizing subjects and introducing ambiguity [20]. Puns serve as a device in both comic and rhetorical art that elicits a smile and gets someone into thinking about the depth of the statement.

Another feature of English humour is *"deadpan"*. Members of the English linguistic culture can maintain facial severe expressions even when their jokes make other people smile [15]. The British have been particularly successful in this genre, so they have an emotionless national reputation, seemingly able to laugh without smiling. This perception is reinforced

by the definition of *"deadpan"*: *"marked by an impassive matter-of-fact manner, style, or expression"* [21].

In the new millennium, these characteristics have continued to evolve within English-speaking communities. Unsurprisingly, people using these techniques often credit English television shows of this genre, popular in the UK as far back as 40-50 years ago, as their sources of inspiration.

Another characteristic of English humour is an absurdity – meaning nonsense, strangeness. Taking situations to an extreme level of absurdity highlights their contradictions, which is why surreal humour is gaining popularity in today's reality, which is full of contrasts. English humour is distinguished by unexpected and illogical twists and situations that defy norms and lead to comical and unusual outcomes, even in challenging situations. The English highly value maintaining a sense of humour even in difficult moments, considering it a strength of character and human nature [17]. This creates a unique atmosphere of amusement and intrigue that appeals to a broad audience. Such a feature helps to step beyond one's usual perspective, evoking curiosity and a desire to reflect on what was heard.

The conditions of English society form the national absurdity of English linguistic culture. It is rooted in satire and self-irony about the absurdities of daily life. From its lighter forms to the more absurd – humour can play an essential role in forming social connections and relieving tension [36]. This quality of English humour resonates with people, as it is a tool for building relationships and lifting the mood within English society. Humour becomes the backbone for a joyful atmosphere in communication due to its universal absurdity.

Thus, the humour of the English linguistic culture embodies specific features that distinguish it from other types. These include wordplay, absurdity, and deadpan humour. English humour requires both cultural and linguistic awareness to grasp the context entirely. It is marked by a certain wit that makes it unique. The jokes can be restrained, with individuals often maintaining a severe and emotionless expression, creating a dynamic in communication that requires deeper analysis and careful attention.

6. Elements of humour in English literature

English literary humour has its own system of values and traditions, which acts as a basis for the cultural figurative expressions. They seriously

affect the understanding of humour in English linguistic culture in the context of intercultural communication. Peculiarities of humour define the standards for the comedy material, thus shaping the style and subject matter of comic literature. English writers tend to use their linguistic knowledge to create a comical effect in humorous situations.

To create a comical effect, writers use wordplays. Introducing a new word captivates the audience and presents itself as something odd, curious, something that changes the context as it was known to the reader previously. Works of Shakespeare can be presented as an example, when the author was using wordplays to make the text seem witty and ambiguous. In the first lines of his historical play 'The Life and Death of Richard the Third' we can see the wordplay:

1) *'Now is the winter of our discontent*
Made glorious summer by this sun of York' [32].

In this example, the author uses the word 'sun' as a wordplay to convey the figurative symbolic meaning. Together with describing the weather conditions, the author hints on the noble title of the character, namely the son, the heir of the House of York. Sun here means power, strength and control, guaranteed by the title of this character.

Another example can be the next quote from the play 'Romeo and Juliet':

2) *'Not I, believe me. You have dancing shoes*
With nimble soles. I have a soul of lead' [31].

In this case, Shakespeare uses the wordplay caused by the similarities of the words 'soles' and 'soul'. With that, the poet describes the contrast between the levity of Juliet's character and life and Romeo's sorrow. This linguistic device possesses a philosophical meaning, encouraging to think and reflect on the depth of the true nature of the said characters.

The works of English linguistic culture also contain such phrases that add absurdity for the humorous touch. Such linguistic means can be found in the works of Oscar Wilde, e.g. in the comedy work 'An Ideal Husband':

3) *'You see, Phipps, Fashion is what one wears oneself. What is unfashionable is what other people wear'* [42].

In this context, the word 'Fashion' has metaphorical meaning, not only indicating societal tendencies, but the unique personal style as well. By using humour, the author highlights the inconsistency of human society, its imperfections and the absurdity of societal judgement. Wilde encourages

the readers to think about their own identity, the foolishness of social norms, he speaks ironically about the distrustful values of society that rule the public, who don't have their own ideas. Creating a comedic situation, he uses humour to emphasise the controversy while stimulating readers to think.

Another example of humorous effect in literature can be found in "Pride and Prejudice", a work written by an English writer Jane Austen.

4) *'For what do we live, but to make sport for our neighbors, and laugh at them in our turn'* [3].

In this passage authoress uses humour in sarcastic form, creating a witty comic effect. Sarcastic commentary is pointed at the social structure, emphasizing the shallow nature of social expectations and interactions between people there. Humorous effect is created from the satiric criticism not of a specific person, but the negative sides of society as a whole and its norms in particular.

Absurdity is present in Lewis Carrol's 'Alice in Wonderland', specifically the animals' ability to talk and the communication with such characters as the Cheshire Cat, the Mad Hatter or the White Rabbit. Conversations with them are enhancing the general absurdity of the story. Jokes in this kind of humour style are based on insignificant details which become apparent on the extravagant background.

English authoress Joan Rowling uses humour in her 'Harry Potter' book series as well, in order to create the effect of creative liveliness. In the third book, the twins Fred and George are constantly using the phrase:

5) *'I solemnly swear that I am up to no good'* [28].

Afterwards it usually brings humour in their adventures. The humorous touch is given by the controversy of the situation: the formality of this oath and the entertainment that comes after it. The ironic paradox of the situation adds a humorous atmosphere to the characters' actions. At the same time readers' expectations change from the serious to more entertaining nature of the story.

The next example is a rhetorical question from the second book of the series:

6) *'Why spiders? Why couldn't it be 'follow the butterflies'* [26].

In this case, the rhetorical question highlights the arachnophobia of Ron Weasley, one of the main characters. With this, authoress creates a

witty humorous effect from the contrast between butterflies and spiders, as butterflies are associated with the beauty of surrounding us nature, and spiders are seen as threatening creatures. In this situation, the given linguistic device adds a comedy touch to the text.

Summing up, the humour in English literature makes its works special and unique. In order to make the reader laugh, authors use different comedic techniques, such as irony, sarcasm, absurdity; linguistic means, such as metaphors and wordplays. English writers not only create entertaining moments, but also encourage readers to think and reflect on them. WIth the help of creative dialogues and comic situations they mock the flaws of society while building an emotional connection with the reader.

7. Humour in media and popular culture
of English-speaking countries

Humour is a unit of cultural information that can be manifested in different forms: an idea, a phrase, or anything that can be passed on from one person to another. Humour also is an integral part of art, a kind of media folklore or an addition to the existing popular trend. Jokes develop into events and phenomena, they are compared with viruses that affect society in direct or indirect ways and can manipulate the public mood. Jokes can spread virtually in digital space, similar to the evolutionary process, to quickly and effectively 'infect' as many people as possible with laughter.

In the modern digital era, social media, such as Instagram and Youtube, evolved into platforms where English humour can spread and gain popularity among its audience. The development of new media that actively communicate with their users leads to changes in communication culture manifests in different videos, parodies, and jokes [35]. However, one of the most popular kinds of internet humour in the comedy genre is memes. Memes can be divided into two categories: internet memes and promotional memes. The first category is a form of online culture widespread on the internet. The second category involves using popular trends and memes for advertisement purposes. Marketing principles explain this because people usually buy things that provoke their emotional reactions.

British humour is considered unique, especially the politics-based kind of it. Members of English linguistic culture have their special political satire and use humour when discussing political events and analyzing politicians'

actions. Society uses political jokes to reflect on the matter and start a discussion. With this, people in the media aspire to create cultural concepts that can revolutionise the casual reality of life [10].

One of the most popular ways to convey humour are memes. The most well known meme in the English media space is *'Keep Calm and Carry On'*. It spread not only in the UK but in other countries as well. It is a part of the military, political and informational campaign of the UK' government during WW2. Its creation was meant to improve society's morale during war. Even with most evidence of its existence being destroyed, one was found at the beginning of the 21th century and started actively spreading among Internet users.

Among members of society, the first part of the phrase, namely *'Keep Calm and…'* developed a comic nature and evolved into a meme. Internet users use this phrase as a template and write their jokes with it, for example:

7)' *Keep Calm and Gangnam Style', 'Keep Calm and This Poster is Getting Old'* [13].

Humorous subtext helps keep calm, supports each other, and creates a positive atmosphere and unity even during hard times. It is in great demand among its audience. With its comical effect, this phrase is used as a motto for souvenirs and gifts that possess special meaning in different situations. Therefore, such a kind of humour is a symbol of mood improvement for not only English speakers but the whole world, too.

Comical situations can also spread worldwide through particular hashtags in social media. Hashtags are modern devices that immediately attract the attention of the public. They help to improve people's moods and gain the audience's attention. They are used in discussions and communication with users with similar interests in comedy to share entertaining content on social media platforms.

Aside from politics, English people often use hashtags when discussing football-related topics. The humour of English linguistic culture is closely linked to soccer. For this reason, football stories often become a source of popular comedy material in British culture. Football has a huge influence on British culture and is also a humour inspiration. Famous sports events become topics for jokes and comic interpretations in the media.

One of the most popular football hashtags related to humour is '# *ItsComingHome'* [39]. It became famous during the 2018 FIFA World

Cup, as the English national team reached the semi-finals against Croatia. On the one hand, the phrase expresses optimism and hope for the football team's victory. However, on the other hand, the hashtag contains hidden mockery and sarcasm about the possibility of winning the championship or at least becoming a finalist. Thus, the hashtag *#ItsComingHome*had two functions: a comic and sarcastic commentary and the appearance of faith in the victory of the English national team.

Another humorous phrase widely used in politics is *'Brexit means Brexit does mean Brexit'* [37]. The history of this phrase is related to the political decision of the United Kingdom during the Brexit process, when the country decided to leave the European Union. The comedy lies in the confusion and ambiguity of the process. Humour and sarcasm are often used in political discussions to make fun of difficult aspects of political events and to point out their absurdity or ambiguity. Humour and sarcasm in political discussions serve to relieve tension and to emphasize the absurdity or inaccuracy of certain political statements and promises.

Another meme widely known to the public is the phrase *'Is This a Pigeon?'* [13]. This meme is based on a comic situation when the main character of an anime film is standing in front of a butterfly and calling it a pigeon. This phrase has become a symbol used to visually describe comic situations related to the misidentification of objects or everyday confusion. In this scene, the linguistic element highlights the misunderstanding and incorrect use of words, which gives this meme its wide popularity as a means of illustrating funny situations where someone makes linguistic mistakes or is confused about the meanings of words.

Thus, humour in English-speaking countries' media and popular culture has different stylistic characteristics and is expressed through memes and hashtags. Humour in the media and popular culture is subject to overwhelming development and trends. As society's values and preferences change, comedy content is evolving to keep up with current trends.

8. Conclusions

As a result of this study, the peculiarities of humour in the English-speaking linguistic culture have been identified from the linguistic perspective and the cultural specificity of Internet humour. The role of humour in the communication has been studied and defined. Its main

functions are creating a positive atmosphere in the team, improving the mood, finding a common language to overcome conflicts and manipulating interlocutors in a positive way. These functions play a unique role in everyday life and improve mutual understanding by creating an emotional connection between members of society.

The study has also analyzed linguistic means and various techniques used to create a humorous effect in a speech to emphasize the absurdity and comic nature of the situation. The following elements of humour are worth emphasizing: irony, satire, sarcasm. The lexical units used to create a comic context have been identified; they are conditionally divided into phonetic, grammatical, and lexical categories.

The analysis of theoretical sources on humour's influence on English linguistic culture and the formation of its features has shown that humour has unique characteristics that distinguish it from other cultural varieties. These characteristics include wordplay, absurdity, and emotionless humour. It has been found that jokes of the English-speaking linguistic culture create dynamics in communication and require in-depth analysis and an attentive attitude.

We have analyzed the linguistic techniques of the comic based on textual examples from literature and the Internet media. It has been shown that in English literature, authors use comic techniques and linguistic means to create a humorous situation. However, besides being comic, they covertly make us think about the characters' phrases. The whole system of society is ridiculed by adding dialogue and sarcastic comments.

By examining and evaluating jokes, it has been determined that humour in the media and mass culture of the English linguistic culture has its stylistic diversity and is becoming popular outside of English-speaking countries. Spreading through memes, hashtags and other means, it constantly evolves under the influence of modern trends and changing societal values.

Prospects for further research lie in a more detailed study and analysis of the formation of humour features in the English linguistic culture from the point of view of translation studies and manipulation strategies in the source and target languages.

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