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**MEANS OF COMEDIC EDGE IN RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH  
POLITICAL STAND-UP COMEDIES**

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***Abstract***

The paper explores the forms and means of creating a comedic edge based on the speech resources in the Russian and English stand-up comedies. The idea is put forward that this genre of television humorous discourse has turned into an efficient instrument of promoting the public interest in the political events and into a tool of speech influence on the target audience. The authors confirm that political stand-up comedies represent an axiological communication genre in the mass-media. Both Russian and English stand-up comedies carry out two major functions: 1) realizing the democratic values and political liberty; 2) ridiculing the modern political situation. The difference is in the fact that Russian stand-up comedies are aimed at desacralisation of the past, diminishing the state's image by means of humorous interpretation of some ideologemes. The English (American) stand-up comedies put forward interracial discourse. The subject-matter of the analysed stand-up comedies is characterised by two topics: 1) politics itself; 2) social events of political nature (getting citizenship, holidays) in the framework of which the cultural and ethnic stereotypes are used to the best effect. At the same time the spectrum of topics addressed to by the English stand-up comics is widened by means of discussing racial stereotypes which is not inherent to the Russian standup-comedies. The results of the analysis of the means of creating a comedic edge suggest that the main form of comic effect in the political stand-up comedies is irony which very often becomes a cruel joke, ridiculing without result-oriented aim.

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**Keywords:** Humour, irony, scoff, comedic edge, Russian language, English language.



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## **1. Introduction**

The texts of stand-up comedies are often analysed as a peculiar speech genre in the framework of either comic (Liliental', 2014) or humorous discourse (Reshetarova & Gerasimenko, 2019), the main features of which were revealed and characterised by Karasik (2004): the intention of the communicators to escape a serious conversation, "the attempt to reduce the distance and critically reconsider the urgent concepts in a mild form", the demonstration of certain models of funny behaviour (Karasik, 2004, p. 304). From the point of view of interaction register (its tonality, style, sense interpretation specifics, etc.) the discourse of stand-up comedies can be characterised as pragmatic (Karasik, 2004, p. 240). The speech behaviour of stand-up comedians is more active than of representatives of some professional groups (Manzhelevskaya, 2017, p. 110). From the point of view of socio-linguistic approach the discourse of stand-up comedies belongs to the institutional type as it is realised in the professional sphere of one of the communication participants – professional comedian (Lobova, 2013).

The institutional character of political humour is a logic result of the functional nature of the political communication and humour as one of the constituents parts of politics (Chudinov & Nikiphorova, 2019). Zhadanova and Shirobokov (Zhadanova & Shirobokov, 2019) point out that "the comic effect as regards the power indicates if not the political tenseness but the need of the society to discuss the political issues" (p. 110).

## **2. Problem Statement**

The texts of Russian and English stand-up comedies which are the object of our research reflect "non-serious" interlocution of a professional comedian with the audience which is eager to get entertainment on political or politically charged topics. It should be noted that from all stand-up comedies which we have watched the political topics (the definition is symbolic) quantitatively trail gender, family, household themes. Two major issue-related directions can be singled out in the "political sector" of stand-up comedies: 1) politics itself (political events, politicians, ideologemes); 2) social events of political nature (getting citizenship, holidays, migration and others).

## **3. Research Questions**

The scope of questions of the authors is determined by the functional approach to the study of different types of discourse: political, humorous, etc.

- 3.1.** The functions of stand-up comedies should be singled out and the difference between Russian and English stand-up comedies in the functional aspect is to be revealed.
- 3.2.** Speech means characteristic of Russian and English stand-up comedies should be identified.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

Our intention is to conduct the comparative analysis of Russian and English stand-up comedies which function in the framework of two types of institutional discourse: political and humorous. The

authors aim to indicate the national peculiarities of Russian and English stand-up comedies since they exist in two different socio-linguistic circumstances. The overall purpose may be defined as presenting the genre of Russian and English stand-up comedies as the entity which comprises the political and humorous elements being a reflection of the topical issues which this or that society confronts.

## 5. Research Methods

The choice of the material determines the range of methods used for the analysis of the empirical data. With the aim of revealing the means of creating the comedic edge in the Russian and English stand-up comedies the method of discursive analysis was used. It was accompanied by the contextual study of the communicative situations.

## 6. Findings

**6.1.** The informative function of Russian stand-up comedies goes into the background since the common political events become the main topic of all presentations: appointing the ministers, presidential elections, elections of Moscow's mayor, elections in the Ukraine, armaments drive, etc. The presenter orients at the background knowledge of the addressee at that. The Russian stand-up comedy targets at the ridiculing but not stirring the public interest in the political events. The latter, however, doesn't stimulate the political activity of the addressee. Such a situation is proved by the fact that the political trigger which became the topic of the presentation is ridiculed only in some aspects, very piecewise. The marginal political leaders, outsiders often become victims of a joke. Besides, political topics may be touched upon superficially with the transition to household matters. For the English stand-up comedies the informative function is also peripheral, at the forefront is the function of realising the democratic liberties. The authors who study the genre under analysis on the basis of the English language point out this functional peculiarity (Chato, 2019; Decamp, 2016; Keisalo, 2018).

Both in Russian and English stand-up comedies the above-mentioned functions are supplied with the foregrounding of the personal experience of a professional comedian and ridiculing at that background the national features of this or that linguo-culture. For instance, Russell Dominic Peters – a Canadian comedian and actor – often in his performances turns to his personal experience of being brought up in the Indian family, mocks the accents of different ethnic groups (the Russian, the Arabs, the Indians), making barbed jokes of them, portraying the representatives of various nationalities in the absurd and foolish aspect: *I would never go to an Indian guy who became a doctor, especially when he was born and raised in this part of the world. Because when you were born and raised here you had real dreams and it was never to become a doctor (Russell Peters).*

**6.2.** Not each deviation from the norm is comic but each comic is a deviation from the norm (Radbil', 2017, p.184). One of the main means of creating a comedic edge is modelling of the absurd situation. Special means serve this goal among which are instruments based on the comic element of the situation and the language game though their character can be described as random (Liliental', 2014). Both kinds of instruments are employed to create a funny situation and are determined by the pragmatic goals of the author. The instruments are differentiated on the basis of the type of the infringed norms. The

instruments based on the comic element of the situation are such means of setting up the text (utterance) which are set up on the infringement of the logic and ontological norms. These means are orientated at the conceptual level of the addressee, his background knowledge, the forwarding of implicatures which are determined by the world picture of the social or ethnic group. The instruments of language game are such means of setting up the text (utterance) which are based on the infringement of speech and language norms. The broader understanding of language game was given by Wittgenstein (Wittgenstein, 2011) and Gridina and Talshmanov (Gridina & Talshmanov, 2019). Antithesis and hyperbola may be based both on the infringement of both ontological (instruments set up on the comic element of the situation) and speech / language norm (instruments set up on the language game). For instance, in the Russian political stand-up comedy the following instruments based on the comic element of the situation are used:

- enabling the foreign leaders with the Russian mentality: *Был Жириновский. Да, сейчас не лучшее для него время. Слишком импульсивный политик. Не хочется, чтобы после первой встречи Трампа и Жириновского на нас полетели ракеты с надписью: «Сам проститутка»* (Виктор Комаров) – *There was Zhirinovsky. Yes, now is not the best time for him. Too impulsive politician. I don't want rockets with the inscription: "A prostitute himself" flow at us after the first meeting between Trump and Zhirinovsky* (Viktor Komarov);

- antilogism which consists in conjunction of two pragmatically incompatible parts: *К 2018 году у нас в стране должна появиться новая супербаллистическая ракета /.../. Я думаю, у нас теперь такие ракеты каждый год будут появляться. Знаете, чаще, чем «Айфоны». Весь мир будет сидеть в он-лайне и смотреть, как Путин, знаете, такой в джинсах и черной водолазке, презентует новую ракету с Wi-Fi, там, ядерное приложение, если что, можно скачать ее себе в страну* (Руслан Белый) – *By 2018, a new super-ballistic missile should appear in our country / ... /. I think we will now have such rockets every year. You know, more often than iPhone. The whole world will sit on-line and watch how Putin, you know, in jeans and a black turtleneck, presents a new rocket with Wi-Fi, there, a nuclear application, if anything, you can download it to your country* (Ruslan Bely)] or in comparison ontologically contradictory parts: *Они в Госдуме хотят больше, чем я секса в 20 лет* (Руслан Белый) – *They in the State Duma want sex more than me when I was 20* (Ruslan Bely);

- paradox and game based on the background knowledge: *И так странно, знаете. У нас Сталин – тиран. Он убивал людей. Но его именем названо то место, где хотят жить люди – сталинки. Мне интересно, в Берлине есть гитлеровки? Что-то такое: я в Берлине снял гитлеровку. «А как у вас тут газ включить?» – «А он сам включается, не переживайте»* (Стас Старовойтов) – *And it's so strange, you know. We have Stalin - a tyrant. He was killing people. But his name is the place where people want to live - stalinki. I wonder if there are gitlerovki in Berlin? Something like this: I rented gitlerovka in Berlin. "And how do you turn on the gas here?" - "But it turns on itself, do not worry"* (Stas Starovoitov)

- antithesis with the following contamination of the opposed events: *Послушайте, вы слышали закон, который они недавно придумали? Где разрешили людям в лесу собирать валежник? Это целый закон. Госдума. /.../ Я думаю это вот вместо Telegram. Telegram запретили, ветки разрешили. Всё. Сейчас будем общаться друг с другом при помощи сигнальных костров* (Руслан Белый) – *Listen, did you hear the law they recently came up with? Where were people allowed to collect*

*dead wood in the forest? This is the whole law. State Duma. / ... / I think this is instead of Telegram. Telegram was banned, branches were allowed. That's all. Now we will communicate with each other using signal fires (Ruslan Bely);*

- hyperbola: *У них средний возраст в Госдуме какой? 104 года. Ну, не, Фетисов в хоккее еще при царе играл (Руслан Белый) – What is their average age in the State Duma? 104 years. Well, no, Fetisov still played hockey under the tsar (Ruslan Bely).*

In the English stand-up comedy the means set up on the axiological or value-based anomalies which are connected with sample ideals, norms and values of a certain linguo-culture are realised (Radbil', 2017). Ironic conceptualization in case of using value-based anomalies is determined by the leading opposition of the political discourse “friend-foe” which represents an axiogenic situation (the term was used by Karasik (2015) ) and is verbalized in a certain set of genres one of which is stand-up comedy. The value-based instruments of comic edge are:

- appellativation and artificial conjunction of heterogeneous phenomena: *The party of Reagan has to explain how it has become the party of Putin (Bill Maher);*

- comic exaggeration of individual features of this or that nation: *Arab men, you need to know how to say 'No, I don't know'. Do you realize how much sh#t could have been avoided? Iraq War would never have happened. They know they didn't have weapons of mass destruction. But when the USA asked them, "Do you have weapons of mass destruction?" – “Yes, of course. Everybody has weapons of mass destruction” (Even the Iraqi people: What are you doing? – Shut up!) – “Where are they?” – “OK. Go straight, then turn left, then right” (Russell Peters);*

- “intrusion” into the text structure of the joke the discussion of the urgent geopolitical events on the broad historical background: *This is like after 9/11 if Bush stood on the rubble of the World Trade Center and shouted into the bullhorn, “Ben Laden is innocent and the FBI will hear from all of us soon” (Bill Maher). This commentary was made after showing the episode from the press-conference where D. Trump supported Russia and rebutted Russia's meddling into the presidential election in the USA;*

- ridiculing the negative features of politicians, their manner of speech which reflects negative attitude of common citizens to the state's leader: *Of course, part of this is due to the Republican party being a straight-up cult. Trump can claim that when he said 'would' he meant to say 'wouldn't' and because every day is opposite day now the rest of the party says makes perfect un-sense to me. Would is wouldn't and being friends with Russian thugs is – repeat after me – good not bad (Bill Maher). In this example Trump's favourite expression 'it's a good thing not a bad thing' is ridiculed which he uses almost in all his speeches (Remarks by President Trump in Press Conference, 2017).*

6.3. The instruments of language game are also widely used in the Russian and English stand-up comedies with the aim of forming the ironic context and conveying emotional and expressive evaluation. There are some kind of such means:

- paronomasia: *В 2018 г. произошло еще одно значимое событие: были выборы. Странные выборы. Странный был **выбор** (Виктор Комаров); Мне кажется, знаете, что в отношении Прибалтики уже надо воспользоваться правилом русского языка, написанием приставки «**при**». И назвать их **Пребалтика**, потому что они реально **пре**увеличивают свое значение (Руслан Белый) – In 2018, another significant event occurred: there were elections. Strange election. There was a*

strange choice (Viktor Komarov); It seems to me, you know, that in relation to the Baltic states it is already necessary to use the rule of the Russian language, writing the prefix “at”. And call them Prebaltica, because they really exaggerate their significance (Ruslan Bely);

- the collision of the direct and figurative meanings, the game with the inner form of the word: *Ведущий с пеной у рта рассказывал, типа: «У нас есть ракета, которую выпускаешь по городу врага, и она точно убивает только мужчин и трудно доступных женщин» (Тимур Каргинов).* – *A presenter with foam at the mouth told, like We have a missile that is fired at the enemy’s city, and it only kills men and hard-to-reach women” (Timur Karginov).* Or in the English language: *The owners of this country know the truth, it’s called the American dream because you have to be asleep to believe it (George Carlin).* This joke is based on the collision of the word ‘dream’ which in one of its meanings denotes the ‘state of being asleep’;

- the usage of occasional nominations: *И в Пентагоне потом: «Так, это у нас что за страна?» – «М-м-м. Пустынястан» (Руслан Белый); Я в Берлине снял гитлеровку. (Стас Старовойтов) – And then at the Pentagon: “So, what country is this?” - “Ммм. Pustynjastan” (Ruslan Bely); I shot Hitler in Berlin (Stas Starovoitov);*

- the change of the connotative meaning which is accompanied by the meta-linguistic comment of the author: *«Ой, ты смотри, террорюшка любит пельмешки. Ой, террорюга, а ты по субботам тоже работаешь?» Она нашла уменьшительно-ласкательную форму к такому страшному слову, как террорист. По мне, это все равно что туберкулезик, спидик. Геноцидушка, роднужа, давно тебя не видел (Тимур Каргинов) – “Oh, look, the terrorjushka loves dumplings. Oh, terrorjuga, and do you work on Saturdays too? ”She found a diminutive form for such a terrible word as a terrorist. For me, it’s like tuberkulezik, spidik. Genocidushka, rodnulja, have not seen you for a long time (Timur Karginov);*

- the usage of derogative words to characterize the victim of a joke: *It’s a high-definition video of a press-conference in Helsinki and it’s irrefutable evidence of a Russian whore and his name is Donald Trump. And like most whores hw always sounds terrified when he is with his pimp (Bill Maher).*

**6.4.** In the Russian stand-up comedies the usage of precedent names is one of the important means of creating a comedic edge and forming an evaluation. They refer to the works of mass art, i.e. movies, serials, cartoons, books which are best known in their screen adaptation version. The employment of precedent names in the stand-up comedies presupposes the simultaneous mass recognition of precedent names which lets to establish the contact with the audience, reduce the sharpness of political struggle, create a funny absurd situation: *Как вы знаете, на 1-ом канале не произносят фамилию человека, которая рифмуется со словом «овальный», потому что считается, что он как Волан де Морт. То есть, если ты случайно произнесешь его имя, он тут же узнает, где ты сейчас находишься, в декларации о доходах (Иван Абрамов); Менты реально не бегают. Поэтому, я думаю, за репосты начали сажать. Потому что там бегать не надо. Сидишь, страничку обновляешь. А на чем они передвигаются – на бобиках? Бобики, вы что, в польском мультике? /.../ У нас ограбление, все по бобикам /.../ Лёлик и Болик, все по бобикам. На крыше фиксики, возьмите камешки (Нурлан Сабуров) – As you know, on Channel 1 they don’t pronounce the person’s surname, which rhymes with the word “oval’nyj”, because it is believed that he is like Voldemort. That is, if you accidentally*

*pronounce his name, he will immediately find out where you are now in the income statement (Ivan Abramov); The cops really don't run. Therefore, I think they started to plant for reposts. Because you don't have to run there. Sit, refresh the page. And what do they move on - on the bobikah? Bobiki, are you in a Polish cartoon? / ... / We have a robbery, everyone is oe bobikam / ... / Lelik and Bolik, everyone is on bobikam. On the roof there are fiksiki, take the pebbles (Nurlan Saburov).*

In the English stand-up comedies text reminiscences are connected not with common cultural and historical background knowledge of a comedian and a target audience (due to different national and cultural origin) but with objects and realities which are familiar to the majority of the spectators: *What's your name? – Prabhjot. – Sorry? – Prabhjot. – Prabhjot. Not Prabchoad. Right? Because that would just be rude at that point, wouldn't it? That's a good solid Indian name. I like Indian names. You know what your name means? – It means 'God's essence'. – God's essence. God damn! What's your sister's name? Herbal Essence? Your sister smells great. That's just herbal, herbal jot (Russell Peters).* In this example the name of the spectator *Prabhjot* is used with good effect which means "God's essence" and the modified name of the American shampoo *Herbal Essences* which has a pleasant herbal aroma. While comparing the ideological opposition "black vs. white" the host of the show Bill Maher counterbalances the USA which is often described with the help of the metaphor *melting pot* and Russia which in the opinion of a comedian *is a pot which doesn't melt ... which says 'we're here, we're white ... they have a drink called White Russian.* White Russian is the name of the cocktail with cream on the basis of vodka and coffee liqueur.

**6.5.** The peculiarity of the Russian stand-up comedies is the usage of ideologemes as an object of comic interpretation. Ideologemes are such concepts of mass consciousness which contain politically charged meanings (Radbil', 2017), for example "USSR", "Lenin", "totalitarian state", "the Decembrists" and some others. As a rule the ideologeme is connected with some life situation and attributes of common people's life and is presented to the addressee in the absurd form.

For instance, the ideologeme "USSR" is built-in into the context of playing on the children's playground. The comedian starts from the antithesis "democratic Russia vs authoritarian USSR": *Горки сейчас потрясающие. И заметьте, я говорю «горки». Их много, разных: прямая, спиралевидная... В моем детстве была одна горка. Она была собрана из листов железа, которые даже были сварены не «стык в стык», а внахлест. Причем нахлест был против движения». Это была не горка, а терка для ребенка. Ты съезжал – приезжал на пару килограмм легче. Сразу карпаччо какое-то детское приезжало. И куда ты съезжал? В щепень. Некоторые дети делали это головой вперед (В. Комаров) – *The slides are amazing now. And mind you, I say "slides". There are many of them: straight, spiral-shaped ... In my childhood there was one slide. It was assembled from sheets of iron, which were not even welded "butt to butt", but overlap. Moreover, the overlap was against the movement. " It was not a slide, but a grater for a child. You moved out - came without couple of kilograms. Immediately some kind of baby carpaccio came. And where did you go? In rubble. Some kids did it with their head forward (V. Komarov).* The oppositions *a lot of different slides vs one slide; spiral-shaped vs assembled from sheets of iron* represent stereotype meanings of the ideologeme "USSR" in its Soviet version: the standard of form and meaning, the deficit of variety, creativity and individuality. The word-combination *sheets of iron* being a direct nomination of reality works at creating a negative image*

of the state which works like a machine and is not able to produce anything human. The implicit character of negative evaluation creates ironic connotation but the main source of comedic edge is a fantastic absurd situation which is modelled with the help of paradox similes and the infringement of common sense norms.

In the comedy by N. Saburov the ideologeme “USSR” gets comedic interpretation due to the absurd character of some features of the Soviet household, such as a small size of the house (*a sitz bath is not a bath*), housing squeeze (*You did your homework on grandmother’s forehead*) which are hyperbolized to an absurd degree. The image of the typical soviet flat’s residents is vulgarized, and with this purpose the denial of conventional euphemisms and the comparison with socially accused phenomenon are used: *Совмещенный туалет связан с чем? С отсутствием моральных принципов. Потому что батя срет, а дочка моется. Это не инцест-видео. Это советские реалии* (Н. Сабуров). – *Combined toilet connected with what? With a lack of moral principles. Because the father poops and the daughter washes. This is not an incest video. These are Soviet realities* (N. Saburov).

The ideologeme “totalitarian state” is represented in Kim’s comedy “On North Korea and Russia” where such notional components are used with great effect as “absence of liberty”, “deficit of essential goods”. “army as an axiological category”. Kim’s miniature presents certain interest from the prespective of employing more subtle means of creating irony: the manipulation by interaction implicatures and by semantic presuppositions, the effect of failed expectations. For instance, in the very beginning the comedian tells that Korea is his Motherland, but he can’t prepare sushi, can’t advise his girl-friend which sneakers to buy, but he is well aware how *to make a tunnel using a teaspoon for six people to crawl* (Kim). In this example interaction implicatures appeal to the common communicators’ background knowledge about the norm: seafood is favorite Korean food, sneakers are popular shoes nowadays, each citizen can easily move outside his country. The funny situation is created due to the implicatures infringement and the conclusion which the spectators must come to: people in the comedian’s Motherland don’t eat seafood (lack of food in general), don’t wear sneakers (lack of clothes) but leave the place using the favorite method of Monte-Kristo (absence of liberty).

With the purpose of ridiculing the ideologemes the Russian stand-up comedians use the gender factor: the masculine image is made fun of with the help of attributing feminine character traits, appearance and behavior. For instance, the ideologeme “Lenin” is often ironically represented through the monument’s image and the Mausoleum. But in the performance by I. Tarletskiy the notion “beauty” is quite unexpectedly put forward which is considered a feminine quality in the Russian culture : *Он настолько был крут, что даже когда умер, люди так говорили: «Мы не можем прятать эту красоту.* (И. Тарлецкий). – *He was so cool that even when he died, people said so: “We can’t hide this beauty. People should look further.”* (I. Tarletsky). The self-discreditation strategy is used here: speaking about the beauty of mummified ruins he literally humiliates the image of a leader.

Attributing female features to male characters is used when discussing the ideologeme “deputy” and creating a comedic edge. This ideologeme from the very beginning is associated in the minds of Russian people with negative notions and connotations. Comparing V. Solovyev’s political talk-show with social talk show (during which the issues of assault in connection with female is often discussed) T. Karginov creates a dirty and unpleasant image: *Не за горами то время, когда к Соловьеву придет*

*изнасилованный депутат... Придет такой... – Я депутат. Меня изнасиловали на списке ЛДПР. – Вы пили? – На доньшке... На доньшке избирательной урны... Я уснул, меня изнасиловали их члены партии (Т. Каргинов) – Not far off is the time when the raped deputy will come to Solovyov ... Such will come ... - I am a deputy. I was raped on the LDPR list. - Did you drink? - At the bottom ... At the bottom of the ballot box ... I fell asleep, I was raped by their party members (T. Karginov).*

In the English stand-up comedies (primarily American) not separate ideologemes are discussed but the interracial discourse since the self-identification problem is on the agenda in the USA in spite of all the attempts to improve the intercultural situation, use politically correct words to denote the representative of different nationalities, to get rid of the racially-prejudiced discrimination: *Last night our country gathered together to hear from one of the most important black voices in American history ... What I want to focus on tonight is the state of Obama. Before we go in too deep on this I need to be clear about something. I voted for Obama because he's black. I'm just clearing it up. "Larry, do you agree with Obama's policies?" And here's the truth. "I agree with the policy that he is black." "But shouldn't you vote based on principle?" "That's correct. And my guiding principle is that as long as he is still black, he and I agree on principle" ... My first gut instinct on this year he's still black so it's all good ... He may not get anything done in the next two years but at least he'll still be black (Larry Wilmore).* The funny situation is based here on the evaluation of Obama's politics through a racial characteristic which is inherent to the politician and the comedian (Larry Wilmore is an Afro-American). By using this rhetorical mean the comedian exaggerates the degree of disappointment from Obama's activities and his State of the Union Address which he delivered on January 20, 2015, the day before Larry Wilmore show was released.

## **7. Conclusion**

The conducted analysis of the empirical material let demonstrate general and individual peculiarities of stand-up comedies in Russian and English. Both variants of the analysed genre have common pragmatic goals: 1) demonstration of democratic values and political liberty; 2) ridiculing the modern political situation; 3) the stirring of the audience's interest to the political issues. At the same time the Russian stand-up comedies are aimed at desacralisation of the ideologemes of the historical (Soviet) past of the country, diminishing the state's image and its attributes such as the army, the flag, the anthem. For this purpose the means of notional and stylistic contrast, the pejorative lexical units and the nomination of the something dishonorable, the exaggeration of negative characteristics, the reversion of the masculine image to the feminine type are used. The above-mentioned means function when the absurd situation is modelled which caused the laughter of the audience.

The research showed the similarity of the political topics discussed by the Russian and English stand-up comedians. The cultural and ethnic stereotypes are used with good effect in both types of discursive practices to create a comedic edge. The range of topics discussed by the English stand-up comedians is widened due to the addressing the racial stereotypes. The ideological controversy of Russia and the USA may be singled out which in the discourse of English stand-up comedies is revealed through aggressive image of Russia as an anti-value.

The genre of stand-up comedy is usually discussed in the framework of the humorous discourse although the main tonality of the political miniatures consists in irony – a scoff which borders on emotionally burdened negative evaluation, and irony can become a sarcasm and a cruel joke.

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